

UNIT-1

JOHN RUSKIN : ROOTS OF HONOUR

(An Extract from 'Unto This Last')

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1.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit you will be able to know

1. about John Ruskin, a prominent social, political and economic thinker of England.
2. the meaning of wealth as defined by John Ruskin.
3. about the ideal relationship between the workers and their masters wherein there is no hostility between them.
4. that the social attractions are not accidental and that they are not the disturbing elements.
5. that human problems cannot be solved with mathematical exactitude.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 John Ruskin : A Biographical Sketch

John Ruskin was born in London on February 8, 1819 of Scottish parents. His father, John James, was a wealthy wine merchant. His mother was a staunch puritan and a great disciplinarian. John Ruskin, the only child of his parents, was subjected to rigid discipline. He had to get up early in the morning. He was punished for small lapses and there were no toys for him to play with.

He had his early education at home and as a small child he was forced by his mother to read the Bible for hours everyday. No doubt this discipline was hard, but these readings became an essential part of his education.

At the same time, his father was interested in reading good poetry and prose. At an early age John had read Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Pope, Spenser, Byron, Goldsmith, Addison and Samuel Johnson. Ruskin's father had a great desire that his son should write good pious poetry. John Ruskin's education was supplemented by his regular tours to Europe in the company of his father which in turn cultivated his literary and aesthetic taste.

After a very short stay at a day school he was sent to Christ Church, Oxford in 1837 where he spent five years. The stay was not very comfortable as he did not like the rather suffocating environment of the University. After leaving the University he dedicated himself to writing. His first book came out anonymously under the title *Modern Painters* in 1843. By this time he had started contributing his articles to leading magazines of England.

Ruskin married Euphemia Chalmera Gray in 1848. This marriage was not happy and ultimately they divorced each other in 1853.

In 1853, Ruskin started his career as an Art Lecturer. In 1857, he delivered some Lectures on Political Economy at Manchester. He became increasingly interested in social reforms and economic problems of the contemporary world. During the sixties Ruskin published a number of books in which he propounded his advanced theories on political economy.

He was offered Professorship of Poetry at Oxford, which he decided to decline. However, in 1869, he accepted the post of State Professorship of Art. Ruskin's interest in social reform is also shown in his popular work *Seasame and Lilies* (1865), and *The Crown of the Wild Olive* (1866). In 1885 Ruskin began *Praeterita*, his autobiography, but he could not complete it. Bad health clouded his later years and obscured his fine genius. He died on 20th January, 1900 and was buried at Coniston. Indeed, Ruskin was a great thinker, a social reformer and an artist, the match of which is hard to find in the history of England.

1.1.2 Introduction *Unto This Last*

John Ruskin gave his four essays published in 1862 the title *Unto This Last* when he

brought them in book form. The title has reference to the parable of workers in the vineyard: “I will give unto this last even as unto thee.” in which one person tells the other that whatever is due to him will be given to him. In the ‘Preface’ to *Unto This Last* John Ruskin commented that his job was to define wealth and investigate its nature in a logical manner.

The second object of the book is to show that the acquisition of wealth is finally possible only under certain moral conditions of the society, particularly the quality of honesty. Ruskin believed that honesty is not the disturbing force which deranges the orbits of economy; it is, in fact, a consistent and commanding force which would keep these orbits clear of chaos. Ruskin laments that the English have lost faith in honesty and its working power. He feels that it is imperative for the English people to recover and practise honesty.

Ruskin also takes up the subject of the organisation of labour. He suggests that if we train our captains of industry in honesty, the organisation of labour will become easy. He also suggests that there should be training schools for the youth established at Government cost and under Government discipline. These schools should impart training to the youth along with other skills, the following three things:

1. The laws of health, and the exercises enjoined by them;
2. Habits of gentleness and justice; and
3. The calling by which he is to live.

Ruskin also suggests that Government should undertake to manufacture all things necessary for human life. However, it should allow healthy environment for private enterprise as well. Thus the Government and private enterprise can co-exist in healthy competition. The Government should also see to it that all things are manufactured and sold in their pure form. Further, Ruskin suggests that any man or woman, boy or girl who is out of employment should be given suitable work. Training may be given to these unemployed people, if required. However, if there are people unwilling to work as per their capabilities and potential they should be punished.

Lastly, John Ruskin recommends a respectable system of social support for the old and the destitute. They should be provided with home and comfort in a manner which would generate a feeling of honour instead of guilt among them. Thus whatever is due to everyone must be given to him.

1.1.3 Introduction *The Roots of Honour*

In this introductory essay Ruskin deals with the idea whether an advantageous code of social action may be determined irrespective of the influence of social affection. He also considers questions regarding ideal relationship between the workers and their masters. He disagrees with political economists of the nineteenth century who believed that social affections are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature. The chief exponents of the political

economy in the nineteenth century were John Stuart Mill, Thomas Robert Malthus and David Ricardo.

Though Mill was an advocate of liberty, he was of the opinion that public option and law should work against increase in population. As it would be difficult to maintain a decent standard of living, he therefore, agrees with Malthus who discussed the relation of population to means of subsistence. He further argues that the former must by nature outrun the latter. Ricardo also accepts the theory propounded by Malthus.

Ruskin has criticised those economic thinkers who, according to him, are self-styled political economists. These economists believe that social affections are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature. Greed and the desire of progress on the other hand are constant elements. According to these economists the inconstants should be eliminated and human being is to be treated as a covetous machine. After that, we should examine what laws of labour, purchase and sale etc. operate in a society in order to obtain wealth. They also feel that these laws once determined will allow each individual to introduce as much of the disturbing affections as he chooses and thus he would be able to determine for himself the result of the new conditions.

Ruskin thus creates the ground for his discussion. He finds faults with the aforesaid economists because of two main reasons. First, he believes that the behaviour of a man should be traced under constant conditions and the causes of variations should be determined later. He also suggests that elements of social affections do not operate mathematically but chemically. Secondly, he disagrees with contemporary political economists in that they considered human being as nothing but a mere skeleton, an automation without a soul. Like many other idealists Ruskin too protests against the concept of human beings as machines. In order to make his argument possible he borrows images from chemistry and human anatomy. In spite of influence of science on his writings, Ruskin does not hesitate in rejecting the popular view that human body is a machine. He exploits the example of the use of pure nitrogen as a very manageable gas. However, when we deal with its flourides, it can cause havoc to us and our apparatus. In the same way he bombards the theory of progress at the cost of the negation of a soul. By giving these examples Ruskin propounds the view that human problems cannot be solved by mathematical precision. He also points to the inapplicability of such a theory in the context of strike of the workers.

Here he takes up for discussion a vital problem concerning the relation between the employer and the employee. He feels that all the leading economists of the 19th century preferred to remain silent on this issue. They are not able to reconcile the interests of the opposing parties. Ruskin, on the other hand, believes that the interests of the masters and the workers are the same and there is no antagonism between them. He suggests that all cordial relations between the masters and the servants depend on “balance of justice” – a term that includes emotional relations between one man and another. He ruthlessly rejects the politico-economic view that a worker is merely an engine whose motivating power is steam, magnetism and

gravitation. For him the motivating power of a worker is a soul which is of an unknown quantity. He believes that this motivating force involving the will and the spirit of man is brought to its greater strength by its own proper feeling, namely the affection which these political economists have called accidental and disturbing elements in human nature. He concludes the argument by suggesting that the relationship between the master and the workers must be based on affection because there is no hostility between them nor do their interests clash. After this Ruskin discusses the problem related to wages. He believes in the equality of wages and asserts that constant number of worker should remain in employment. A bad worker should not be discriminated against with a good one in terms of wages. If a master has to choose a workman, he always chooses a good workman. A bad workman should not be allowed to offer his work even at half wages and he should not be permitted to take the place of a good worker. He completely rules out competition for the sake of insufficient sum. Similarly a good workman should get satisfaction from the fact that he is chosen for his work. He should not feel proud for the higher wages he earns.

Ruskin believes that in every civilized society there exist five intellectual professions, namely the soldier, the pastor, the physician, the lawyer and the merchant. Persons belonging to these professions are expected to perform their duty honestly. The merchant, for instance, must supply perfect and pure things to the people. But the question that perturbs Ruskin's mind is what social pressure can be exercised against a dishonest person.

In this first essay of *Unto This Last* Ruskin's mind is preoccupied with the question on the individual conscience. He believes that the society can be transformed only when the individual is reformed. Thus personal honesty will lead to social honesty as against the mechanical theories of the other contemporary political economists. Ruskin's theory of political economy is based on an ethical code of life. An amoral person is likely to act against the general interests of society. So in spite of the fact that Ruskin does not oppose individual's right to run industries and employ workers, he wants an ethical basis to form the core of all social and financial endeavours. Thus in the first essay *Roots of Honour* Ruskin tries to put forth his views in an ethical framework. However, he leaves certain vital questions unanswered.

1.1.4 Text

Among the delusions which at different periods have possessed themselves of the minds of large masses of the human race, perhaps the most curious — certainly the least creditable — is the modern soi-disant science of political economy, based on the idea that an advantageous code of social action may be determined irrespectively of the influence of social affection.

Of course, as in the instances of alchemy, astrology, witchcraft, and other such popular creeds, political economy, has a plausible idea at the root of it. "The social affections," says the economist, "are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature; but avarice and the desire of progress are constant elements. Let us eliminate the inconstants, and, considering the

human being merely as a covetous machine, examine by what laws of labour, purchase, and sale, the greatest accumulative result in wealth is obtainable. Those laws once determined, it will be for each individual afterwards to introduce as much of the disturbing affectionate element as he chooses, and to determine for himself the result on the new conditions supposed.”

This would be a perfectly logical and successful method of analysis, if the accidentals afterwards to be introduced were of the same nature as the powers first examined. Supposing a body in motion to be influenced by constant and inconstant forces, it is usually the simplest way of examining its course to trace it first under the persistent conditions, and afterwards introduce the causes of variation. But the disturbing elements in the social problem are not of the same nature as the constant ones: they alter the essence of the creature under examination the moment they are added; they operate, not mathematically, but chemically, introducing conditions which render all our previous knowledge unavailable. We made learned experiments upon pure nitrogen, and have convinced ourselves that it is a very manageable gas: but, behold! the thing which we have practically to deal with is its chloride; and this, the moment we touch it on our established principles, sends us and our apparatus through the ceiling.

Observe, I neither impugn nor doubt the conclusion of the science if its terms are accepted. I am simply uninterested in them, as I should be in those of a science of gymnastics which assumed that men had no skeletons. It might be shown, on that supposition, that it would be advantageous to roll the students up into pellets, flatten them into cakes, or stretch them into cables; and that when these results were effected, the re-insertion of the skeleton would be attended with various inconveniences to their constitution. The reasoning might be admirable, the conclusions true, and the science deficient only in applicability. Modern political economy stands on a precisely similar basis. Assuming, not that the human being has no skeleton, but that it is all skeleton, it founds an ossifant theory of progress on this negation of a soul; and having shown the utmost that may be made of bones, and constructed a number of interesting geometrical figures with death's-head and humeri, successfully proves the inconvenience of the reappearance of a soul among these corpuscular structures. I do not deny the truth of this theory: I simply deny its applicability to the present phase of the world.

This inapplicability has been curiously manifested during the embarrassment caused by the late strikes of our workmen. Here occurs one of the simplest cases, in a pertinent and positive form, of the first vital problem which political economy has to deal with (the relation between employer and employed); and, at a severe crisis, when lives in multitudes and wealth in masses are at stake, the political economists are helpless—practically mute: no demonstrable solution of the difficulty can be given by them, such as may convince or calm the opposing parties. Obstinate the masters take one view of the matter. obstinate the operatives another; and no political science can set them at one.

It would be strange if it could, it being not by “science” of any kind that men were ever intended to be set at one. Disputant after disputant vainly strives to show that the interests of the masters are, or are not, antagonistic to those of the men: none of the pleaders ever seeming

to remember that it does not absolutely or always follow that the persons must be antagonistic because their interests are. If there is only a crust of bread in the house, and mother and children are starving, their interests are not the same. If the mother eats it, the children want it; if the children eat it, the mother must go hungry to her work. yet it does not necessarily follow that there will be “antagonism” between them, that they will fight for the crust, and that the mother, being strongest, will get it, and eat it. Neither, in any other case, whatever the relations of the persons may be, can it be assumed for certain that, because their interests are diverse, they must necessarily regard each other with hostility, and use violence or cunning to obtain the advantage.

Even if this were so, and it were as just as it is convenient to consider men as actuated by no other moral influences than those which affect rats or swine, the logical conditions of the question are still indeterminable. It can never be shown generally either that the interests of master and labourer are alike, or that they are opposed; for, according to circumstances, they may be either. It is, indeed, always the interest of both that the work should be rightly done, and a just price obtained for it; but, in the division of profits, the gain of the one may or may not be the loss of the other. It is not the master’s interest to pay wages so low as to leave the men sickly and depressed, nor the workman’s interest to be paid high wages if the smallness of the master’s profit hinders him from enlarging his business, or conducting it in a safe and liberal way. A stoker ought not to desire high pay if the company is too poor to keep the engine-wheels in repair.

And the varieties of circumstances which influence these reciprocal interests are so endless, that all endeavour to deduce rules of action from balance of expediency is in vain. And it is meant to be in vain. For no human actions ever were intended by the maker of men to be guided by balances of expediency, but by balances of justice. He has therefore rendered all endeavours to determine expediency futile for evermore. No man ever knew, or can know, what will be the ultimate result to himself, or to others, of any given line of conduct. But every man may know, and most of us do know, what is a just and unjust act. And all of us may know also, that the consequences of justice will be ultimately the best possible, both to others and ourselves, though we can neither say what is best, or how it is likely to come to pass.

I have said balances of justice, meaning, in the term justice, to include affection, — such affection as one man owes to another. All right relations between master and operative, and all their best interests, ultimately depend on these.

We shall find the best and simplest illustration of the relations of master and operative in the position of domestic servants.

We will suppose that the master of a household desires only to get as much work out of his servants as he can, at the rate of wages he gives. He never allows them to be idle; feeds them as poorly and lodges them as ill as they will endure, and in all things pushes his requirements to the exact point beyond which he cannot go without forcing the servant to leave him.

In doing this, there is no violation on his part of what is commonly called “justice.” He agrees with the domestic for his whole time ad service, and takes them; — the limits of hardship in treatment being fixed by the practice of other masters in his neighbourhood; that is to say, by the current rate of wages for domestic labour. If the servant can get a better place, he is free to take one, and the master can only tell what is the real market value of his labour, by requiring as much as he will give.

This is the politico-economical view of the case, according to the doctors of that science; who assert that by this procedure the greatest average of work will be obtained from the servant, and therefore the greatest benefit to the community, and through the community, by reversion, to the servant himself.

That, however, is not so. It would be so if the servant were an engine of which the motive power was steam, magnetism, gravitation, or any other agent of calculable force. But he being, on the contrary, an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the force of this very peculiar agent, as an unknown quantity, enters into all the political economist’s equations, without his knowledge, and falsifies every one of their results. The largest quantity of work will not be done by this curious engine for pay, or under pressure, or by help of any kind of fuel which may be supplied by the caldron. It will be done only when the motive force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the creature, is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel: namely, by the affections.

It may indeed happen, and does happen often, that if the master is a man of sense ad energy, a large quantity of material work may be done under mechanical pressure, enforced by strong will and guided by wise method; also it may happen, and does happen often, that if the master is indolent and weak (however good-natured), a very small quantity of work, and that bad, may be produced by the servant’s undirected strength, and contemptuous gratitude. But the universal law of the matter is that, assuming any given quantity of energy and sense in master and servant, the greatest material result obtainable by them will be, not through antagonism to each other, but through affection for each other; and that if the master, instead of endeavouring to get as much work as possible from the servant, seeks rather to render his appointed and necessary work beneficial to him, and to forward his interests in all just and wholesome ways, the real amount of work ultimately done, or of good rendered, by the person so cared for, will indeed be the greatest possible.

Observe, I say, “of good rendered,” for a servant’s work is not necessarily or always the best thing he can give his master. But good of all kinds, whether in material service, in protective watchfulness of his master’s interest and credit, or in joyful readiness to seize unexpected and irregular occasions of help.

Nor is this one whit less generally true because indulgence will be frequently abused, and kindness met with ingratitude. For the servant who, gently treated, is ungrateful, treated ungently, will be revengeful; and the man who is dishonest to a liberal master will be injurious to an unjust one.

In any case, and with any person, this unselfish treatment will produce the most effective return. Observe, I am here considering the affections wholly as a motive power; not at all as things in themselves desirable or noble, or in any other way abstractedly good. I look at them simply as an anomalous force, rendering every one of the ordinary political economist's calculations nugatory; while, even if he desired to introduce this new element into his estimates, he has no power of dealing with it; for the affections only become a true motive power when they ignore every other motive and condition of political economy. Treat the servant kindly, with the idea of turning his gratitude to account, and you will get, as you deserve, no gratitude, nor any value for your kindness; but treat him kindly without any economical purpose, and all economical purposes will be answered; in this, as in all other matters, whosoever will save his life shall lose it, whoso loses it shall find it.¹

The next clearest and simplest example of relation between master and operative is that which exists between the commander of a regiment and his men

Supposing the officer only desires to apply the rules of discipline so as, with least trouble to himself, to make the regiment most effective, he will not be able, by any rules or administration of rules, on this selfish principle, to develop the full strength of his subordinates. If a man of sense and firmness, he may, as in the former instance, produce a better result than would be obtained by the irregular kindness of a weak officer; but let the sense and firmness be the same in both cases, and assuredly the officer who has the most direct personal relations with his men, the most care for their interests, and the most value for their lives, will develop their effective strength, through their affection for his own person, and trust in his character, to a degree wholly unattainable by other means. This law applies still more stringently as the numbers concerned are larger: a charge may often be successful, though the men dislike their officers; a battle has rarely been won, unless they loved their general.

Passing from these simple examples to the more complicated relations existing be-

¹The difference between the two modes of treatment, and between their effective material results, may be seen very accurately by a comparison of the relations of Esther and Charlie in *Bleak House*, with those of Miss Brass and the Marchioness in *Master Humphrey's Clock*.

The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons, merely because he presents his truth with some colour of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens's caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true. I wish that he could think it right to limit his brilliant exaggeration to works written only for public amusement; and when he takes up a subject of high national importance, such as that which he handled in *Hard Times*, that he would use severer and more accurate analysis. The usefulness of that work (to my mind, in several respects, the greatest he has written) is with many persons seriously diminished because Mr Bounderby is a dramatic monster, instead of a characteristic example of a worldly master; and Stephen Blackpool a dramatic perfection, instead of a characteristic example of an honest workman. But let us not lose the use of Dickens's wit and insight, because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire. He is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially *Hard Times*, should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust; but if they examine all the evidence on the other side, which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all their trouble, that his view was the finally right one, grossly and sharply told.

tween a manufacturer and his workmen, we are met first by certain curious difficulties, resulting, apparently, from a harder and colder state of moral elements. It is easy to imagine an enthusiastic affection existing among soldiers for the colonel. Not so easy to imagine an enthusiastic affection among cotton-spinners for the proprietor of the mill. A body of men associated for purposes of robbery (as a Highland clan in ancient times) shall be animated by perfect affection, and every member of it be ready to lay down his life for the life of his chief. But a band of men associated for purposes of legal production and accumulation is usually animated, it appears, by no such emotions, and none of them are in any wise willing to give his life for the life of his chief. Not only are we met by this apparent anomaly, in moral matters, but by others connected with it, in administration of system. For a servant or a soldier is engaged at a definite rate of wages, for a definite period; but a workman at a rate of wages variable according to the demand for labour, and with the risk of being at any time thrown out of his situation by chances of trade. Now, as, under these contingencies, no action of the affections can take place, but only an explosive action of disaffections, two points offer themselves for consideration in the matter.

The first— How far the rate of wages may be so regulated as not to vary with the demand for labour.

The second — How far it is possible that bodies of workmen may be engaged and maintained at such fixed rate of wages (whatever the state of trade may be), without enlarging or diminishing their number, so as to give them permanent interest in the establishment with which they are connected, like that of the domestic servants in an old family, or an esprit de corps, like that of the soldiers in a crack regiment.

The first question is, I say, how far it may be possible to fix the rate of wages, irrespectively of the demand for labour.

Perhaps one of the most curious facts in the history of human error is the denial by the common political economist of the possibility of thus regulating wages; while, for all the important, and much of the unimportant, labour, on the earth, wages are already so regulated.

We do not sell our prime-ministership by Dutch auction; nor, on the decease of a bishop, whatever may be the general advantages of simony, do we (yet) offer his diocese to the clergyman who will take the episcopacy at the lowest contract. We (with exquisite sagacity of political economy!) do indeed sell commissions; but not openly, generalships: sick, we do not inquire for a physician who takes less than a guinea; litigious, we never think of reducing six-and-eight-pence to four-and-sixpence; caught in a shower, we do not canvass the cabmen, to find one who values his driving at less than sixpence a mile.

It is true that in all these cases there is, and in every conceivable case there must be, ultimate reference to the presumed difficulty of the work, or number of candidates for the office. If it were thought that the labour necessary to make a good physician would be gone through by a sufficient number of students with the prospect of only half-guinea fees, public

consent would soon withdraw the unnecessary half-guinea. In this ultimate sense, the price of labour is indeed always regulated by the demand for it; but, so far as the practical and immediate administration of the matter is regarded, the best labour always has been, and is, as all labour ought to be, paid by an invariable standard.

“What!” the reader perhaps answers amazedly: “pay good and bad workmen alike?”

Certainly. The difference between one prelate’s sermons and his successor’s — or between one physician’s opinion and another’s — is far greater, as respects the qualities of mind involved, and far more important in result to you personally, than the difference between good and bad laying of bricks (though that is greater than most people suppose). Yet you pay with equal fee, contentedly, the good and bad workmen upon your soul, and the good and bad workmen upon your body; much more may you pay, contentedly, with equal fees, the good and bad workmen upon your house.

“Nay, but I choose my physician and (?) my clergyman, thus indicating my sense of the quality of their work.” By all means, also, choose your bricklayer; that is the proper reward of the good workman, to be “chosen.” The natural and right system respecting all labour is, that it should be paid at a fixed rate, but the good workman employed, and the bad workman unemployed. The false, unnatural, and destructive system is when the bad workman is allowed to offer his work at half-price, and either take the place of the good, or force him by his competition to work for an inadequate sum.

This equality of wages, then, being the first object toward which we have to discover the directest available road; the second is, as above stated, that of maintaining constant numbers of workmen in employment, whatever may be the accidental demand for the article they produce.

I believe the sudden and extensive inequalities of demand, which necessarily arise in the mercantile operations of an active nation, constitute the only essential difficulty which has to be overcome in a just organization of labour. The subject opens into too many branches to admit of being investigated in a paper of this kind; but the following general facts bearing on it may be noted.

The wages which enable any workman to live are necessarily higher, if his work is liable to intermission, than if it is assured and continuous; and however severe the struggle for work may become, the general law will always hold, that men must get more daily pay if, on the average, they can only calculate on work three days a week than they would require if they were sure of work six days a week. Supposing that a man cannot live on less than a shilling a day, his seven shillings he must get, either for three days’ violent work, or six days’ deliberate work. The tendency of all modern mercantile operations is to throw both wages and trade into the form of a lottery, and to make the workman’s pay depend on intermittent exertion, and the principal’s profit on dexterously used chance.

In what partial degree, I repeat, this may be necessary in consequence of the activities

of modern trade, I do not here investigate; contenting myself with the fact, that in its fatalest aspects it is assuredly unnecessary, and results merely from love of gambling on the part of the masters, and from ignorance and sensuality in the men. The masters cannot bear to let any opportunity of gain escape them, and frantically rush at every gap and breach in the walls of Fortune, raging to be rich, and affronting, with impatient covetousness, every risk of ruin, while the men prefer three days of violent labour, and three days of drunkenness, to six days of moderate work and wise rest. There is no way in which a principal, who really desires to help his workmen, may do it more effectually than by checking these disorderly habits both in himself and them; keeping his own business operations on a scale which will enable him to pursue them securely, not yielding to temptations of precarious gain; and, at the same time, leading his workmen into regular habits of labour and life, either by inducing them rather to take low wages in the form of a fixed salary, than high wages, subject to the chance of their being thrown out of work; or, if this be impossible, by discouraging the system of violent exertion for nominally high day wages, and leading the men to take lower pay for more regular labour.

In effecting any radical changes of this kind, doubtless there would be great inconvenience and loss incurred by all the originators of movement. That which can be done with perfect convenience and without loss, is not always the thing that most needs to be done, or which we are most imperatively required to do.

I have already alluded to the difference hitherto existing between regiments of men associated for purposes of violence, and for purposes of manufacture; in that the former appear capable of self-sacrifice—the latter, not; which singular fact is the real reason of the general lowness of estimate in which the profession of commerce is held, as compared with that of arms. Philosophically, it does not, at first sight, appear reasonable (many writers have endeavoured to prove it unreasonable) that a peaceable and rational person, whose trade is buying and selling, should be held in less honour than an unpeaceable and often irrational person, whose trade is slaying. Nevertheless, the consent of mankind has always, in spite of the philosophers, given precedence to the soldier.

And this is right.

For the soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain. This, without well knowing its own meaning, the world honours it for. A bravo's trade is slaying; but the world has never respected bravos more than merchants: the reason it honours the soldier is, because he holds his life at the service of the State. Reckless he may be — fond of pleasure or of adventure—all kinds of bye-motives and mean impulses may have determined the choice of his profession, and may affect (to all appearance exclusively) his daily conduct in it; but our estimate of him is based on this ultimate fact—of which we are well assured — that put him in a fortress breach, with all the pleasures of the world behind him, and only death and his duty in front of him, he will keep his face to the front; and he knows that his choice may be put to him at any moment—and has beforehand taken his part—virtually takes such part continually—

does, in reality, die daily.

Not less is the respect we pay to the lawyer and physician, founded ultimately on their self-sacrifice. Whatever the learning or acuteness of a great lawyer, our chief respect for him depends on our belief that, set in a judge's seat, he will strive to judge justly, come of it what may. Could we suppose that he would take bribes, and use his acuteness and legal knowledge to give plausibility to iniquitous decisions, no degree of intellect would win for him our respect. Nothing will win it, short of our tacit conviction, that in all important acts of his life justice is first with him; his own interest, second.

In the case of a physician, the ground of the honour we render him is clearer still. Whatever his science, we would shrink from him in horror if we found him regard his patients merely as subjects to experiment upon; much more, if we found that, receiving bribes from persons interested in their deaths, he was using his best skill to give poison in the mask of medicine.

Finally, the principle holds with utmost clearness as it respects clergymen. No goodness of disposition will excuse want of science in a physician, or of shrewdness in an advocate; but a clergyman, even though his power of intellect be small, is respected on the presumed ground of his unselfishness and serviceableness.

Now, there can be no question but that the tact, foresight, decision, and other mental powers, required for the successful management of a large mercantile concern, if not such as could be compared with those of a great lawyer, general, or divine, would at least match the general conditions of mind required in the subordinate officers of a ship, or of a regiment, or in the curate of a country parish. If, therefore, all the efficient members of the so-called liberal professions are still, somehow, in public estimate of honour, preferred before the head of a commercial firm, the reason must lie deeper than in the measurement of their several powers of mind.

And the essential reason for such preference will be found to lie in the fact that the merchant is presumed to act always selfishly. His work may be very necessary to the community. but the motive of it is understood to be wholly personal. The merchant's first object in all his dealings must be (the public believe) to get as much for himself, and leave as little to his neighbour (or customer) as possible. Enforcing this upon him, by political statute, as the necessary principle of his action; recommending it to him on all occasions, and themselves reciprocally adopting it, proclaiming vociferously, for law of the universe, that a buyer's function is to cheapen, and a seller's to cheat,—the public, nevertheless, involuntarily condemn the man of commerce for his compliance with their own statement, and stamp him for ever as belonging to an inferior grade of human personality.

This they will find, eventually, they must give up doing. They must not cease to condemn selfishness; but they will have to discover a kind of commerce which is not exclusively selfish. Or, rather, they will have to discover that there never was, or can be, any other kind of

commerce; that this which they have called commerce was not commerce at all, but cozening; and that a true merchant differs as much from a merchant according to laws of modern political economy, as the hero of the Excursion from Autolycus. They will find that commerce is an occupation which gentlemen will every day see more need to engage in, rather than in the businesses of talking to men, or slaying them; that, in true commerce, as in true preaching, or true fighting, it is necessary to admit the idea of occasional voluntary loss; — that sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty. that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms as well as war.

May have —in the final issue, must have-and only has not had yet, because men of heroic temper have always been misguided in their youth into other fields; not recognising what is in our days, perhaps, the most important of all fields; so that, while many a jealous person loses his life in trying to teach the form of a gospel, very few will lose a hundred pounds in showing the practice of one.

The fact is, that people never have had clearly explained to them the true functions of a merchant with respect to other people. I should like the reader to be very clear about this.

Five great intellectual professions, relating to daily necessities of life, have hitherto existed — three exist necessarily, in every civilised nation:

The Soldier's profession is to defend it.

The Pastor's to teach it.

The Physician's to keep it in health.

The lawyer's to enforce justice in it.

The Merchant's to provide for it.

And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to die for it.

“On due occasion,” namely: -

The Soldier, rather than leave his post in battle.

The Physician, rather than leave his post in plague.

The Pastor, rather than teach Falsehood.

The lawyer, rather than countenance Injustice.

The Merchant— what is his “due occasion” of death?

It is the main question for the merchant, as for all of us. For, truly, the man who does not know when to die, does not know how to live.

Observe, the merchant's function (or manufacturer's, for in the broad sense in which it is here used the word must be understood to include both) is to provide for the nation. It is no

more his function to get profit for himself out of that provision than it is a clergyman's function to get his stipend. This stipend is a due and necessary adjunct, but not the object of his life, if he be a true clergyman, any more than his fee (or honorarium) is the object of life to a true physician. Neither is his fee the object of life to a true merchant. All three, if true men, have a work to be done irrespective of fee—to be done even at any cost, or for quite the contrary of fee; the pastor's function being to teach, the physician's to heal, and the merchant's, as I have said, to provide. That is to say, he has to understand to their very root the qualities of the thing he deals in, and the means of obtaining or producing it; and he has to apply all his sagacity and energy to the producing or obtaining it in perfect state, and distributing it at the cheapest possible price where it is most needed.

And because the production or obtaining of any commodity involves necessarily the agency of many lives and hands, the merchant becomes in the course of his business the master and governor of large masses of men in a more direct, though less confessed way, than a military officer or pastor; so that on him falls, in great part, the responsibility for the kind of life they lead: and it becomes his duty, not only to be always considering how to produce what he sells, in the purest and cheapest forms, but how to make the various employments involved in the production, or transference of it, most beneficial to the men employed.

And as into these two functions, requiring for their right exercise the highest intelligence, as well as patience, kindness, and tact, the merchant is bound to put all his energy, so for their just discharge he is bound, as soldier or physician is bound, to give up, if need be, his life, in such way as it may be demanded of him. Two main points he has in his providing function to maintain: first, his engagements (faithfulness to engagements being the real root of all possibilities, in commerce); and, secondly, the perfectness and purity of the thing provided; so that, rather than fail in any engagement, or consent to any deterioration, adulteration, or unjust and exorbitant price of that which he provides, he is bound to meet fearlessly any form of distress, poverty, or labour, which may, through maintenance of these points, come upon him.

Again in his office as governor of the men employed by him, the merchant or manufacturer is invested with a distinctly paternal authority and responsibility. In most cases, a youth entering a commercial establishment is withdrawn altogether from home influence; his master must become his father, else he has, for practical and constant help, no father at hand: in all cases the master's authority, together with the general tone and atmosphere of his business, and the character of the men with whom the youth is compelled in the course of it to associate, have more immediate and pressing weight than the home influence, and will usually neutralize it either for good or evil; so that the only means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinate as he would with his own son, if compelled by circumstances to take such a position.

Supposing the captain of a frigate saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of a common sailor: as he would then treat his son, he is bound

always to treat every one of the men under him. So, also, supposing the master of a manufactory saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of an ordinary workman; as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of his men. This is the only effective, true, or practical Rule which can be given on this point of political economy.

And as the captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his ship in case of wreck, and to share his last crust with the sailors in case of famine, so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel; as a father would in a famine, shipwreck, or battle, sacrifice himself for his son.

All which sounds very strange: the only real strangeness in the matter being, nevertheless, that it should so sound. For all this is true, and that not partially nor theoretically, but everlastingly and practically: all other doctrine than this respecting matters political being false in premises, absurd in deduction, and impossible in practice, consistently with any progressive state of national life; all the life which we now possess as a nation showing itself in the resolute denial and scorn, by a few strong minds and faithful hearts, of the economic principles taught to our multitudes, which principles, so far as accepted, lead straight to national destruction. Respecting the modes and forms of destruction to which they lead, and, on the other hand, respecting the farther practical working of true polity, I hope to reason farther in a following paper.

1.1.5 Glossary

Delusion :	A false belief or opinion about yourself or your situation
Alchemy :	A mysterious power or magic that can change things
Orsifiont :	Something which is fix and not ready to change
Demonstrable :	Which can be shown
Antagonism :	Feeling of hatred or opposition
Falsifies :	To prove incorrect
Ingratitude :	The state of not feeling or showing that you are not grateful to something
Proprietor :	Master, Owner
Mercantile :	Connected with trade and commercial affair
Intermittent :	Stopping and starting often over a period of time but not regularly
Covetousness :	Having a strong desire for things which other people have (greed)
Precarious :	Dangerous, not safe or certain

Irrational :	Illogical, not based on reason
Plausibility :	The quality of being reasonably or likely to be true
Iniquitous :	Very unfair or wrong, wicked
Involuntarily :	Doing something suddenly without you intending it or being able to control it
Pastor :	A minister in charge of Church
Commodity :	A product or a raw material that can be bought and sold; a thing that can be used or has a useful quality
Sagacity :	A quality of showing good judgement and understanding (wise)
Doctrine :	Policy, a belief or a set of beliefs preached by a Church or a political party.

1.1.6 Model Explanations

(a) **And the varieties balances of justice.”**

These lines are an extract from the first chapter entitled *The Roots of Honour* from John Ruskin’s celebrated book *Unto This Last*. John Ruskin is a significant British Social thinker and in this chapter he deals with the questions of wealth, inter-relationships between the masters and workers and the concepts of wealth and justice.

In the lines under consideration Ruskin discusses the various circumstances which influence the mutual relationships between the master and the labourer. Whether it is the master or the workers, each act on the basis of urgent needs or demands that they are supposed to deal with. Each group has its own interests in mind. However, Ruskin believes that all these considerations are futile. He believes that all human actions should be guided by the balance of justice. God, the maker, intended that no human actions should be directed by the considerations of greed or self-interest. In fact, all human actions or relationships should have faith in norms of ethics, mortality and create a balance of justice.

The above extract presents before the reader a sterling example of Ruskin’s prose : it is so simple, so clear and yet so forceful. These lines also indicate Ruskin’s moral angle in the matters related to society and its economic aspects.

(b) **“That however, is not their results.”**

These lines form an extract from John Ruskin’s essay *The Roots of Honour*. This essay happens to be the introductory chapter of his significant book *Unto This Last* and herein John Ruskin introduces the moral and spiritual angle to the dry and mechanical theories on political economy propounded by his nineteenth century contemporary thinkers.

In the lines under scrutiny, Ruskin asserts that the principle of greatest happiness to the

greatest number of masses is wrong. Drawing an example, he suggests that a servant is not a mere machine. His motive power, like the machine is not magnetism or gravitation. It is not a force which can be calculated on some principle of physics. A servant, asserts, Ruskin is a human being; his soul is his motive power. This motivation power, like any other power or energy cannot be calculated. As such the very principle of the political economist who equates a worker with a soulless machine stands cancelled out.

Here in these lines Ruskin talks of man as a child of God and his motivational energy in his soul or spirit. Thus he reaffirms his ethical stance with the help of the perfect analogy of a soulless engine.

1.2 Self Assessment Questions

1. What is John Ruskin's opinion about the nineteenth century political economists?
2. What are John Ruskin's views about master-workmen relationship?
3. Which according to Ruskin are five "great intellectual professions" in every civilised nation? What are their duties?

1.3 Answers to SAQs

Ans.1 John Ruskin has a very negative opinion of the theories advanced by the nineteenth century political economists. These economists believe that an advantageous code of social action can be created without taking into consideration the influence of social affection. They are of the opinion that avarice and the desire of progress are constant elements in the processes of social action while social affections are accidental.

John Ruskin rejects this idea. He says that these forces do not operate mathematically, but chemically. He also stresses that importance of human soul or spirit which motivates men. Ruskin also criticizes these political economists because they believe that the interest of masters and workmen are antagonistic. It does not always follow that persons must be antagonistic because their interests are.

He also condemns these theorists for suggesting that human actions depend on the rule of expediency. He believes that balance of justice is more important and it includes human affection, something which one man owes to another. All right relationships between masters and workmen depend on these. Ruskin rejects the contemporary view that worker is a mere engine the motive power of which is steam, magnetism and gravitation. He believes that motive power is a soul which enters into all the political economist's equations without his knowledge.

Thus Ruskin creates an emotional, even an ethical angle as opposed to the mechanical angle put forward by political economists like John Stuart Mill, Ricardo and Malthus.

Ans.2 John Ruskin looks at the questions related to master-workmen relationship in great

detail. First of all, he affirms that human-beings are not automations or engines. They are not motivated with steam, magnetism and gravitation. They are motivated with a spirit. So they must be treated with consideration and sympathy and balance of justice.

Ruskin also knows that kindness and sympathy will be frequently abused. He asserts that workmen should be treated with kindness without any economic purpose and, in return, our economic purposes will be answered. Masters need not be blatantly selfish but cautiously considerate. Further, Ruskin proves his point with the examples from army, robbers and industrialists. He suggests that unlike a soldier or a servant, a workman operates at a rate of wages which varies according to the demand of labour. He can be thrown out at any time.

He raises two questions here : one, how the rates are to be regulated in a way that they do not vary with demand of labour. Second, how bodies of workmen may be engaged or maintained without enlarging or diminishing their numbers. The answer to the first question is that it should be paid at a fixed rate on a regular basis. Secondly, the number of the workers may not be enlarged or diminished at will. They should be given some permanent interests in the establishment in which they work.

To conclude, John Ruskin does not look at the master-worker relationship only from the mercantile angle. He wants it to have a character with human, emotional, and ethical angle.

Ans.3 The five great intellectual professions are those of soldiers, pastors, physicians, lawyers, merchants. The soldier's profession is to defend the nation and not run away on due occasion of war. The physician should keep a nation in good health. He should not leave his post in times of medical emergency. The pastor should teach faith rather than falsehood. The lawyer should not defend injustice but enforce justice.

John Ruskin, then takes up the case of the merchant by putting the question "What are the duties of a merchant?"

According to him, the duty of a merchant or a manufacturer is to provide for the nation. He says that it is perfectly legitimate for a merchant to earn profit. But it is his duty to maintain the quality of the things he deals in. Purity of the products must be maintained at every cost.

It is also the duty of the merchant to distribute or sell his things at the cheapest rate where it is most needed. Since the production or obtaining of any commodity involves necessarily the involvement of many people, it is the responsibility of the merchant to produce and sell in purest and cheapest forms. It is also his duty to maintain balance of justice in his dealings with his employees.

Thus John Ruskin, by pointing to social, ethical and emotional issues, emerges as a

different kind of political economist.

1.4 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have studied some questions related to the political economy of England. As against the dry, mechanical relationships supposed to be existing between the master and his subordinates, Ruskin talks of some ethical values, human emotions, the motivating factors of soul. He also talks about the “balances of justice”. Thus Ruskin brings about the human as well as spiritual angles in a political economic context which is based on the principles of covetousness.

1.5 Review Questions

1. Why does Ruskin call the contemporary science of political economy “delusions”?
2. What does he mean by “advantageous code of social action”?
3. Why are social affections accidental and disturbing elements in human nature?
4. What are the constant elements in human nature?
5. What happens when nitrogen chloride is touched?
6. What does Ruskin mean by “negation of a soul”?
7. Why, according to Ruskin, do political economists feel helpless when there is a conflict between the employer and the employed?
8. What does Ruskin mean when he says “persons may not be antagonistic because their interests are”?
9. What is “balance of expediency”? How is it different from “balance of justice”?
10. How do the relationships between master and operative depend on “affection”?

1.6 Bibliography

1. A.C. Benson : Ruskin : A Study of Personality
2. P. Harrison : John Ruskin
3. John Ruskin : Seasame and Lilies
4. Thomas Carlyle : Past and Present
5. Charles Dickens : David Copperfield
6. Henry Thoreau : Walden
7. Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell : Mary Barton

UNIT-2

E.V. LUCAS : THIRD THOUGHTS

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 About the Author
- 2.3 About the Essay
- 2.4 Reading the Text
 - 2.4.1 The Essay : Third Thoughts (Text)
 - 2.4.2 Glossary
 - 2.4.3 Summary
- 2.5 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.6 Answers to SAQs
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Review Questions
- 2.9 Bibliography

2.0 Objectives

In this unit we intend to discuss the English essay, its development, particularly E.V. Lucas as an essayist and his famous essay ‘Third Thoughts’ in detail by presenting to you a detailed summary and a glossary of difficult words followed by self-assessment questions and their answers.

2.1 Introduction

The literary or personal essay has continued to flourish in the present century, though since the 1940s its personal character has been obscured by the ‘critical’ and it survives today as an extended book review of more or less enduring interest. The greatest names among the essayist are : Sir Max Beerbohm, E.V. Lucas, Robert Lynd, A.A. Milne, A.G. Gardiner, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, J.B. Priestley, etc.

The essay is, literally, a “trial” of ideas (from French *essayer*, “try”). It may be subdivided into familiar essays, such as Montaigne’s *Lamb’s* or *Lucas’s*, and formal ones, such as Arnold’s literary criticism, each kind depending on the structure, tone or style the writer adopts.

2.2 About the Author

Edward Verral Lucas, known as E. V. Lucas (1868-1938) was a famous English essayist. He has generally been regarded as the true successor of Charles Lamb. From 1889 to 1892 he was associated with *Sussex Daily News* and later served as an assistant editor of *Punch* for sometime. He also rendered services as chairman to Methuen Publishers. He was a prolific writer. Apart from an authoritative study of Charles Lamb, he produced about a dozen novels, more than thirty collections of essay, sundry works of travel, topography and art, two books of reminiscences, and a play. He called his novels ‘Entertainments’ and wrote in a kind of style relying largely upon discursive conversation but little upon plot. He was a keen observer of men and manners, and shared his pleasures amiably with his readers. His ‘wanderer’ series became a great success.

He was not a scholarly writer, but his work is characterized by clarity and good taste. He is the prime mover in the revival of the light-hearted essay, blending humour and sentiment, which was very popular in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Among his famous works are : *Four and Twenty Toilers, A Wanderer in London, The Phantom Journal and other Essays and Diversions and Events and Embroideries.*

2.3 About the Essay

The essay ‘*Third Thoughts*’ a gentle satire on our civilization wherein money – making has become the main motto of modern man, appeared in *The Phantom Journal and Other Essays and Diversions* in 1919. The title of the essay ‘Third Thoughts’, a humorous and ironical coinage is based on the idiom ‘second thought’ which means a rethinking of an opinion. The essayist is of the opinion that there is no end to think and rethink when one’s mind is taken over by selfishness. The narrator rightly admits that the motto of the narrative lies in bargaining with his own soul. The essay also pinpoints the practical human psychology that governs the world of trade where the seller and the buyer try to befool each other.

The narrator is the author’s friend and the essay is written in first person narrative. The essay brings out the qualities of gentle and delightful humour.

2.4 Reading the Text

Now you read the essay carefully :

2.4.1 The Essay : Third Thoughts (Text)

This story was told to me by a friend.

It is my destiny (said he) to buy in the dearest markets and to sell – if I succeed in selling at all – in the cheapest. Usually, indeed, having tired of a picture or decorative article I have positively to give it away; almost to make its acceptance by another a personal favour to

me . But the other day was marked by an exception to this rule so striking that I have been wondering if perhaps the luck has not changed and I am, after all, destined to be that most enviable thing, a successful dealer.

It happened thus. In drifting about the old curiosity shops of a cathedral city I came upon a portfolio of water-colour drawings, among, which was one that to my eye would have been a possible Turner, even if an earlier owner had not shared that opinion or hope and set the magic name with all its initials (so often placed in the wrong order) beneath it.

‘How much is this?’ I asked scornfully.

‘Well’, said the dealer, ‘if it were a genuine Turner it would be worth anything. But let’s say ten shillings. You can have it for that; but I don’t mind if you don’t, because I’m going to London next week and, should take it with me to get an opinion’.

I pondered.

‘Mind you, I don’t guarantee it,’ he added.

I gave him the ten shillings.

By what incredible means I found a purchaser for the drawing at fifty pounds there is no need to tell, for the point of this narrative resides not in bargaining with collectors, but in bargaining with my own soul. The astonishing fact remains that I achieved a profit of forty-nine pounds ten and was duly elated. I then began to think.

The dealer (so my thoughts ran) in that little street by the cathedral west door, he ought to participate in this. He behaved very well to me and I ought to behave well to him. It would be only fair to give him half.

Thereupon I sat down and wrote a little note saying that the potential Turner drawing, which no doubt he recollected, had turned out to be authentic, and I had great pleasure in enclosing him half of the proceeds, as considered that the only just and decent course.

Having no stamps and the hour being late I did not post this, and went to bed.

At about 3.30 a.m. I woke widely up and, according to custom, began to review my life’s errors, which are in no danger of ever suffering from loneliness. From these I reached, by way of mitigation, my recent successful piece of chaffering and put the letter to the dealer under both examination and cross-examination. Why (so my thoughts ran) give him half? Why be Quixotic? This is no world for Quixotry. It was my eye that detected the probability of the drawing, not his. He had indeed failed; did not know his own business. Why put a premium on ineptitude? No, a present of, say, ten pounds at the most would more than adequately meet the case.

Sleep still refusing to oblige me, I took a book of short stories and read one. Then I closed my eyes again, and again began to think about the dealer. Why (so my thoughts ran)

send him ten pounds? It will only give him a wrong idea of his customers, none other of whom would be so fair, so sporting, as I. He will expect similar letters every day and be disappointed, and then he will become embittered and go down the vale of tears a miserable creature. He looked a nice old man too; a pity, nay a crime, to injure such a nature. No, ten pounds is absurd. Five would be plenty. Ten would put him above himself.

While I was dressing the next morning I thought about the dealer again. Why should I (so my thoughts ran), directly I had for the first time in my life brought off a financial *coup*, spoil it by giving a large part of the profit away? Was not that flying in the face of the Goddess of Business, whoever she may be? Was it not asking her to disregard me – only a day or so after we had at last got on terms? There is no fury like a woman scorned; It would probably be the end of me. City magnates are successful probably just because they don't do these foolish impulsive things. Impulse is the negation of magnetism. If I am to make any kind of figure in this new role of fine-art-speculator (so my thoughts continued) I must control my feelings. No, five pounds is absurd. A *douceur* of one pound will meet the case. It will be nothing to me – or, at any rate, nothing serious – but a gift of quail and manna from a clear sky to the dealer, without, however, doing him any harm. A pound will be ample, accompanied by a brief note.

The note was to the effect that I had sold the drawing at a profit which enabled me to make him a present, because it was an old, and perhaps odd, belief of mine that one should do this kind of things; good luck should be shared.

I had the envelope in my pocket, containing the note and the cheque when I reached the club for lunch; and that afternoon I played bridge so disastrously that I was glad I had not posted it.

After all (so my thoughts ran, as I destroyed the envelope and contents) such bargains are all part of the game. Buying and selling, are a perfectly straightforward matter between dealer and customer. The dealer asks as much as he thinks he can extort, and the customer, having paid it, is under no obligation whatever to the dealer. The incident is closed.

2.4.2 Glossary

<i>striking</i>	arousing great interest
<i>destined</i>	lucky enough
<i>enviable</i>	a source of jealousy
<i>drifting</i>	walking aimlessly
<i>curiosity shops</i>	shops selling rare and interesting articles/things
<i>cathedral</i>	church where the bishop holds his office
<i>came upon</i>	happened to see; visited

<i>portfolio</i>	flat case for keeping documents etc.
<i>Turner</i>	(1775-1851) a great English landscape painter
<i>pondered</i>	thought
<i>incredible</i>	that can not be believed
<i>collectors</i>	here, those who collect curious and rare objects
<i>bargaining</i>	negotiating
<i>astonishing</i>	surprising
<i>elated</i>	felt proud, happy
<i>potential</i>	having strong possibility
<i>proceeds</i>	profit, income
<i>mitigation</i>	comforting himself
<i>chaffering</i>	the drawing that earned him a profit
<i>Quixotry</i>	quixotry arose from Don Quixote, a character known for the romantic unselfishness
<i>ineptitude</i>	unjustified act
<i>adequately</i>	sufficiently
<i>embittered</i>	disturbed with bitter feelings.
<i>a financial coup</i>	a big profit as if earned in a victory against fate
<i>fly in the face of</i>	to insult
<i>magnate</i>	successful businessman
<i>impulsive</i>	emotional
<i>fine art speculator</i>	one who has a thorough knowledge about fine arts and can point out their good and bad aspects;
<i>douceur</i>	(French) a present given as a token of goodwill
<i>a gift of quail and</i>	quail is a small bird belonging to the family of
<i>manna from a</i>	partridge; manna is the heavenly food
<i>clear sky (idiom)</i>	an unexpected gift
<i>disastrously</i>	terribly
<i>extort</i>	take out cunningly

2.4.3 Summary

The author was told this story by one of his friends. The friend said that it is only one's destiny that can be bought and sold in the dearest markets to the cheapest rate. The friend was dealing in the decorative items. Usually he had to sell them at such a lower price that it seemed to him that by accepting that item at such a lower rate, the buyer was doing him a special favour. But the other day changed into a very fortunate day for him bringing him an unexpected earning.

Drifting about the old curiosity shops of a cathedral city he came upon a portfolio of water – colour drawings. Among these the drawing by Turner attracted him very much. He asked the dealer its price and the dealer said that cost ten shillings only. He paid ten shillings to the dealer and bought it from him and then the next moment he sold it at the cost of fifty pounds and thus earned a huge profit, exactly, forty nine pounds ten and was duly elated.

Thereupon, his thoughts ran thus; that the dealer must also participate in the profit. He had behaved him very well and he ought to behave well to him. Hence, it would be fair to send him half of the earning. After having decided thus, he sat down and wrote a little note saying that the potential Turner drawing turned out to be authentic and he had great pleasure in enclosing half of the proceeds. As he had no stamps and was late by an hour, he could not post the letter and went to bed. He woke up at about 3.30 a.m. and began to review his life's errors. This process of evaluation and review led him to examine and cross examine the contents of the letter. His thoughts ran why he should give half of the proceeds to the dealer as it was useless to be quixotic in this modern world. It was only his eyes that detected the probability of this business in which he had remained a complete failure and thus why he should put a premium for ineptitude. And a present of ten pounds would be more than enough. Then he took a story book and read one as sleep was refusing to oblige him. His thoughts ran thus why he should send ten pounds even. It will only give the dealer a wrong idea of his customers; none other would be so fair and sporting to him. He will expect everyday such letter and this will make him disappointed. Thus, he will get embittered and become miserable. It was a crime to injure his existing nature. Five pounds would be plenty.

When he was dressing the next morning, he thought about the dealer again. His thoughts ran thus, why he should bring a financial coup in his life by giving such large part of money away and he should control his feelings. At last he decided in favour of sending a pound with a brief note. The note contained that he had sold the drawing at a profit – which, enabled him to make a present because it is his old belief that good luck must be shared. He had the envelope containing the cheque and the brief note in his pocket when he reached the club for lunch. He played bridge so disastrously that he was glad that he had not posted it. Because in the last, he had decided not to send anything to the dealer thinking that buying and selling were a perfectly straight forward matter between dealer and customer. The dealer asks as much as he thinks he can exhort and the customer having paid the price is under no obligation of the dealer. Thus the incident was closed.

2.5 Self – Assessment Questions

Answer the following questions

1. Who is the narrator in the story ?
.....
.....
2. What was the opinion of the dealer about the drawing ?
.....
.....
3. What price did the narrator pay for the drawing to the dealer ? How much profit did he gain by selling it?
.....
.....
4. Why did the narrator think of sending some amount of the profit to the dealer ?
.....
.....
5. How many times did he think about the dealer ? Did he change his thoughts each time?
.....
.....
6. Why did he not post the letter after having written the first note ?
.....
.....
7. Comment on the title ‘Third Thoughts’?
.....
.....
8. How did the dealer behave with the story – teller before selling the drawing ?
.....
.....

9. What did the narrator think about the dealer when he was unwilling to send him ten pounds ?

.....
.....

10. Which game did the friend of the author play in the club ? What was the time ?

.....
.....

11. Summarise the essay in your own words.

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.....

2.6 Answers to SAQs

1. Author's friend.
2. "If it were a genuine Turner, it would be worth anything".
3. Ten shillings. He achieved a profit of forty nine pounds ten and was very happy.
4. The dealer behaved very well to him and he ought to behave well to him. Therefore, he thought that it would be fair to give him half.
5. First he thought that he would give the dealer fifty percent of his profit; second time he reduced it to ten pounds; third time he decided to give five pounds; then the thought that he would send the dealer one pound accompanied by a brief note of thanks. Finally he dropped the idea of sending any share from his profit to the dealer.
6. As he played bridge disastrously, he could not post the letter.
7. The title is apt and suggestive of the fact that there is no end to consideration and reconsideration when one's mind is taken over by selfish thoughts.
8. He behaved well with the narrator; he also made it clear that he did not know about

the genuineness of the painting.

9. He thought that if he were be so fair, the dealer would expect similar letters everyday and be disappointed and embittered. It would certainly be a crime to injure such a nature.
10. He played bridge. It was afternoon.

2.7 Let Us Sum Up

This unit comprises :

- (a) an introduction to English essay
- (b) an introduction to the English essayist E. V. lucas
- (c) an introduction to the Essay ‘Third Thoughts’ with summary.
- (d) a glossary of difficult words

2.8 Review Questions

1. Summarise the Essay in your own words.
2. What changes regarding the decisions did he undergo in the essay?

2.9 Bibliography

1. C.H. Lockitt (ed.) The Art of The Essayist (Orient).
2. E. V. Lucas : The Phantom Journal and Other Essays and Diversions, (OUP)

UNIT-3

BERTRAND RUSSELL: MACHINES AND EMOTIONS

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 About the writer
- 3.3 The Text : *Machines and Emotions*
 - 3.3.1 Summary of the Essay
 - 3.3.2 Glossary and Summary
- 3.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 3.5 Answers to SAQs
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Review Questions
- 3.8 Bibliography

3.0 Objectives

The world at present is living under the threat of another world war that will create more destruction than has been done by the two earlier world wars. The writer in the essay analyses the reasons of the two world wars and suggests some measures to avoid the next world war. The purpose of this unit is therefore, to enable you to understand the writer's point of view to avoid the next world war by making the workers happy.

3.1 Introduction

The writer says that the machines have made the life of their owners comfortable but those of the workers miserable. Machines demand the qualities of regularity, punctuality, and exactness while there is no scope for the workers to do anything different or new. Their desire to do something is never satisfied and they become rebellious. They find their satisfaction in world wars. The writer makes some suggestions so as to avoid the possibility of a third world war by making the workers happy.

3.2 About the Writer

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) lived most of his life in the twentieth century and personally witnessed the ferocity and agony of the two world wars. He has also been a witness to

the great industrial progress of his time made by the machines. It is therefore natural that he takes up the question of the cause of these wars and comes to attack the machines which are intensely hated. Russell is prominently noted for his anti-war and anti-nuclear campaign.

Bertrand Russell is a controversial writer. He has written on a number of subjects which include, apart from science and humanities, history, political theory, religion and education. He has made important contribution to philosophy and logic. Some of his principal works are *The Principles of Mathematics*, (1903) and *Principia Mathematica* which he wrote with Whitehead (1909). In 1950 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

3.3 The Text : ‘*Machines and Emotions*’

Will machines destroy emotions, or will emotions destroy machines? This question was suggested long ago by Samuel Butler in *Erewhon*, but it is growing more and more actual as the empire of machinery is enlarged.

At first sight, it is not obvious why there should be any opposition between machines and emotions. Every normal boy loves machines; the bigger and more powerful they are, the more he loves them. Nations which have a long tradition of artistic excellence, like the Japanese, are captivated by Western mechanical methods as soon as they come across them, and long only to imitate us as quickly as possible. Nothing annoys an educated and traveled Asiatic so much as to hear praise of ‘the wisdom of the East’ or the traditional virtues of Asiatic civilization. He feels as a boy would feel who was told to play with dolls instead of toy automobiles. And like a boy, he would prefer a real automobile to a toy one, not realizing that it may run over him.

In the west, when machinery was new, there was the same delight in it, except on the part of a few poets and aesthetes. The nineteenth century considered itself superior to its predecessors chiefly because of its mechanical progress. Peacock, in its early years, makes fun of the ‘steam intellect society’, because he is a literary man, to whom the Greek and Latin authors represent civilization; but he is conscious of being out of touch with the prevailing tendencies of his time. Rousseau’s disciples with the return to Nature, the Lake poets with their medievalism, William Morris with his *News from Nowhere* (a country where it is always June and everybody is engaged in haymaking), all represent a purely sentimental and essentially reactionary opposition to machinery. Samuel Butler was the first man to apprehend intellectually the non-sentimental case against machines, but in him it may have been no more than a *jeu d’ esprit* certainly it was not a deeply held conviction. Since his day numbers of people in the most mechanized nations have been tending to adopt in earnest a view similar to that of the Erewhonians; this view, that is to say, has been latent or explicit in the attitude of many rebels against existing industrial methods.

Machines are worshipped because they are beautiful, and valued because they confer power; they are hated because they are hideous, and loathed because they impose slavery. Do not let us suppose that one of these attitudes is ‘right’ and the other ‘wrong’, any more than it

would be right to maintain that men have heads but wrong to maintain that they have feet, though we can easily imagine Lilliputians disputing this question concerning Gulliver. A machine is like a Djinn in the *Arabian Nights*: beautiful and beneficent to its master, but hideous and terrible to his enemies. But in our day nothing is allowed to show itself with such naked simplicity. The master of the machine, it is true, lives at a distance from it, where he cannot hear its noise or see its unsightly heaps of slag or smell its noxious fumes, if he ever sees it, the occasion is before it is installed in use, when he can admire its force or its delicate precision without being troubled by dust and heat. But when he is challenged to consider the machine from the point of view of those who have to live with it and work with it, he has a ready answer. He can point out that, owing to its operations, these men can purchase more goods--often vastly more--than their great-grandfathers could. It follows that they must be happier than their great-grandfathers--if we are to accept an assumption which is made by almost everyone.

The assumption is that the possession of material commodities is what makes men happy. It is thought that a man who has two rooms and two beds and two loaves must be twice as happy as a man who has one room and one bed and one loaf. In a word, it is thought that happiness is proportional to income. A few people, not always quite sincerely, challenge this idea in the name of religion or morality; but they are glad if they increase their income by the eloquence of their preaching. It is not from a moral or religious point of view that I wish to challenge it; it is from the point of view of psychology and observation of life. If happiness is proportional to income, the case for machinery is unanswerable; if not, the whole question remains to be examined.

Men have physical needs, and they have emotions. While physical needs are unsatisfied, they take first place; but when they are satisfied, emotions unconnected with them become important in deciding whether a man is to be happy or unhappy. In modern industrial communities there are many men, women, and children whose bare physical needs are not adequately supplied; as regards them, I do not deny that the first requisite for happiness is an increase of income. But they are a minority, and it would not be difficult to give the bare necessities of life to all of them. It is not of them that I wish to speak, but of those who have more than is necessary to support existence--not only those who have much more, but also those who have only a little more.

Why do we, in fact, almost all of us, desire to increase our income? It may seem, at first sight, as though material goods were what we desire. But, in fact, we desire these mainly in order to impress our neighbours. When a man moves into a large house in a more genteel quarter, he reflects that 'better' people will call on his wife, and some unprosperous cronies of former days can be dropped. When he sends his son to a good school or an expensive university, he consoles himself for the heavy fees by thoughts of the social kudos to be gained. In every big city, whether of Europe or of America, houses in some districts are more expensive than equally good houses in other districts, merely because they are more fashionable. One of the most powerful of all our passions is the desire to be admired and respected. As things

stand, admiration and respect are given to the man who seems to be rich. This is the chief reason why people wish to be rich. The actual goods purchased by their money play quite a secondary part. Take, for example, a millionaire who cannot tell one picture from another, but has acquired a gallery of old masters by the help of experts. The only pleasure he derives from his pictures is the thought that others know how much they have cost; he would derive more direct enjoyment from sentimental cronies out of Christmas numbers, but he would not obtain the same satisfaction for his vanity.

All this might be different, and has been different in many societies. In aristocratic epochs, men have been admired for their birth. In some circles in Paris, men are admired for their artistic or literary excellence, strange as it may seem. In a German university, a man may actually be admired for his learning. In India saints are admired; in China, sages. The study of these differing societies shows the correctness of our analysis, for in all of them we find a large percentage of men who are indifferent to money so long as they have enough to keep alive on, but are keenly desirous of the merits by which, in their environment, respect is to be won.

The importance of these facts lies in this, that the modern desire for wealth is not inherent in human nature, and could be destroyed by different social institutions. If, by law, we all had exactly the same income, we should have to seek some other way of being superior to our neighbours, and most of our present craving for material possessions would cease. Moreover, since this craving is in the nature of a competition, it only brings happiness when we outdistance a rival, to whom it brings correlative pain. A general increase of wealth gives no competitive advantage and therefore brings no competitive happiness. There is, of course, some pleasure derived from the actual enjoyment of goods purchased, but, as we have seen, this is a very small part of what makes us desire wealth. And in so far as our desire is competitive, no increase of human happiness as a whole comes from increase of wealth, whether general or particular.

If we are to argue that machinery increases happiness, therefore, the increase of material prosperity which it brings cannot weigh heavily in its favour, except in so far as it may be used to prevent absolute destitution. But there is no inherent reason why it should be so used. Destitution can be prevented without machinery where the population is stationary; of this France may serve as an example, since there is very little destitution and much less machinery than in America, England and pre-war Germany. Conversely, there may be much destitution where there is much machinery. Of this we have examples in the industrial areas of England a hundred years ago and of Japan at the present day. The prevention of destitution does not depend upon machines, but upon quite other factors--partly density of population, and partly political conditions. And apart from prevention of destitution, the value of increasing wealth is not very great.

Meanwhile, machines deprive us of two things which are certainly important ingredients of human happiness, namely spontaneity and variety. Machines have their own pace, and their own insistent demands; a man who has an expensive plant must keep it working. The

great trouble with the machine, from the point of view of the emotions, is its *regularity*. And, of course, conversely, the great objection to the emotions, from the point of view of the machine, is their *irregularity*. As the machine dominates the thoughts of people who consider themselves 'serious', the highest praise they can give to a man is to suggest that he has the qualities of a machine--that he is reliable, punctual, exact, etc. And an 'irregular' life has come to be synonymous with a bad life. Against this point of view Bergson's philosophy was a protest--not, to my mind, wholly sound from an intellectual point of view, but inspired by a wholesome dread of seeing men turned more and more into machines.

The greater ferocity of modern war is attributable to machines, which operate in three different ways. First, they make it possible to have larger armies. Secondly, they facilitate a cheap press, which flourishes by appealing to men's baser passions. Thirdly--and this is the point that concerns us--they starve the anarchic, spontaneous side of human nature, which works underground, producing an obscure discontent, to which the thought of war appeals as affording possible relief. It is a mistake to attribute a vast upheaval like the late war merely to the machinations of politicians. I believe that the modern increase in warlike instinct is attributable to the dissatisfaction (mostly unconscious) caused by the regularity, monotony, and tameness of modern life.

It is obvious that we cannot deal with this situation by abolishing machinery. Such a measure would be reactionary, and is in any case impracticable. The only way of avoiding the evils at present associated with machinery is to provide breaks in the monotony, with every encouragement to high adventure during the intervals. Many men would cease to desire war if they had opportunities to risk their lives in Alpine climbing; one of the ablest and most vigorous workers for peace that it has been my good fortune to know habitually spent his summer climbing the most dangerous peaks in the Alps. If every working man had a month in the year during which, if he chose, he could be taught to work on aeroplane, or encouraged to hunt for sapphires in the sahara, or otherwise enabled to engage in some dangerous and exciting pursuit involving quick personal initiative, the popular love of war would become confined to women and invalids. I confess I know no method of making these classes pacific, but I am convinced that a scientific psychology would find a method if it undertook the task in earnest.

Machines have altered our way of life, but not our instincts. Consequently there is maladjustment. The whole psychology of the emotions and instincts is as yet in its infancy; a beginning has been made by psycho-analysis, but only a beginning. What we may accept from psycho-analysis is the fact that people will, in action, pursue various ends which they do not consciously desire and will have an attendant set of quite irrational beliefs which enable them to pursue these ends without knowing that they are doing so. But orthodox psycho-analysis has unduly simplified our unconscious purposes, which are numerous, and differ from one person to another. It is to be hoped that social and political phenomena will soon come to be understood from this point of view, and will thus throw light on average human nature.

Moral self-control, and external prohibition of harmful acts, are not adequate methods

of dealing with our anarchic instincts. The reason they are inadequate is that these instincts are capable of as many disguises as the Devil in medieval legend, and some of these disguises deceive even the elect. The only adequate method is to discover what are the needs of our instinctive nature, and then to search for the least harmful way of satisfying them. Since spontaneity is what is most thwarted by machines, the only thing that can be *provided* is opportunity; the use made of opportunity must be left to the initiative of the individual. No doubt considerable expense would be involved; but it would not be comparable to the expense of war. Understanding of human nature must be the basis of any real improvement in human life. Science has done wonders in mastering the laws of the physical world, but our own nature is much less understood, as yet, than the nature of stars and electrons. When science learns to understand human nature, it will be able to bring happiness into our lives, which machines and the physical science have failed to create.

3.3.1 Summary of the Essay

According to Bertrand Russell there should be no opposition between machines and emotions. The machines were invented by the West for increasing their wealth and prosperity and the people of the East are jealous of the West because the West had machinery but the East did not have it. The people of the East also love machines now.

The important question for Russell is why people love machines. The answer is that machines give power and money to man and with money a man can satisfy his physical needs like food, clothes, house etc. No doubt, machines can reduce poverty but the problem is that those who love machines have already enough to provide them against poverty. If people love machines and money for reducing poverty and destitution, there is a justification for them. But what justification is there for those people who have enough to meet their physical needs, and yet want to increase their money? They want more money because they want to have power to do good not to themselves but to cause pain to others. They feel happy with the idea that those who have to work with machines have to live in dust and dirt caused by machines while they themselves sit away from them and from the dirt and dust in which the workers have to work.

The writer says that there is no harm if the wealth that machines create is needed for meeting the physical necessities of life and to that limit the use of machines is perfectly acceptable. There is nothing objectionable about machines if these are used for reducing poverty and destitution among people and nations. But how to account for the love of money for money's sake only? Those whose physical needs are totally satisfied yet they want more and more money. The answer to it is that people want power through money and machines. They want to live a life better than others. In other words, they want to be admired and appreciated because they have more than they need so that others who do not have as much money should feel jealous of them. The writer says that for such people happiness is in proportion to their wealth. They have so much that they do not know what to do with their excess money and so

they spend it on things in which they are in the least interested. But they do so, so that others may feel jealous of them. Thus the happiness that money gives to them is in proportion to the pain that others feel in being jealous of them and it is for this reason that people want more money. If by law it is decided that every one will have the same amount of money, neither more nor less, the competitive advantage that money gives will not be there and people will not want more money and more machinery.

The reason is that the desire for admiration and appreciation that every one has is natural in man and this desire is the source of competitive spirit in man. The disadvantage with working on machines is that man is unable to satisfy his competitive instinct. Machines demand machine like qualities in man—regularity, punctuality and exactness. Being dissatisfied with regularity their instincts become rebellious. They want spontaneity and variety and these are the qualities discouraged by machines. The workers want to do something new, different and unusual. But they have no opportunity for doing so. Consequently their instincts seek their expression and relief in war. This is the reason for the modern costly world wars in our days. The writer says that something needs be done to curb these rebellious and anarchic tendencies in man. One method is to provide workers with opportunities for doing something unusual and new. For this the workers may be given one month's leave on full pay to do what they like to satisfy their natural instincts. They may climb the Alps mountains or work on an aeroplane and the like. All this will give them relief and the desire for war will disappear. Psychology has not made the study of human nature from this point of view. In this way the desire for collecting too much wealth will naturally disappear and man will be happier. Then there will be no opposition between machines and human emotions.

3.3.2 Glossary and Summary

Paragraph -1. Will machines . . . enlarged

Summary : The question whether machines will destroy emotions or emotions destroy machines was for the first time raised by Samuel Butler in his novel *Erewhon* but there it was not raised seriously. But Butler takes up the question here quite seriously.

Word Meanings : Samuel Butler (1835-1902) was a novelist and he attacked some aspects of Darwin's theory of evolution. *Erewhon* :- a satirical novel by Samuel Butler. But it is going . . . enlarged := but as the machines are being more and more popular.

Paragraph -2 At first sight . . . runs over him.

Summary : Russell says that ideally there is no opposition between machines and emotions. Every child loves to play with machine toys. As he grows he loves bigger and more powerful machines. Nations of the east that have a tradition of machineless civilisation are also attracted towards machines. If a westerner praises the people of the East for their civilisation they are annoyed. They think that they are being mocked for their civilisation which valued life more than machines.

Word meanings :

Captivated = attracted. long = desire keenly.

annoyed ; not being happy and peaceful.

Asiatic = one who belongs to Asia. Here Asia stands for the East.

Paragraph - 3 In the west . . . methods

Summary : Machines were for the first time introduced in the west in the nineteenth century.

At that time there was some sentimental opposition from persons like Peacock, Rousseau's followers, the Romantic poets and people like William Morris. Their arguments were not based on reason.

Word meanings :

Aesthetes = lovers of beauty in art or nature. predecessors = those who went before them : forefathers. Peacock = Thomas Love Peacock was an English novelist. steam intellect society = people who strongly favour machines that are run by steam. Rousseau's disciples with the return to Nature = students and followers of Rousseau who was against all civilisation and said that man must go back to nature for meeting his needs. The Lake Poets = poets of the early nineteenth century such as Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats who loved nature. William Morris = (1834-1896) an English artist, writer, and socialist associated with the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. A country where always is June . . . heymaking = a country where there is always sunshine and happiness. apprehend = understand jeu d'esprit = it is a French phrase which means joyfully or lightly. latent = hidden. numbers of people = many people.

Paragraph - 4 : machines are worshipped . . . almost everyone.

Summary : There are two sides of machines. They are beautiful and powerful for those who own them but do not work with them. But machines are hateful to those who work with them and have to bear with the noise, dust and slag that machines create. The owners of the machines argue that for all this the workers get more money than their forefathers ever did.

Word meaning :

worshipped = very much liked. confer = give or grant. hideous = frightful. loathed = hated. Lilliputians = extremely short sized people of an imaginary land called Lilliput in Jonathan Swift's novel Gulliver's Travels. Gulliver = a very huge sized person for the people of Lilliput. disputing = unable to decide. Djinn = a spirit with strange powers that obeyed his master but did great harm to his master's enemies. beneficent = kind : doing good. slag = waste material after ore extraction. noxious = harmful. fumes = smells. assumption = something taken for granted.

Paragraph - 5 The assumption is that . . . examined.

Summary : The religious and moral teachers speak ill of money and machines because they are paid great sums of money for preaching against machines. If money got from working on machines adds to happiness, there is nothing that can be said against machines. But this fact must be thoroughly examined from the psychological point of view whether money can really give happiness in life.

Word Meanings :

commodities = useful things. proportional = in relation or quantity. eloquence = power of effective speaking.

Paragraph : Men have physical needs. . . a little more.

Summary : For those whose physical needs are not sufficiently met, money is absolutely necessary for them. But the writer wants to talk about those people whose physical needs have been sufficiently met and for them emotions are more valuable than money.

Word meanings :

physical needs = needs such as food, clothes, housing etc. requisites = things required or needed.

Paragraph - 7 Why do we in fact . . . vanity.

Summary : It can be said the we want more money because we want more material goods. It is not true. We want more money because we want to impress our neighbours and expect their praise, admiration and respect. The actual things purchased by money become less important. A millionaire may not be interested in paintings but he buys them so that people admire him for having so much money and that gives him satisfaction.

Words meanings :

genteel = of upper class society. reflects = thinks. cronies = close friends. console = give comfort and sympathy to. kudos = honour and glory. passions = desires that make people move or work for. gallery of old masters = collection of good paintings by great painters. vanity = very high opinion about oneself.

Paragraph - 8 All this might . . . to be won.

Summary : There have been many societies where talent is valued more than money and there are several examples of them. But this happens only when the physical needs of the people have been met and satisfied. Such people usually work for respect and admiration and not for money so much.

Word meanings :

epochs = ages or periods. their environment = society in which they live and move.

Paragraph - 9 The importance of fact . . . particular.

Summary : Human nature is competitive. Suppose it is decided by law that all people will have the same amount of money, neither less nor more, there would be no happiness in collecting more money. Pleasure that is derived from money is in proportion to the pain or jealousy it causes to others. If there is no competitiveness in earning more money, people will turn to other ways of being important and superior to others. It suggests that the basic human nature is for competitiveness and not for money.

Word meanings :

inherent = naturally existing. craving = intense desire. outdistance = surpass. rival = competitor. correlative = in the same proportion or relation.

Paragraph - 10 If we are to argue . . . not very great.

Summary : Increase in income is just if it is for reducing poverty but unjust if it is for material prosperity. Poverty can be reduced in other ways also. In France, for example, there was no increase in population and hence there was no increase in poverty. On the other hand, there has been increase in poverty where there was enough machinery as in America or nineteenth century England or pre-war Germany and in the present day Japan. Except for the prevention of poverty and destitution, increase in wealth for its own sake cannot be the source of happiness in life.

Word meanings :-

material = concerning money. destitution = want of basic physical necessities.

Paragraph - 11 Meanwhile machine deprive . . . machine.

Summary : Machines want machine like qualities in man such as reliability, punctuality, regularity and exactness. But human instincts want a change and is addicted to irregularity, spontaneity and emotional satisfaction. These are the qualities just opposite to those bound in the machines.

Word meanings :

ingredients = parts of a mixture. pace = movement. conversely = an idea in opposition to some other. synonymous = having the same or similar meaning. Bergson (1859-1941) a French philosopher, known for his study of consciousness. wholesome = suggestive of good health. dread = great fear and anxiety.

Paragraph - 12 The great ferocity . . . modern life.

Summary : When the natural instincts are not satisfied they become rebellious and this is the

reason of the world wars in our days. Press and politicians for their own advantage encourage people for wars as a measure of relief from machine like qualities.

Word meanings :

ferocity = extreme cruelty. attributable = resulting from. facilitate = make easily available. strive = work hard. underground = unconsciously. obscure = not visible or unknown. affording = giving. relief = reduction or removal of pain. upheaval = great and sudden change. machinations = mischievous plans or schemes. monotony = dullness. tameness = here it means regularity or obedience.

Paragraph - 13 It is obvious . . . earnest.

Summary : The present desire for war can be discouraged if people have some opportunity to do something different or new from their routine work. This can be done by granting one month free pay once in a year, so that they may do whatever they want. The money involved in granting one month's leave will be less than what is spent on war. It will not be more than what is involved in a war.

Word meanings :

breaks = changes. sapphire = clear and bright blue jewels. initiative = first move towards. pacific = peaceful.

Paragraph - 14 Machines have altered . . . average human nature.

Summary : Machines have changed our life but they have done nothing for our instincts and emotions. Workers want change from their mechanised life. Psychology has not helped us in understanding human nature. It does not suggest as to what can be done to satisfy our desire for change, spontaneity and initiative.

Word meanings :

instincts = basic psychological desires. infancy = early childhood. ends = purposes. irrational = unreasonable; here it means natural. orthodox = traditional. phenomenon = spectacle.

Paragraph- 15 Moral self control . . . failed to create.

Summary : Merely by preaching that one should not do harmful acts our instincts cannot be restrained. Moreover, our instincts are of different nature and they differ from man to man. Psycho-analyses should take up this problem seriously. For the present it is necessary that each person should be given opportunity and freedom for some time every year to do something different so as to satisfy his desire for irregularity and change. Science and machine have greatly helped man physically but they have done nothing for our emotional happiness.

Word meanings :

anarchic = rebellious. thwarted = defeated or cancelled. legend = old story. elect = intelligent people.

3.4 Self Assessment Questions

1. Who wrote the novel *Erewhon* ? What kind of novel is it ?
 2. Why are machines valued ?
 3. Why is machine like a Djinn ?
 4. Do people want more money for having more material goods ?
 5. On what grounds can the use of machines be justified ?
-

3.5 Answers to SAQs

1. Samuel Butler wrote the novel *Erewhon*. It is a satirical novel.
2. They are valued because they confer power upon others.
3. Because it makes its owner's life happy but it is cruel to those who work with machines.
4. No, they want more and more money so that others praise them for their money.
5. Machines have made people and nations rich and prosperous but they have not succeeded in making them happy. This is clear from the fact that during the last century the world has seen two world wars and a great and huge amount of loss of money and goods. Such wastage is inexcusable. What the world needs most is not the physical comforts but happiness. Happiness is a psychological necessity whereas the comforts are needed for the physical well being only.

During the nineteenth century machines were invented by the West but they did not attract the attention of Asia and the East. The East had a cultural heritage which was against the physical comforts and emphasized the necessity of psychological satisfaction. But such is the attraction of machines that the people of the East also feel jealous of the West because of their machine culture.

The machines have made the life of the people psychologically miserable. No doubt, because of machines, people today earn more than their fathers and grandfathers ever did. But the machines have made only those people prosperous who own them. On the other hand there are many workers who work on machines regularly and they have to live with dirt and dust that machines create. Moreover, machines expect their workers to have machine like qualities which are regularity, changelessness and exactness and there is no relief for the workers from these machine like qualities.

Working continuously and for long hours on the machines they have nothing fresh or new for them in their life to do. The desire to do something new or unusual is never satisfied and they become more and more irritated and dissatisfied with their work. They have no opportunity to do anything which will satisfy their desire to do something different.

The use of machines, according to the writer, can be justified only if it is used for the reduction of poverty and destitution. But beyond, that the desire to have more and more money turns human beings into machines. But human beings are not machines and they want change, novelty and something fresh to do. The writer is of the opinion that if the world is to be saved from the fear of world wars the workers must be provided with opportunities to do something different so that they may find some emotional satisfaction. As a solution the writer suggests that each worker should be given at least one month's leave on full pay to do whatever he likes to do in order to satisfy his starved instincts so that after a month's leave he may return fresh to his work and psychologically satisfied. The writer says that some people may object to the idea on the ground that it will involve a lot of money. To this the writer says that though the money involved is immense but it cannot be as much that is spent on world wars.

So the use of machines can be justified only for reducing poverty and destitution and not for making only some people very rich and others unhappy and emotionally starved.

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

This unit acquaints you with Bertrand Russell as a prose writer and presents a detailed summary of his essay '*Machines and Emotions*.' The writer is of the view that wars in future can be prevented by providing the workers opportunities to do something novel and different from the mechanised one.

3.7 Review Questions

1. How does Russell suggest that the modern desire for wealth is not inherent in human nature ?
2. What, according to Bertrand Russell, is the root cause of the modern world wars ?

3.8 Bibliography

1. C.H.Lockitt: The Art of the Essayist (Orient)
2. Bertrand Russell: Principia Mathematica

UNIT-4

WILLIAM DOUGLAS : *DEEP WATER*

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 About the Author
- 4.3 Reading the Text
 - 4.3.1 The Essay : Deep Water (Text)
 - 4.3.2 Glossary
 - 4.3.3 Summary
- 4.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 4.5 Answers to SAQs
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Review Questions
- 4.8 Bibliography

4.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to acquaint you with William Douglas as a prose – writer by presenting to you a detailed analysis of the excerpt entitled ‘Deep Water’ taken from *Of Men and Mountains*.

4.1 Introduction

The excerpt ‘Deep Water’ is taken from *Of Men and Mountains* by William Douglas. It reveals how as a young boy William Douglas nearly drowned in a swimming pool. In this essay he talks about his fear of water and thereafter, how he finally overcame it. As you read the essay, you will notice that the autobiographical part of the selection is used to support his discussion of fear.

The essay is a beautiful psychological analysis of fear and its focus is on first person narrative style.

4.2 About the Author

William Douglas (1898-1980) was born in Maine, Minnesota. After graduating with a

Bachelors of Arts in English and Economics, he spent two years teaching high school in Yakima. However, he got tired of this and decided to pursue a legal career. He met Franklin D. Roosevelt at Yale and became an adviser and friend to the President. Douglas was a leading advocate of individual rights. He retired in 1975 with a term lasting thirty-six years and remains the longest-serving Justice in the history of the court.

4.3 Reading the Text

4.3.1 The Essay : Deep Water (Text)

It had happened when I was ten or eleven years old. I had decided to learn to swim. There was a pool at the Y.M.C.A. in Yakima that offered exactly the opportunity. The Yakima River was treacherous. Mother continually warned against it, and kept fresh in my mind the details of each drowning in the river. But the Y.M.C.A. pool was safe. It was only two or three feet deep at the shallow end; and while it was nine feet deep at the other, the drop was gradual. I got a pair of water wings and went to the pool. I hated to walk naked into it and show my skinny legs. But I subdued my pride and did it.

From the beginning, however, I had an aversion to the water when I was in it. This started when I was three or four years old and father took me to the beach in California. He and I stood together in the surf. I hung on to him, yet the waves knocked me down and swept over me. I was buried in water. My breath was gone. I was frightened. Father laughed, but there was terror in my heart at the overpowering force of the waves.

My introduction to the Y.M.C.A. swimming pool revived unpleasant memories and stirred childish fears. But in a little while I gathered confidence. I paddled with my new water wings, watching the other boys and trying to learn by aping them. I did this two or three times on different days and was just beginning to feel at ease in the water when the misadventure happened.

I went to the pool when no one else was there. The place was quiet. The water was still, and the tiled bottom was as white and clean as a bathtub. I was timid about going in alone, so I sat on the side of the pool to wait for others.

I had not been there long when in came a big bruiser of a boy, probably eighteen years old. He had thick hair on his chest. He was a beautiful physical specimen, with legs and arms that showed rippling muscles. He yelled. "Hi, Skinny! How'd you like to be ducked?"

With that he picked me up and tossed me into the deep end. I landed in a sitting position, swallowed water, and went at once to the bottom. I was frightened, but not yet frightened out of my wits. On the way down I planned : When my feet hit the bottom, I would make a big jump, come to the surface, lie flat on it, and paddle to the edge of the pool.

It seemed a long way down. Those nine feet were more like ninety, and before I

touched bottom my lungs were ready to burst. But when my feet hit bottom I summoned all my strength and made what I thought was a great spring upwards. I imagined I would bob to the surface like a cork. Instead, I came up slowly. I opened my eyes and saw nothing but water – water that had a dirty yellow tinge to it. I grew panicky. I reached up as if to grab a rope and my hands clutched only at water. I was suffocating. I tried to yell but no sound came out. Then my eyes and nose came out of the water – but not my mouth.

I flailed at the surface of the water, swallowed and choked. I tried to bring my legs up, but they hung as dead weights, paralysed and rigid. A great force was pulling me under. I screamed, but only the water heard me. I had started on the long journey back to the bottom of the pool.

I struck at the water as I went down, expending my strength as one in a nightmare fights an irresistible force. I had lost all my breath. My lungs ached, my head throbbed. I was getting dizzy. But I remembered the strategy – I would spring from the bottom of the pool and come like a cork to the surface. I would lie flat on the water, strike out with my arms, and thrash with my legs. Then I would get to the edge of the pool and be safe.

I went down, down, endlessly. I opened my eyes. Nothing but water with a yellow glow – dark water that one could not see through.

And then sheer, stark terror seized me, terror that knows no understanding, terror that knows no control, terror that no one can understand who has not experienced it. I was shrieking under water. I was paralysed under water – stiff, rigid with fear. Even the screams in my throat were frozen. Only my heart, and the pounding in my head, said that I was still alive.

And then in the midst of the terror came a touch of reason. I must remember to jump when I hit the bottom. At last I felt the ties under me. My toes reached out as if to grab them. I jumped with everything I had.

But the jump made no difference. The water was still around me. I looked for ropes, ladders, water wings. Nothing but water. A mass of yellow water held me. Stark terror took an even deeper hold on me, like a great charge of electricity. I shook and trembled with fright. My arms wouldn't move. My legs wouldn't move. I tried to call for help, to call for mother. Nothing happened. And then, strangely, there was light. I was coming out of the awful yellow water. At least my eyes were. My nose was almost out too.

Then I started down a third time. I sucked for air and got water. The yellowish light was going out.

Then all effort ceased. I relaxed, Even my legs felt limp; and a blackness swept over my brain. It wiped out fear; it wiped out terror. There was no more panic. It was quiet and peaceful. Nothing to be afraid of. This is nice. . . . to be drowsy . . . to go to sleep. . . no need to jump. . . too tired to jump . . . it's nice to be carried gently . . . to float along in space. . . tender arms around me. . . tender arms like Mother's. . . now I must go to sleep..

I crossed to oblivion, and the curtain of life fell.

The next I remember I was lying on my stomach beside the pool, vomiting. The chap that threw me in was saying, "But I was only fooling." Someone said, "The kid nearly died. Be all right now. Let's carry him to the locker room".

Several hours later, I walked home. I was weak and trembling I shook and cried when I lay on my bed. I couldn't eat that night. For days a haunting fear was in my heart. The slightest exertion upset me, making me wobbly in the knees and sick to my stomach.

I never went back to the pool. I feared water. I avoided it whenever I could.

A few years later when I came to know the waters of the Cascades, I wanted to get into them. And whenever I did – whether I was wading the Tieton or Bumping River or bathing in Warm Lake of the Goat Rocks – the terror that had seized me in the pool would come back. It would take possession of me completely. My legs would become paralysed. Icy horror would grab my heart.

This handicap stayed with me as the years rolled by. In canoes on Maine lakes fishing for landlocked salmon, bass fishing in New Hampshire, trout fishing on the Deschutes and Metolius in Oregon, fishing for salmon on the Columbia, at Bumping Lake in the Cascades – wherever I went, the haunting fear of the water followed me. It ruined my fishing trips; deprived me of the joy of canoeing, boating, and swimming.

I used every way I knew to overcome this fear, but it held me firmly in this grip. Finally, one October, I decided to get an instructor and learn to swim. I went to a pool and practiced five days a week, an hour each day. The instructor put a belt around me. A rope attached to the belt went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. He held on to the end of the rope, and we went back and forth, back and forth across the pool, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. On each trip across the pool a bit of the panic seized me. Each time the instructor relaxed his hold on the rope and I went under, some of the old terror returned and my legs froze. It was three months before the tension began to slack. Then he taught me to put my face under water and exhale, and to raise my nose and inhale. I repeated the exercise hundreds of times. Bit by bit I shed part of the panic that seized me when my head went under water.

Next he held me at the side of the pool and had me kick with my legs. For weeks I did just that. At first my legs refused to work. But they gradually relaxed; and finally I could command them.

Thus, piece by piece, he built a swimmer. And when he had perfected each piece, he put them together into an integrated whole. In April he said, "Now you can swim. Dive off and swim the length of the pool, crawl stroke".

I did, The instructor was finished.

But I was not finished. I still wondered if I would be terror – stricken when I was alone in the pool. I tried it. I swam the length up and down. Tiny vestiges of the old terror would return. But now I could frown and say to that terror, “Trying to scare me, eh? Well, here’s to you! Look!” And off I’d go for another length of the pool.

This went on until July. But I was still not satisfied. I was not sure that all the terror had left. So I went to Lake Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived off a dock at Triggs Island and swam two miles across the lake to Stamp Act Island. I swam the crawl, breast stroke, side stroke, and back stroke. Only once did the terror return. When I was in the middle of the lake, I put my face under and saw nothing but bottomless water. The old sensation returned in miniature. I laughed and said, “Well, Mr. Terror, what do you think you can do to me?” It fled and I swam on.

Yet I had residual doubts. At my first opportunity I hurried west, went up the Tieton to Conrad Meadows in the high meadow by the side of Warm Lake. The next morning I stripped, dived into the lake, and swam across to the other shore and back – just as Doug Corpron used to do. I shouted with joy and Gilbert Peak returned the echo. I had conquered my fear of water.

The experience had a deep meaning for me, as only those who have known stark terror and conquered it can appreciate. In death there is peace. There is terror only in the fear of death, as Roosevelt knew when he said, “All we have to fear is fear itself.” Because I had experienced both the sensation of dying and the terror that fear of it can produce, the will to live somehow grew in intensity.

At last I felt released – free to walk the trails and climb the peaks and to brush aside fear.

4.3.2 Glossary

treacherous	:	false; disloyal; deceptive
skinny	:	with little flesh
subdued	:	overcame; being under control
beach	:	bank
surf	:	Waves breaking in white foam on the sea shore
revived	:	brought back to consciousness
misadventure	:	event caused by bad luck; misfortune
timid	:	coward
bruiser	:	tough, brutal boxer

rippling	:	rising and falling gently
tossed	:	threw up into or through the air; jerked
yell	:	utter a loud sharp cry of pain or excitement
flailed	:	beat with a flail (a tool for threshing grain)
tinge	:	colour slightly; affect slightly
clutched	:	siezed; took hold of tightly with the hands
shrieking	:	screaming shrilly
oblivion	:	state of forgetting
wobbly	:	not firm or steady
salmon	:	large fish
vestiges	:	traces or sings
miniature	:	very small painting of a person
stark	:	stiff; complete
trails	:	series of marks

4.3.3 Summary

In the essay, 'Deep Water', the author talks about his fear of water and how he overcame it. He reveals how he had feared it ever since he was three or four years old and how his father had taken him to a beach in California. He was terrified of the sheer force of the waves that swept over the beach and knocked him down, leaving him breathless.

He decided to learn how to swim at the YMCA pool when he was ten or eleven years of age, and though the sight of the water revived unpleasant memories he was determined to overcome them and learn to swim. For a few days he managed to ape others at the pool and with the assistance of the water wings that he had, he was able to paddle comfortably in the pool.

One day, however, while he was sitting on the side of the pool waiting for others to come, a bigger boy quite unaware that he did not know how to swim flung him into the deep end of the pool. What transpired next was nothing short of a nightmare for the author, who made three vain attempts to rise to the surface of the pool after hitting the bottom, but each time he came within inches of reaching the surface before he sank to the bottom again. William Douglas describes how fear immobilized him making his limbs deaden and unresponsive, till he finally fainted.

He lived with the fear of water for many years and this haunting anxiety ruined all his

fishing trips and all activities related to water sports or even activities, which were in the proximity of water. Finally one October, he decided to hire the services of an instructor and master swimmer. Initially, the instructor put a belt around him and the attached rope went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. He held on to the rope and the author went back and forth across the pool hour after hour, day after day till he began to get back his confidence. In addition, the instructor made him practice kicking his legs in water by the side of the pool until he finally learned to relax. Thus, through sheer willpower and practice, William Douglas overcame his fear of water and became a swimmer. Though the instructor was satisfied with his progress, he on many an occasion felt the old fear of water return and hence he continued relentlessly to swim in different places till he felt that he had to a large extent mastered it.

To test whether he had lost all the vestiges of panic and fear, the author went up to the Tieton, to Conrad Meadows, up the Conrad Creek Trail to Mead Glacier, and camped in the high meadows by the side of the Warm Lake. He dived into it and swam across it and was overjoyed to learn that he had at last conquered his fear of water.

To the author this experience was one that represented a brush with death which in turn produced in him an intense desire to live. It egged him on to fight the fears that haunted him and paralysed him and made him victorious. This narrative is indeed a saga of courage, grit, patience and determination and a lesson to us that any fear can be overcome provided one perseveres.

4.4 Self Assessment Questions

(a) Answer the following questions in 30 words each.

1. What is the theme of the essay ?

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2. What is the sub theme of the essay ?

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3. Comment on the style of the essay ?

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.....

4. What is the misadventure that William Douglas speaks about ?

.....

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5. How did the instructor “build a swimmer” out of Douglas ?
-
-
6. How did Douglas make sure that he conquered the old terror ?
-
-
7. What thoughts of Roosevelt deeply impacted Douglas ?
-
-
8. How did Douglas apply Roosevelt’s thoughts to his own life ?
-
-
9. Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of it ?
-
-
10. What larger meaning does Douglas draw from this experience ?
-
-
11. How did Douglas get rid of all the residual fear that he had of water ?
-
-

4.5 Answers to SAQs

- (a) (i) A real life personal account of experiencing fear and the steps taken to overcome it.
- (ii) Psychological analysis of fear.
- (iii) First person narrative style.

- (iv) How he was thrown into a pool by a big boy quite unaware that he did not know how to swim.
- (v) The instructor made him practise swimming for a long period regularly until he gained his willpower.
- (vi) He continued to swim relentlessly in different places until he felt that he had to a large extent mastered it.
- (vii) “All we have to fear is fear itself”.
- (viii) The author had experienced both the sensation of dying and the terror that fear of it can produce.
- (ix) Because this experience egged him on to fight the fears that haunted and paralysed him and he emerged victorious.
- (x) Any fear can be overcome if one perseveres.
- (xi) The author went up to the Tieton, to Conrad Meadows, up the Conrad Creek Trail to Mead Glacier, and camped in the high meadows by the side of the Warm Lake. He dived into it and swam across it and was overjoyed to learn that he had at last conquered his fear of water.

4.6 Let Us Sum Up

We can sum up the unit under the following points :

- (a) Theme : A real life personal account of experiencing fear and the steps taken to overcome it.
- (b) Sub – theme : Psychological analysis of fear.
- (c) Text : This is a text relating to personal experiences i.e. sharing accounts of acts of courage.
- (d) Language : First person narrative style

4.7 Review Questions

1. What was the sense of panic that gripped William O. Douglas? How did he overcome that fear?
2. What was the ‘misadventure’ that William O. Douglas speaks about at the YMCA swimming pool? Why did he go there? How did the ‘misadventure’ affect Douglas in later years?
3. Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of it? What larger meaning does he draw from this experience?

4. The narrative 'Deep Water' by William Douglas is a saga of perseverance and courage. Discuss.

4. 8 Bibliography

1. C.H. Lockett : The Art of the Essayist (Orient)
 2. V.V. John : The Great Classroom Hoax (Vikas)
 3. William O. Douglas : Of Men and Mountains
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UNIT-5

ALDOUS HUXLEY:SELECTED SNOBBERIES

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 About the Writer :Aldous Huxley
- 5.3 The Text of the Essay:Selected Snobberies
 - 5.3.1 Summary of the Essay
 - 5.3.2 Detailed Notes and Glossary
- 5.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 5.5 Answers to SAQs.
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.7 Review Questions
- 5.8 Bibliography

5.0 Objective

The present essay on *Selected Snobberies* is a fine example of what an essay should be. The writer has taken up an interesting topic and suggested some snobberies with which most people in the world are affected. The essay does not teach any moral principle but familiarises with a new subject that is applicable to most people of the world. It says whether we like it or not but most of us do have some kind of snobbery though we may not be conscious that it is only a snobbery. The unit aims at presenting a detail of snobberies enumerated by Aldous Huxley.

5.1 Introduction

The essay consists of seven paragraphs in which the writer discusses the interesting subject of snobberies. The essay has been entitled *Selected Snobberies* which means that the writer discusses not all but some selected snobberies only. The selected ones here are the most common ones. These common ones are about diseases, booze, modernity, art and culture. Aldous Huxley's style is quite interesting, particularly the way he exposes the weakness of each snobbery. For example, a society that has many snobberies has been compared with "a dog with plenty of fleas".

5.2 About the Writer :Aldous Huxley

Aldous Leonerd Huxley (1894–1963), an English writer who spent the later part of his life in United States is famous for his novels and essays on a number of topics. He also published poetry, stories and film stories. He was not only a humanist and pacifist but a writer on spiritual subjects including those on parapsychology and philosophical mysticism. He was an intellectual and a leader of modern thought and philosophy.

Huxley started writing at an early age. He wrote his famous novel *Brave New world* in which he discusses the demeaning effect of scientific progress and in *Ends and Means* he points out that though every one is in favour of a just and ideal society yet there are differences among people and leaders on how to achieve it. In 1938 Huxley became a friend of J. Krishnamurti whose teachings had great influence on him. He was much attracted to Vedantism also and was introduced into the Vendantic Circle of Swami Prabhavananda and soon after he wrote *The Perennial Philosophy* in which he discusses some of the widely believed spiritual ideas and the mystical teachings of the famous mystics.

5.3 The Text of the Essay:Selected Snobberies

All men are snobs about something. One is almost tempted to add: There is nothing about which men cannot feel snobbish. But this would doubtless be an exaggeration. There are certain disfiguring and mortal diseases about which there has probably never been any snobbery. I cannot imagine, for example, that there are any leprosy snobs. More picturesque diseases, even when they are dangerous, and less dangerous diseases, particularly when they are the diseases of the rich, can be and very frequently are a source of snobbish self-importance. I have met several adolescent consumption snobs, who thought that it would be romantic to fade away in the flower of youth, like Keats or Marie Bashkirtseff. Alas, the final stages of the consumptive fading are generally a good deal less romantic than these ingenuous young tubercle-snobs seem to imagine. To any who has actually witnessed these final stages the complacent poeticizings of these adolescents must seem as exasperating as they are profoundly pathetic. In the case of those commoner disease-snobs, whose claim to distinction is that they suffer from one of the maladies of the rich, exasperation is not tempered by very much sympathy. People who possess sufficient leisure, sufficient wealth, not to mention sufficient health, to go travelling from spa to spa, from doctor to fashionable doctor, in search of cures from problematical diseases (which, in so far as they exist at all, probably have their source in overeating) cannot expect us to be very lavish in our solicitude and pity.

Disease-snobbery is only one out of a great multitude of snobberies, of which now some, now others take pride of place in general esteem. For snobberies ebb and flow; their empire rises, declines, and falls in the most approved historical manner. What were good snobberies a hundred years ago are now out of fashion. Thus, the snobbery of family is everywhere on the decline. The snobbery of culture, still strong, has now to wrestle with an orga-

nized and active low-browism, with a snobbery of ignorance and stupidity unique, so far as I know, in the whole of history. Hardly less characteristic of our age is that repulsive booze-snobbery, born of American Prohibition. The malefic influences of this snobbery are rapidly spreading all over the world. Even in France, where the existence of so many varieties of delicious wine has hitherto imposed a judicious connoisseurship and has led to the branding of mere drinking as a brutish solecism, even in France the American booze-snobbery, with its odious accompaniments — a taste for hard drinks in general and for cocktails in particular — is making headway among the rich. Booze-snobbery has now made it socially permissible, and in some circles even rather creditable, for well-brought up men and (this is the novelty) well-brought-up women of all ages, from fifteen to seventy, to be seen drunk if not in public, at least in the very much tempered privacy of a party.

Modernity-Snobbery, though not exclusive to our age, has come to assume an unprecedented importance. The reasons for this are simple and of a strictly economic character. Thanks to modern machinery, production is outrunning consumption. Organized waste among consumers is the first condition of our industrial prosperity. The sooner a consumer throws away the object he has bought and buys another, the better for the producer. At the same time, of course, the producer must do his bit by producing nothing but the most perishable articles. ‘The man who builds a skyscraper to last for more than forty years is a traitor to the building trade’. The words are those of a great American contractor. Substitute motor car, boot, suit of clothes, etc., for skyscraper, and one year, three months, six months, and so on for forty years, and you have the gospel of any leader of any modern industry. The modernity-snob, it is obvious, is this industrialist’s best friend. For modernity-snobs naturally tend to throw away their old possessions and buy new ones at a greater rate than those who are not modernity-snobs. Therefore it is in the producer’s interest to encourage modernity-snobbery, which in fact he does do — on an enormous scale and to the tune of millions and millions a year — by means of advertising. The newspapers do their best to help those who help them; and to the flood of advertisement is added a flood of less directly paid-for propaganda in favour of modernity snobbery. The public is taught that up-to-dateness is one of the first duties of man. Docile, it accepts the reiterated suggestion. We are all modernity snobs now.

Most of us are also art-snobs. There are two varieties of art-snobbery — the platonic and the unplatonic. Platonic art-snobs merely ‘take an interest’ in art. Unplatonic art-snobs go further and actually buy art. Platonic art snobbery is branch of culture-snobbery. Unplatonic art-snobbery is a hybrid or mule; for it is simultaneously a sub-species of culture-snobbery and of possession-snobbery. A collection of works of art is a collection of culture-symbols, and culture-symbols still carry social prestige. It is also a collection of wealth-symbols. For an art collection can represent money more effectively than a whole fleet of motor cars.

The value of art-snobbery to living artists is considerable. True, most art-snobs collect only the works of the dead; for an Old Master is both a safer investment and a holier culture-symbol than a living master. But some artsnobs are also modernity-snobs. There are enough of them, with the few eccentrics who like works of art for their own sake, to provide living artists

with the means of subsistence.

The value of snobbery in general, its humanistic 'point', consists in its power to stimulate activity. A society with plenty of snobberies is like a dog with plenty of fleas: it is not likely to become comatose. Every snobbery demands of its devotees unceasing efforts, a succession of sacrifices. The society-snob must be perpetually lion-hunting; the modernity-snob can never rest from trying to be up-to-date. Swiss doctors and the Best that has been thought or said must be the daily and nightly preoccupation of all the snobs respectively of disease and culture.

If we regard activity as being in itself a good, then we must count all snobberies as good; for all provoke activity. If, with the Buddhists, we regard all activity in this world of illusion as bad, then we shall condemn all snobberies out of hand. Most of us, I suppose, take up our position somewhere between the two extremes. We regard some activities as good, others as indifferent or downright bad. Our approval will be given only to such snobberies as excite what we regard as the better activities; the others we shall either tolerate or detest. For example, most professional intellectuals will approve of culture-snobbery (even while intensely disliking most individual culture snobs), because it compels the philistines to pay at least some slight tribute to the things of the mind and so helps to make the world less dangerously unsafe for ideas than it otherwise might have been. A manufacturer of motor cars, on the other hand, will rank the snobbery of possessions above culture-snobbery; he will do his best to persuade people that those who have fewer possessions, particularly possessions on four wheels, are inferior to those who have more possessions. And so on. Each hierarchy culminates in its own particular Pope.

5.3.1 Summary of the Essay

There are all kinds of people and all kinds of snobberies so that there is nothing in the world about which people cannot be snobbish. There is however one exception to it. It is not possible to find a leprosy snob as none wants to suffer from it. But there are a good number of people who are disease snobs. There are examples of young men and women who are T.B. snobs. They think that it would be quite romantic to die of tuberculosis while they are in the prime of their youth. The regrettable part of it is that the end of these T.B. snobs is not as romantic as they seem to imagine. But there are many rich people who seem to think that they suffer from many diseases and they run from one fashionable doctor to another to seek cure for their imaginary diseases. The only disease that these snobs suffer from is none else but that of over-eating. They eat more than they can digest and so they think that they are suffering from several diseases.

There are fashions in snobberies also. Old snobberies become out dated and the new ones take their place. Earlier people used to be snobbish about their families but now family snobbery is on the decline. New culture snobbery is on the increase though it is resisted by low class people. The latest in our times is the booze snobbery and most young men and women

also from fifteen to seventy are seen drunk in at least private parties. France has been famous for its fine wines and its fine tastes but such is the influence of these low class people that the taste for fine wines is being substituted for strong wines and cocktails.

Modernity snobbery is not wholly new for it existed in the past also. Modernity snobs throw away old things and buy the latest that have been created or invented by machines. These snobs are the best friends of the modern industry producers. The producer produces the latest things that do not last long. This modernity snobbery is fast increasing in our times.

Art snobbery is another. These art snobs are of two kinds : The platonic and the unplatonic. The Platonic ones only appreciate and admire art without buying art objects; but the unplatonic art snobs actually purchase art objects and for them an art object is not a piece of art but actually a commodity, a money symbol which they must possess just as they buy and possess motor cars. Some of these art snobs happen to be modernity snobs also and they claim to be the patrons of modern art. Without understanding anything about art they just buy the paintings of modern painters. In this way these modern art snobs are a great source of the livelihood of the new art painters.

As for the value of snobberies it all depends on the attitude of its practitioners. If they think that all activities are good then all snobberies are also good. But if they think that all activities are bad then all snobberies are not good. If they think that all the world is illusion then all snobberies are meaningless. All depends on our attitude and approval of what is good activity and what is bad. But most people take the middle position between these two extremes. Those who regard some snobberies as good activities they will promote only those snobberies and they will advise all people to acquire those very snobberies which they think promote good activity. Every snob in this way is the promoter of one snobbery or the other at a time.

5.3.2 Detailed Notes and Glossary

Paragraph-1 : All men are snobs..... solicitude and pity.

Summary :-

There is no end of snobberies and all people have one kind of snobbery or the other though there may be no leprosy snobs. But disease snobbery is common enough. There are many T.B. snobs who wish to die while young but their death is usually not so happy as they seem to imagine. There are some rich snobberies which are the snobberies of rich people. These rich people think that they suffer from several diseases and they run from one fashionable doctor to another in search of their cure. In fact these rich people do not suffer from any diseases but their disease is that they eat too much and then they think that suffer from many diseases.

Word meanings :-

snobs = one who holds very high opinion of himself. mortal = resulting in death. leprosy = a disease that forms silvery scales on the body. Consumption = tuberculosis or T.B. Keats = an important romantic poet of the early nineteenth century who died at a very young age. Marie Bashkirtseff = (1858-1884) a Russian French artist ; she was one of the most romantic figures who lived in the most intense cultural period of the nineteenth century. fading = slowly dying. ingenious = here it means one who thinks of new diseases. poeticizing = thinking sentimentally. pathetic = deserving pity. maladies = diseases. from spa to spa = from one good doctor to another good doctor. lavish = generous. solicitude = consideration.

Paragraph-2 :- Disease Snobbery is..... privacy of a party

Summary :-

Snobberies change with time. Some snobberies of the past have been replaced by the new ones. The family snobbery is on the decline but the booze snobbery is on the increase. The taste for fine and soft wines has been replaced by strong drinks and cocktails. Culture snobbery is also being replaced by low culture snobbery. The drink snobberies is becoming quite popular and women also have taken to drinking in private parties.

Word meanings :-

multitude = a great number. Ebb and flow = rise and fall (here it means that they flourish and disappear). booze = strong drinks. wrestle = fight against. low-browism = the habit of low class people. repulsive = hateful. malefic = harmful. connoisseurship = the ability to judge about tastes from good to bad. solecism = against good manners. branding = marking. cocktail = mixing of strong drinks. headway = progress. tempered = softened.

Paragraph -3 :- Modernity snobbery..... snobs now

Summary :-

Modernity snobbery has been there in every age and a modernity snob is the modern producer's best friend. A modernity snob will always be hunting for the latest goods that he will buy and throw away the old ones. The modern producer of goods will always produce the latest things for the modernity snobs. The more he produces, the more it is sold. The modern producer produces the most perishable things that do not last for a longer time. He spends a lot of money on advertisements. His great desire is that many and more people should become modernity snobs; so that he becomes more rich very quickly.

Word meanings :-

unprecedented = not happening before; something quite new. economic = here it means one of a spendthrift nature. production running out of consumption = there is more production than its utilisation. skyscraper = very high building. perishable = soon finished. gospel = religion ; here it means the theory. enormous = very large. flood of advertisement =

lots of advertisement. docile = unable to resist. reiterated = repeated two times or more

Paragraph-4 : Most of us are... fleet of motor cars.

Summary :-

Art snobs are of two types. These are the platonic and the unplatonic. The Platonic ones admire art objects but do not buy them but the unplatonic ones actually buy art without admiring it. They treat art objects only as commodities or as money symbols like motor cars.

Word meanings :-

Platonic = those people who love art for its own sake but do not buy it. unplatonic = One who does not love art but actually buys it hybrid = from parents of different species ; here it means of mixed breed. mule = a hybrid of horse and donkey.

Paragraph -5 : The value of ... means of subsistence

Summary :-

Many art snobs are modernity snobs also and they buy the paintings of the modern artist. They are a source of income and livelihood of the upcoming artist.

Word meanings :-

Old Masters = paintings by the famous artists of the past. Eccentric = peculiar, not normal. subsistence = livelihood.

Paragraph -6 :- The value of snobbery..... diseases and culture

Summary :-

The purpose of snobbery in general is to keep its practitioners always busy and active. There are practitioners of every type of snobbery in society — be it booze, diseases, modernity, art or of any other kind.

Word meanings :-

humanistic point = from the point of advantage to everyman. stimulate = encourage. comatose = dull. devotees = active followers or believers. unceasing = non stop or restless. succession = one after the other. perpetually = permanently or continuously. lion hunting = seeking the company of the best persons. preoccupation = demanding the best attention.

Paragraph -7 :- If we regard activity particular Pope

Summary :-

Snobberies are neither good nor bad in themselves but they all depend on what we think about them. Those activities which we regard as good become good snobberies while others to us are either bad or indifferent. Every one wants to promote among others the same snobbery which he considers to be good and he becomes a great and strong supporter of that

particular snobbery.

Word meanings :-

Buddhists = the followers of the religion of Lord Buddha who preached that all the world is false and unreal and there is not truth in it. out of hand = without any choice. downright = completely or thoroughly. detest = hate or dislike. philistines = those who care for money only and not for culture. tribute = something said or done to show respect or admiration. Pope = the highest authority of the Roman Catholic religion. Here it means the strongest supporter.

5.4 Self Assessment Questions

- Q.1. Name the selected snobberies mentioned by Huxley in his essay on selected snobberies.
- Q.2. What are Huxley's general views and observations about snobberies?
- Q.3. According to Huxley snobberies like fashions keep on changing. How does the writer substantiate it ?
- Q.4. What are the commoner disease snobberies of the rich people ?
- Q.5. What are Huxley views on unplatonic art snobbery ?

5.5 Answers to SAQs

Ans. 1 According to Huxley the following are the important selected snobberies.

- (i) Diseases snobbery.
- (ii) Consumption (T.B.) snobbery
- (iii) Family snobbery
- (iv) Snobbery of ignorance and stupidity
- (v) Booze (wine drinking) snobbery
- (vi) Modernity snobbery
- (vii) Art (Platonic and unplatonic) snobbery
- (viii) Culture snobbery

Ans.2. According to Huxley all of us are snobs about something or the other and there is nothing about which man cannot be snobbish. However, there is the leprosy disease about which hardly any person can be found to be snobbish. The writer says that he cannot imagine any person who can be snobbish about leprosy.

About the value of snobberies Huxley says that snobberies make every person active and working for it. A society that has many snobberies will never be

dull because all people are snobbish about something and so all people ought to be working for their particular snobberies. In this way all people ought to be busy and active. "Every snobbery demands of its devotees unceasing efforts, a succession of sacrifices".

No snobbery is good or bad in itself. It all depends on one's view about life in general. If we think that all activity is good, all snobberies ought to be good. If, on the other hand, we think that all activity is bad and useless, all snobbery is bad and useless. The value of snobbery accordingly depends on what we think about the purpose of life. But generally people avoid both the extremes. Generally people prefer to take the middle position with regard to these extremes about activity related to snobberies.

Everyone is interested in promoting his kind of snobbery. He will promote only that snobbery which he considers to be good. He will naturally try to promote and work for that very activity. Thus for each snobbery there is its promoter and its advertiser.

Ans.3 According to Huxley snobberies also have their fashions and live according to their allotted time. Just as fashions change so do snobberies. There were many snobberies which were quite fashionable and popular a fifty or hundred years ago but they are not valued now. With advancement in medical sciences, the disease snobbery is increasing, while the family snobbery which used to be quite fashionable earlier is now on the decline. The culture snobbery is also there but it is being challenged by low taste people. For example, France was once quite famous for its fine wines and fine tastes. But the fine taste for drinking is being substituted by booze snobbery and people now want strong drinks and cocktails. The latest fashion is seen in the drinking habits of women also. Now every woman from fifteen to seventy is seen drunk not in public places so much as in the privacy of domestic parties.

There is also the modernity snobbery now a days. In the past people used to respect old families and old things and traditions. But now all this is a thing of the past. Today people are modernity snobs and they want to buy the latest things that are produced by the machines. They want to throw away the old things. Such people are the modern producers' best friends. The producer is fast producing items that are quickly perishable.

There are the art snobs and they are of two kinds — the platonic and the unplatonic. The platonic ones merely appreciate works of art. They do not buy these things but only admire them for their artistic excellence. But the unplatonic ones actually buy these art objects without having any knowledge or taste for these things. Such people only show that they are interested in art but actually they are interested in showing their money power and value.

Ans. 4. There are some commoner disease snobberies of the rich people who think that they suffer from incurable diseases. Such people possess lot of leisure, sufficient wealth and health also yet they seem to suffer from undiagnosable diseases and for their cure they run from one famous doctor to another and spend a lot of money also and yet they find no satisfaction. The truth about them is that they do not suffer from any disease and are quite hale and healthy : but such people are only disease snobs. If they suffer from any disease at all it is only that they overeat and then they think that they suffer from several diseases. Overeating is their habit because they are rich people and they can afford to be disease snobs.

Ans. 5 According to Huxley art snobs are of two kinds — the platonic and the unplatonic. The platonic art snobs admire and appreciate art for its own sake. They do not buy art objects. But the unplatonic art snobs, instead of admiring art want to possess it and so they buy art objects as though an art object is a commodity like a fleet of motor cars. Thus they want to show that they have enough money and want to impress others by their power to buy art also. For them an art object is a money symbol which is costlier than a fleet of motor cars and is nothing more. They think that people will admire and respect them as real art lovers.

The unplatonic art snobs are worse when they happen to be modernity snobs also. In that case, instead of buying old art objects they buy art objects made by living artists. In this way instead of buying the art objects of the Old Masters they patronize the living artists. Thus they are a source of livelihood for the poor living artists. In this way they think that they are great patrons of living art. The advantage is that the poor living artists benefit from it and so these modern unplatonic art snobs impress others by their money power.

5.6 Let Us Sum Up

The present essay entitled ‘Selected Snobberies’ gives us an insight about some of the selected snobberies like diseases, booze, modernity, art and culture etc. prevailing amidst the society and how the value of snobbery depends according of people’s time and place.

5.7 Review Questions

1. Explain in detail all the selected snobberies mentioned by Huxley in his essay.
2. Differentiate between the platonic and the unplatonic varieties of art snobbery.

5.8 Bibliography

1. Aldous Huxley, Polite Essays, 1937
2. Aldous Huxley, Literary Essays, 1954
3. J. Atkins, Critical: Aldous Huxley, 1956

UNIT-6

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI : CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

(An Extract from '*A Passage to England*')

Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
 - 6.1.1 About the author
 - 6.1.2 About the essay
- 6.2 Christian Civilization (Text)
 - 6.2.1 Glossary
 - 6.2.2 Summary
 - 6.2.3 Some model explanations
- 6.3 Self Assessment Questions
- 6.4 Answers to SAQs
- 6.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.6 Review Questions
- 6.7 Bibliography

6.0 Objectives

The present unit aims at achieving the following objectives :

1. To enable you to comprehend the essentials of the *Christian Civilization*
2. To enable you to contrast the essentials of the *Christian Civilization* with Hinduism in terms of worship offered by the respective devotees in their shrines.
3. To enable you appreciate and evaluate the given extract.
4. To develop the ability to comprehend the prose style of Nirad C. Chaudhuri

6.1 Introduction

The extract entitled *Christian Civilization* has been taken from Nirad C. Chaudhuri's second book *A Passage to England*. It was published in 1959. The theme of the book is the record of sensations the author experienced during his visit to England in the Spring of 1955.

The book was a turning point in Chaudhuri's career as a writer. It is not based on any diary or notes of his visit. On the other hand the author has tried to recapitulate the sensation of his foreign visit in tranquility. The book is considered as a testament of Chaudhuri's anglomania. In it he presents the contrast between England and India and shows his preference to England and wilfully denigrates India.

6.1.1 About the Author

For the background material regarding life and personality, literary background, literary devices and the works of Nirad C. Chaudhuri you should read the another unit entitled '*Money and the Englishman*' as they are common for these two units.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1897-1999) occupies an honourable place among the Indian writers writing in English. Critics have placed him in the top class of Indo-Anglian writers. He emerged as a new star with the publication of his book *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* in 1951. This work made him suddenly- and deservedly- famous. His aim was to become a professor and historian. Unfortunately, he could not fulfil his ambition. He became a journalist. By temperament, aspiration and arduous training, he was meant to be a historian, but the fates had decided otherwise, This set back was like a deep wound to his sensibility, and it soured his temperament not a little. "*To day I nurse no grievance,*" he says "*because I have at last unravelled the genesis and growth of my maladjustment.*" This explains his unconventional progress to history through autobiography. Chaudhuri emerged as an essentially Indian in Education. He never wished to get educated abroad. As he became a popular figure after the publication of his book, he was invited by BBC to see England and write a few talks for its Overseas Service. So he visited England in his sixties. His visit provided him the theme for his second book *A Passage to England* which was published in 1959. His other works are: *The Continent of Circe* and *To Live or Not to Live*. From the analysis of his works, he appears as an admirer of the English character, though he freely criticizes it too on occasions.

Nirad C Chaudhuri remains the Grand solitary, the master of a prose style that has often a fascinating spidery quality. His great merit as an intellectual is that he isn't ever too lazy to avoid doing his own thinking or too timid to hesitate to give expression to his own views.

6.1.2 About the essay

The present essay is an extract from Nirad C Chaudhuri's famous book *A Passage to England*. This piece brings to focus the essentials of the Christian civilization and contrasts it with Hinduism, in terms of worship offered by the respective devotees in their shrines and collectively, in the main. The author has given many examples of his observations on different occasions to show the seriousness of the English people in the matter of religion. He has also acquainted us with the attitude of Hindus shown to their religion.

6.2 Christian Civilization (Text)

There is, however, one region of the cultural life of the English people in which there is no question of anything but seriousness. It is occupied by religion. It must be widely known that the, author of one of the supreme achievements of English culture, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, was not only devoted to indices and surds, but also to religion. He was deeply distressed by the conduct of a friend who at a dinner in his rooms had repeated some remarks made by children about very sacred subjects on the assumption that since they were innocent when made by children who were unconscious of any irreverence they were also innocent when repeated by a grown up person. '*The hearing of that anecdote*', he wrote, '*gave me so much pain and spoiled so much of the pleasure of my tiny dinner party, that I feel sure you will kindly spare me such in future.*' Some Englishmen of today, who do not consider the humour of Alice to be Victorian, set down this seriousness of Victorianism. This discriminatory appraisal will simply not hold water. It has to be admitted that if the nonsense of Alice is national the religious susceptibility of Lewis Carroll is also national. Without it the book would have been a different kind of classic, something like *Candide* or *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

I hope, however, that I am not giving offence to Englishmen by including religion in culture. There is not reason why I should. I wish very much indeed that I could also say something about the place of religion in the personal life of the English people, but I really had no opportunities for learning anything about that. Therefore I am compelled to restrict myself to what I saw. But that too was one of the major aspects of their religious life. Everybody recognizes that Christianity has been a great force behind the rise of Western civilization, and one of its earlier manifestations, the Anglo-Saxon, was intensely Christian. A very vivid way of realizing the difference which the new religion made to the life of these strong and young people is to think of Penda of Mercian and then of Alfred. Religion and culture have always intermingled in Europe, more so in England than anywhere else. This is in every elementary textbook, so if I also became conscious of it, there was no originality in my perception. Its only point of interest lies in the fact that it was suggested by a direct personal contact with contemporary affairs, and was not due to what I had read, all of which fortunately had gone out of my mind when I was there.

My introduction to the religious life of the English people began at Canterbury. There could be no fitter place for it. In the Cathedral a very learned canon explained to me what it stood for and symbolized. He considered the spirit which had created it, first, historically and then *sub specie aeternitatis*. He did not, however, say anything about the passing fragment of time in which we were living. The significance of the Cathedral for the present age, I could only feel from the atmosphere, and I felt it unprompted. Canterbury was not tourists' town, and I think it was a mistake to call the bombings of 1942 '*Baedekar raids*'. The bombs did not burst merely on a four star show place, however ancient. They hit sensibilities which were very much deeper, and certainly went to convince the English people finally that there could be no compromise between Nazism and their way of life.

But I did not attend any religious service at Canterbury. The First one I attended was at Cambridge over Easter. I was fortunate in respect of the place of worship, for it was King's College Chapel. I went to see it one morning with a large number of visitors who had come to spend their holiday in the old university town, instead of going to a gay seaside resort. We were stopped at the entrance of the choir because a rehearsal was going to be held. I looked at the magnificent vault and the glowing stained glass, and suddenly heard a lovely voice singing a melody which rose to the lofty roof like a coil of incense smoke. I was told that it was the voice of a boy chorister. Its quality was different from that of any voice I had heard before, and only the previous night I had been listening to the whole of Handel's *Messiah*.

In the afternoon I came again, this time to evensong. My English friend, who had not intended to remain through the service but had come only to put me in my seat, stayed on, saying that it was a very moving experience. He was a literary critic by vocation. I had read too much about the decline of religious belief, falling church attendance, and ignorance of the Bible that I was surprised by the number of people I saw and no less by the absence of any mood which could be called non-devotional. So the old question which had arisen in my mind about Shakespeare posed itself again in a more insistent manner. What was it that had brought so many men and women to a church service?

Though the choir of the Chapel was famous, that could not have been the main inducement. In any case, nobody was treating the service as a song recital, nor was there any concession to that character in the singing itself, from which all traces of virtuosity had been taken away. I noticed the expression on the faces as people left the Chapel. There was no sudden break in the silence, either through resumption of conversation or footfalls. They went out with a grave and abstract expression as if what they had gone through was still holding them in its grip. Nobody even cast a last look at the noble interior.

The next day was Easter Sunday, and I again went to the Chapel. This time the attendance was even greater than on the previous afternoon. Once again I felt the power of the service, and though I could not define in what it lay, I said to myself that if anywhere I, a Hindu, could think of becoming a Christian it was in such a place.

I attended other services at Stratford and Winchester which gave me the same impression. But I did not see any services outside the Anglican Church, and therefore I cannot say what effect they would have produced. I suppose Englishmen would have found a difference, but to me that would certainly not have been material. All Christian worship in England would have had the same appearance to me. Their spirit would have been common.

But what was that spirit? I never got any insight into it, and I never asked any Englishman what he was seeking in his religious observance or what he was getting out of them. I could only apply Hindu analogies, with which I was familiar, and they failed to enlighten me. For instance, I wondered if they went to a church as we went to a temple. We go to temple to look on the image of a divine potentate and to watch the ceremonials of his daily life, which are

modelled on those of a king. We do indeed prostrate ourselves in awe before him, but that used to be done by the ancient Egyptians before the Pharaoh and by the Japanese before their Emperor. Modern Indians did that before Mahatma Gandhi, and do it now before Jawaharlal Nehru. Between these secular prostrations and the prostrations before the gods there is only a difference of degree and note of kind, because in India the most powerful political leadership is itself quasi-religious. But certainly the English people did not go to their churches to look on a Divine Ruler and his daily life.

However, temple cults, popular as they are, are no part of true Hinduism. None of our scriptures refers to them or lays on a Hindu the duty of going to a temple or worshipping an image. These cults were borrowed by the ancient Hindus from western Asia., and even after their adoption in India they and their gods, together with the habitations of these gods, retained the same divine lords of cities as they were in Western Asia: all the greater reason why there could be no resemblance between our temple worship and Christian worship, for Christianity had fought and triumphed over those very cults.

I then tried more specifically Hindu or Brahmanic forms of religious experience. True Hinduism in its most universally understood and practised aspect makes us accept the universe and requires us to make such a welfare universe of it with the help of the gods that any man-made welfare state can only be a pinchbeck imitation of it. Some of the welfare is thought of in purely worldly terms. In olden days kings turned to religion for the sake of conquest, for the preservation of their kingdom, and for the recovery of lost thrones; the merchant for wealth; the peasant for crops; and all for children, health and prosperity. We do so still. This is the prayer to our Mother Goddess. *“Give me longevity, fame, good fortune, O Goddess, give me sons, wealth and all things desirable.”*

But a Hindu’s pursuit of welfare in the world is not wholly materialistic, although materialism is an essential part of the Hindu religious outlook. Hinduism has kept the old economic gods in the pantheon so that economics might not drive religion out of the life mankind altogether, as it is doing in the west. It is certainly less foolish if not more sensible, to keep the two together than to set them at loggerheads, In Hinduism this has served to infuse a glow of spirituality into worldly prosperity and happiness, which are most desirable and at their best in a semi-sanctified state as the necessary preliminary to the triumph of Dharma, which in its turn is the realized and unrealized righteousness that keeps the world going. This is the typical Hindu concept which stand beyond the purely material aspect of the Hindu welfare universe. But all these basic aspirations of Hinduism were absent from the collective worship of the English people, which seemed to be inspired by a movement of the spirit leading away from the world.

Nor was there any trace in it of the third feature of our collective worship namely, propitiation and coercion of the gods through offerings, sacrifices, and incantations, which create a gamut of a mood from a propitious silence and supermagical tenseness to Dionysiac frenzy. In Hinduism it is not the dread Kali alone who exacts a bloody sacrifice from her

worshippers, the benign Mother Goddess Durga requires this equally. But a Hindu has not to be a mere suppliant at the feet of his god and goddesses. He can also assert the claims of mankind on the deities by scrupulously performing the duties which are in his part of the covenant. In the Hindu religion, somehow, status has been replaced by contract in the relationship between gods and men. Nowhere is this stated more clearly than in the Gita, which is almost a revealed scripture of Hinduism, though strictly speaking it is not one. About rituals it says.

*With this prosper ye the gods,
And let the gods prosper you;
Prospering one the other,
Ye shall attain the highest welfare.*

Gita, III. ii (Tr. By Edgerton)

There are, of course, many other facets of Hinduism, but those do not form part of collective worship and so do not come into comparison with what I saw of Christian worship in England, and even where the two did so, it will already become clear that for me the result was wholly negative. I could not get at the meaning of what I was seeing with the help of what I knew in India, though it is possible that Englishmen will be able to feel from what I have said that their religious experience is very different from ours.

If I could not understand what they were getting from their religious observance, I was not less baffled by two other questions how much of their religious practice went deeper than the continuation of a respected tradition and how much faith was still left among them? Of course, I saw that a new cathedral was being built even in this age. That was at Guildford. It had arisen on a commanding site, and the main structure with the nave and aisles had been completed. Only the apse still remained to be built. There was a good deal of the spirit of the Middle Ages in the manner in which it was being built. Did that indicate the presence of a living faith, or was it only a continuation of the forms of the old civilization?

Even on the assumption that it was nothing more, it would be evidence in favour of the conclusion that religion and civilization were still interwoven with each other in England, as indeed in the West as a whole. What I saw gave me an even stronger feeling. It seemed to me that as soon as the life of the English people lost touch with religion it also passed beyond the pale of civilization to that de-civilized state created for a very large number of the people of the West by industrialism and democracy.

An incident at Canterbury made me aware of this. A party of visitors, clearly English, was being taken round the Cathedral by a clergyman. In the very church of Thomas a Becket, he was having to explain to them who Thomas was, and yet just in front of them I saw that step which had been worn down by the pilgrims who had gone up in double rows on their knees to the shrine. These men and women had even to be told who the Black Prince was. I, who had learned about both in a jungle of East Bengal before I was twelve, was deeply shocked in my

historical consciousness. I asked some of my English friends in dismay whether knowledge of history was disappearing among them. They said that there was a good deal of ignorance of even the elementary facts of English history. Afterwards I realized that it was not question of that alone. They had lost touch with religion, and had never trodden the Pilgrims' Way. They were falling from the civilized state for having acquired, not forbidden knowledge, but forbidden ignorance.

I do not think that there is any pretence of secularity in any aspect of the civilization of English people. When in one of my writings I referred to the Coronation as a secular ritual, an English friend asked me in surprise why I had used that adjective. Even their deepest and highest scientific thought would not have been what it is except for that deep brooding over the mystery of existence which religion alone has fostered so far. In saying this I am not thinking simply of Newton, or Faraday, but even of Rutherford, Jeans, and Thomosn. Even if all that could be forgotten, there would still remain the mores of the whole people, which are infused with the spirit that Christianity has created.

It is felt instantaneously in the reverence which accompanies their religious rituals. I noticed this in the behaviour of the choir boys in King's College Chapel. As they went about placing the music and books on the stand, they looked like young priests. When they sang they appeared angelic, so that I wanted to say as Gregory the Great had done, '*Not Angles, but angles,*' When I said something like that to the young lady who was showing me around Cambridge she remarked, '*Some of them are little devils,*' though I could well believe that. But that was what most forcibly demonstrated the influence of religion on them. It was symbolic of the transformation of those wild folks from the German forests and Scandinavain fjords into civilized peoples.

With all this I also found a sociological fact in connection with religion, in which England to my thinking presented a complete contrast to India. There the so-called upper classes were more religious than the common people, while in India the situation is exactly the opposite . Religion belongs to the people, and the upper classes boast of their irreligiosity. It is not simply that they have lost a particular faith. Men are always doing so, and without that there can be no spiritual progress, But men are also striving after and some times finding new faiths. The upper classes in India are losing, and have largely lost, their capacity for faith, and they no longer feel its need. As an accident of history has for the time being made them the most prosperous section of the people of India in the worldly sense, they do not see the unhappiness of their state.

6.2.1 Glossary

Abstracted	:	drawn apart.
Alfred	:	Alfred (849-99) the great, King of Wessex who, after conquering various settlements, subdued all of England.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	:	famous children's classic by Lewis Carroll (1832-98), author of <i>Through the Looking Glass</i> .
Anecdote	:	a short narrative generally from private life.
Angelic	:	showing the quality of angels.
Anglo-Saxon	:	of the old Germanic settlers in England and Scotland.
Appraisalment	:	estimation of quality.
Apse	:	a semicircular depression at the east end of a church.
Black Prince	:	(1330-76) nickname of Edward, eldest son of King Edward III of England; a great military leader.
Brahmanic	:	possessing the quality of the Brahmins ; as followed by the Brahmins.
Baffled	:	confused
Brooding	:	considering deeply
Candide	:	famous philosophical tale by Voltarie, French dramatist, poet and philosopher
Canon	:	a clergyman.
Choir	:	a band of singers in a church.
Chorister	:	member of a choir.
Covenant	:	contract ; agreement.
De-civilized	:	reduced to a savage state.
Dharma	:	duty as defined in ancient Hindu scriptures.
Distressed	:	mentally unhappy; sad.
Dionysiac	:	as marked by the dramatic and noisy worship of Dionysus of Bacchus, the Greek god of wine and patron of drama.
Discriminatory:	:	showing an unjust distinction between two things thus harming one.
Evensong	:	evening prayer of the Church of England.
Facets	:	many sides as of a polished diamond.

Faraday	:	Michael Faraday (1791-1867) British physicist and discoverer of electrical induction, who defined the laws of electrolysis, deflected polarized light, liquified gases, etc.
Fjords	:	(also spelt fiords) long narrow channels of the sea, running between high banks as on the coast of Norway.
Fostered	:	developed and promoted.
Frenzy	:	uninhibited display of emotions accompanying certain religious rituals.
Gamut	:	full range of scope.
Gargantua and Pantagruel	:	originally the name of a beneficent giant of French folklore connected with the Arthurian legends. But referred here to the most famous works by Rabelais (1494-1533), French satirist and humanist.
Gregroy the Great	:	(540-604) Gregory I , Pope from 590 to 604, a ‘father of the Church’ and saint.
Habitations	:	houses ; abodes.
Handel	:	George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)celebrated German-born composer, later naturalized British. His first opera was performed when he was only 20, and he became court composer in London. His best composition was Messiah.
Incantations	:	loud chanting of hymns.
Indices and surds	:	Plural of ‘index’ the intergral part of a logarithm; ‘surds’ are quantity that cannot be expressed in finite terms of ordinary numbers. Lewis carroll was Lecturer in Mathematics at Oxford.
Infuse	:	introduce.
Irreligiosity	:	disregard of religious principles.
Irreverence	:	lack of respect for religion or God.
Instantaneously	:	at once.
Jeans	:	Sir James Jeans (1877-1946) illustrious English astronomer, physicist and mathematician. His contribution to science is the development of what is known as the tidal theory of the origin of the solar

system. His writings include *The Universe Around Us, Through Space and Time, Science and Music, etc.*

Kali	:	one of the major deities of the Hindus, depicted as a fierce goddess who could be placated only with blood and noisy rituals.
Longevity	:	length of life.
(at) loggerheads	:	having difference of opinion ; engaged in fight.
Manifestations	:	outward appearances.
Magnificent	:	grand.
Mores	:	folkways that are considered conducive to the welfare of society and so through general observance develop the force of law, often becoming part of the formal legal code.
Pantheon	:	originally a sacred building at Rome dedicated to all the Roman gods. Now, all the gods of a people, in the collective sense.
Pharaoh	:	ancient Egyptian king.
Penda	:	(577-655) King of Mercia.
Perception	:	understanding
Pinchbeck	:	cheap imitation; a counterfeit.
Potentate	:	powerful ruler.
Prostrate	:	lie face down full length in worship or prayer before a deity or a ruler.
Quasi	:	half; semi
Rutherford	:	Ernest Rutherford (1871-1937), famous physicist born in New Zealand, worked in Canada and England; the first man to split the atom and open the road to nuclear power; awarded the Nobel Prize for physics.
Scriptures	:	sacred books.
Susceptibility	:	sensitivity; quality of being easily touched or moved.
Sanctified	:	made holy.
Scrupulously	:	observing the rules very strictly.
Striving	:	working hard.

Sub specie aeternitatis : under the aspect of eternity.

Thomas Becket: (1118-70) Archbishop of Canterbury; one-time friend of King Henry II of England and Chancellor of England; he was put to death by the King's henchmen. T.S. Eliot wrote his famous play *Murder in the Cathedral* using this theme.

Thomson : Sir Joseph Thomson (1856-1940), British experimental physicist who specialized in radio-activity; was awarded the Nobel Prize.

Vault : roof of a cathedral or church.

Victorian : possessing the qualities well known during the day of Queen Victoria, in relation to conventional morality.

Virtuosity : the finer points of art.

6.2.2 Summary of the essay

Full seriousness is a marked feature of English cultural life. The English are quite serious in the matter of religion. Lewis Carroll, the author of one of the supreme achievements of English culture, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, was not only a devoted mathematician but also religious man. Thus, according to Chaudhuri, English culture is deeply religious in character.

According to the author, Christianity has been a great force behind the rise of Western civilization. Religion and culture have always intermingled in Europe, more so in England than anywhere else. The author had a first-hand experience of it.

The author was first introduced to the religious life of the English people at Canterbury. In the cathedral a very learned clergyman explained to him what it stood for and symbolized. The very atmosphere of the cathedral had something in it that accounted for its significance for the present age.

The author attended the first religious service at Cambridge in the King's College Chapel. He saw there a large number of visitors. He heard a boy who was singing a hymn. The author was spellbound. He had never before heard anything so divine and lovely. In the evening again the author saw a large number of devotees at the chapel in a deeply devotional mood. He had read in India, much about the decline of religious belief, falling church attendance and ignorance of the Bible. He was surprised to see just opposite to what he had read. He found that the people did not take the service as a mere song recital, nor the singers took it that way. After the church service people went out in grave devotional manner. He attended other services at Stratford and Winchester also and had the same impression.

The author never asked any Englishman what he was seeking in his religious observance or what he was getting out of them. He tried to find an answer to this question by applying Hindu analogies, but he found no answer. He says that Hindus go to temples to look on the image of a divine power. They prostrate themselves before it. They watch the ceremonials of its daily life. The English people do not go to their churches to look on a divine power and its daily life. But it must be remembered that temple cults are no necessary part of true Hinduism. Our scriptures do not refer to them, nor do they lay down on a Hindu the duty of going to a temple or worshipping an image. These cults were borrowed from Western Asia. Christianity had fought and triumphed over those cults. This is a greater reason why there could be no resemblance between temple worship and Christian worship.

Then the author refers to Hindu and Brahmanic forms of religious experience. True Hinduism makes us accept the universe and requires us to make it a welfare universe with the help of gods. Some of this welfare is thought of in purely worldly terms. In olden days kings turned to religion for the sake of conquest, the merchant for wealth, the peasants for crops. Children, health and prosperity inspired all to take shelter of the religion. But, the Hindu view of materialism is not wholly devoid of religion. Materialism and religion have got intermixed in the Hindu concept of the world. In the West economics is driving out religion out of the life of mankind. The collective worship of the English people is different from that of the Hindus in this respect. The English worship seems to be inspired by a movement of the spirit leading away from the world.

The Christian worship was different from the Hindu worship in one more aspect. It lacks propitiation and coercion of the gods through offerings, sacrifices and incantations. In Hinduism the relationship between the gods and men is of the type of a contract. A Hindu can assert his claims on the gods by performing the religious duties.

The author is of the view that religion and civilization are interwoven with each other in the west. It seems to him that as soon as the life of the English people loses touch with religion, it will pass beyond the state of civilization to that of a decivilized state. Such a state is being created for a large number of people in the west by industrialization and democracy. The author became aware of this when he saw a party of English visitors to Canterbury. In the church of Thomas a Becket, the pilgrims had to be told who Thomas was and who the Black Prince was. This not only showed lack of knowledge of history, it also showed that they had lost touch with religion.

The author found that there was no pretence of secularity in any aspect of the civilization of English people. Even their deepest and highest scientific thoughts are coloured by religion.

The English religious rituals are accompanied by reverence which is inspired in its turn by the feelings of mystery. The choir boys looked like angels and they sang like angels. This showed the influence of religion on them.

The author also noticed a sociological fact in connection with religion. The upper classes in England were more religious than the common people, while in India the situation is exactly opposite. In India religion belongs to the common people and the upper classes boast of their irreligiosity. The upper classes in India are losing, and have largely lost, their capacity for religion and they no longer feel its need.

6.2.3 Some Model Explanations

(i) I looked at the magnificent..... Handel's Messiah

These lines have been culled from the essay entitled *Christian Civilization* which is an extract from Nirad C Chaudhuri's famous book *A Passage to England*. The author attended the first religious service at Cambridge in the King's College Chapel in Britain. He observed that a large number of visitors who had come to spend their holiday were also present there. They were stopped at the entrance of the choir because a rehearsal was going to be held. In these lines the author says that he looked at the magnificent arched roof of the chapel and the shining coloured glass and was very much impressed by their beauty. Suddenly he heard a lovely sweet voice singing a melody. The sound of the melody rose to the lofty roof of the chapel like a coil of sweet smelling smoke. The author was informed that it was the voice of a boy chorister who sang in the church service. The author says that the quality of his voice was different from that of any voice he had heard before. The author felt that the voice of the boy was more charming than Handel's Messiah whom he had been listening the previous night.

Messiah was the best composition of George Frederick Handel, a celebrated German composer. The author has described the incident and his experience effectively.

(ii) But a Hindu's pursuit..... doing in the West

The author says that true Hinduism makes us accept the universe and requires us to make a welfare universe with the help of gods. Some people think of welfare in purely worldly terms. They pray for longevity, fame and prosperity. But it is not always for material welfare. Materialism is an essential part of it and Hindus have done well in keeping old economic gods together with other gods. In other words, Hinduism has not separated the economic gods from others. As a result religion has served to infuse a glow of spirituality into worldly prosperity. If it has not been so, pursuit of economic welfare would have destroyed religion, altogether. It is doing so in the west. What the author means to say is that in Hinduism pursuit of economic welfare is a part of religion itself. As such there has been a balance between economic welfare and spiritual welfare.

The author has described the basic aspirations of Hinduism which did not find in the collective worship of the English people in an effective manner.

6.3 Self Assessment Questions

I Answer the following questions in two-three lines each

1. Why did Lewis Carroll get upset over his friend's remarks ?
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2. What is the discrimination shown by some people in their appraisal of Lewis Carroll ?
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3. How did the English people react when Canterbury was hit by Nazi bombing?
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4. Why was Chaudhuri surprised at the presence of a large number of people in King's College Chapel ?
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5. What was his feeling when he visited the Chapel a second time?
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.....
6. What is Chaudhuri's opinion about the origin of Hindu temple cults ?
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7. What does Chaudhuri write about true Hinduism ?

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8. What is the third feature of the Hindus' collective worship?

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.....
.....

II Answer the following question in 300 words.

What the main features of Christian Civilization according to Nirad C. Chaudhuri ?
How far do you agree with his views ?

6.4 Answers to SAQs

(I)

1. Lewis Carroll got upset over his friend's remark because he felt his friend was not serious in the matter of religion.
2. Some people do not consider the humour of Alice to be Victorian but they regard his seriousness in the matter of religion to be a feature of Victorianism.
3. People felt that the bombing had hit their sensibilities which were deep rooted in their culture and they were convinced that there could be no compromise between Nazism and their way of life.
4. Chaudhuri had read so much about the decline of religious belief, falling church attendance, and ignorance of the Bible that he was surprised by the number of people in devotional mood at King's College Chapel.
5. Chaudhuri was deeply moved by the seriousness of religious attitude and the number of people who attended the religious festival. He felt if anywhere he, a Hindu, could think of becoming a Christian it was in such a place.
6. Chaudhuri believes that temple cults are no necessary part of true Hinduism. None of the Hindu scriptures lays on a Hindu the duty of going to a temple or worshipping an image. These cults, India borrowed from Western Asia.
7. True Hinduism makes us accept the universe and requires us to make it a welfare universe with the help of gods that any man-made welfare state can only be a pinchbeck imitation of it.

8. The third feature of Hindu collective worship is propitiation and coercion of the gods through offerings, sacrifices, and incantations. A Hindu is not a mere suppliant at the feet of his gods and goddesses. He can also assert his claims on the deities. He has a kind of contract with his gods.

II The essay 'Christain Civilization' by Nirad C. Chudhuri throws light on the essentials of the Christian civilization and contrasts it with Hinduism in terms of the worship offered by the respective devotees in their shrines and collectively, in the main.

The author observes that Christianity has been a great force behind the rise of Western Civilization. Religion and culture have always mingled in Europe. The bombings of 1942 hit the sensibilities of the English people who realized that there could be no compromise between Nazism and their way of life. The author thinks that as soon as the ties of religion and civilization are snapped, England will recede into a decivilized state.

Full seriousness is a marked feature of English Culture as far as religion is concerned. Even the great and learned persons are very serious in the matter of their religious observances. The author had read about the decline of religious belief of the English people. But, when visited England, he found the situation just the opposite of what he had read.

Christians visit church with different spirit from that of Hindus going to temple. A Hindu goes to temple to look on the image of a Divine Ruler and the ceremonials of his daily life. He does everything to please god. The Christian does not go to church to look on a Divine Ruler and his life. The author says that temple cults are not a part of true Hinduism. They were borrowed from Western Asia. Christianity had fought and triumphed over those very cults.

Christian worship differs from Hindu worship in its objectives. A Hindu seeks worldly as well as spiritual welfare in his worship. In other words, materialism and spiritualism exist side by side in Hinduism. All the basic aspiration of Hinduism are absent from the collective worship of the English. They seem to be inspired by a movement of the spirit away from the world.

The author found that there was no pretence of secularity in any aspect of the civilization of the Christians. Even their deepest and highest scientific thoughts are coloured by religion.

The author also found a sociological fact about the religion. He observed that the upper classes were more religious in England than the common people. The situation is exactly the opposite in India. In India, religion belongs to the common people, while the upper classes boast of their irreligiosity. The upper classes in India are losing, and have largely lost, their capacity for faith and they no longer feel its need.

6.5 Let Us Sum up

In this unit we have discussed essentials of the Christian civilization. We have also tried to contrast the essentials of the Christian civilization with Hinduism, in terms of worship offered by the respective devotees in their shrines and collectively, in the main.

6.6 Review Questions

1. Discuss the essentials of the Christian civilization and contrast it with Hinduism.
2. What similarities and dissimilarities did Chaudhuri find between Christian civilization and Hinduism?

6.7 Bibliography

1. K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger: Indian Writing in English
 2. Nirad C Chaudhuri: A Passage to England
 3. C Paul Verghese: Nirad C Chaudhuri
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UNIT - 7

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI : MONEY AND THE ENGLISHMAN

(An Extract from '*A Passage to England*')

Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 About the Author
 - 7.2.1 Life and Personality
 - 7.2.2 Literary Background
 - 7.2.3 His works
- 7.3 The Essay: Money and the Englishman (Text)
 - 7.3.1 Glossary
 - 7.3.2 Summary of the Essay
 - 7.3.3 Some Model Explanations
 - 7.3.4 Literary Devices
- 7.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 7.5 Answerst to SAQs
- 7.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.7 Review Questions
- 7.8 Bibliography

7.0 Objectives

This unit will help you to learn

1. About the life, personality and works of Nirad C. Chaudhuri.
2. About the main characteristics of Nirad C. Chaudhuri's prose writings.
3. About the theme and content of the essay. 'Money and the Englishman'
4. About the attitude of an Englishman and an Indian towards money.
5. How to explain and interpret the text in one's own words.

6. About the literary devices used by Nirad C. Chaudhuri.
7. How to explain certain lines with reference to the context adding critical notes about the subject matter, theme and style.

7.1 Introduction

The extract entitled *Money and the Englishman* has been selected from Nirad C. Chaudhuri's famous work *A Passage to England*. It was published in 1959. The book is a series of impressions about the author's visit to Britain in 1955. His five week's visit to England, occasioned the writing of this book. He discusses in detail the public behaviour of the English people and as usual compares and contrasts it with that of the Indians. Nirad C. Chaudhuri's love for Europe is clearly evident in the book. He always regards Englishmen superior to Indians. In fact his anglicized spirit could only make him very close to his English hosts. In this extract he observes that Englishmen happily spend money on good things of life in a planned and deliberate manner. Indians on the contrary, feel pleasure in hoarding money and pain in spending it. Even when they spend it, they have no planned and deliberate manner.

7.2 About the Author

7.2.1 Life and Personality

Nirad C. Chaudhuri was born at Kishorganj in East Bengal (now in Bangala Desh) on 23rd November 1897. He spent his childhood in Kishorganj. His father, Upender Naryan Chaudhuri was an ardent exponent of the Bengali humanism of the nineteenth century. He cast an indelible impression on Nirad C. Chaudhuri during his formative years. His mother, Sushila Sundari was a lady of high morals. She taught Nirad the significance of good manners in life. Upto the age of twelve Chaudhuri came under the influence of Indian Renaissance. In 1910, his family shifted to Calcutta and lived there upto March 1942. His stay in Calcutta helped him to develop his intellectual faculty. The period from 1921 to 1937 was a testing time for him as he suffered indescribable poverty, want and humiliation. In March 1942 Chaudhuri migrated to Delhi to pursue his ambition as a writer and journalist. He contributed various essays and articles on a wide variety of subjects to numerous magazines and newspapers. He became popular with the publication of his first book *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* in 1951. In 1955 he paid a short visit to England. He was awarded the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize for his book *The Continent of Circe*. Chaudhuri remained intellectually alert even at the age of one hundred years. His last works *The Horsemen of the New Apocalypse* appeared in 1998. He passed away on July 31, 1999, at the ripe old age of one hundred two years.

7.2.2 Literary Background

Chaudhuri was brought up in an intellectual atmosphere. His mother taught him the famous plays of William Shakespeare. He was deeply impressed by these plays. He also read

Colly Cibber, Wordsworth, Webster, Rupert Brooke and Campbell. He was fascinated by England. He had a predilection of Western thought and literature from his early boyhood. Everything Western fascinated him and hence, he emerges a profound admirer of the Western culture and way of life and scathingly exposes the hollowness of the Hindu social, religious and family life. He turned out to be the most controversial writer of the 20th century. He regarded Mahatma Gandhi a great tragic failure. He was very popular in the Western world. His autobiography was considered superior to the biographies of Paramhansa Yoganand, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

7.2.3 His works

The famous works of Nirad C. Chaudhuri are the following :

1. *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian.*
2. *A Passage to England*
3. *The Continent of Circe*
4. *The Intellectuals in India*
5. *To Live or Not to Live*
6. *The Scholar Extraordinary*
7. *Thy Hand, Great Monarch : India 1921-1952*
8. *Hinduism*

7.3 The Essay: Money and the Englishman (Text)

Interested as I was in everything English from childhood, I could not possibly have failed to read and hear about their economic conditions and problems. But I gave no attention to them, because I knew I should not be able to understand them. In an age of economics I am not only ignorant of the subject but even contemptuous of it. But economics in its everyday and human form cannot be avoided by anyone, and it happens that in this aspect it has been the concern as much of the moralists as of the economists. Whatever little I shall have to say about the Englishman's relations with money will be said from the moral standpoint.

Now, in the West, or to be more precise in Great Britain and Western Europe, there is nothing more difficult to estimate than a man's exact degree of attachment to money. He will confess to even the most depraved of passions, but not to his love of the thing which makes life in the world possible, a love which within its limits is both reasonable and decent. Here at all events, the moralist has fully succeeded in making hypocrisy a homage paid by vice to virtue. Therefore, if anyone wishes to get an insight into a man's attitude towards money in the West, he has to resort to an indirect line of investigation, to look for symptoms and watch behaviour.

But even in the symptoms and behaviour a man will be as wary over money as wild animals are about their young.

So I never asked an Englishman how much love of money he had in his heart, but looked out for symptoms. Naturally, I looked for those which were the easiest to come upon in Hindu society, that is to say, the religious symptoms of the love of money. If I visited the house of an English family I tried quietly to find out if in any part of it there was a private shrine for a god or goddess of money, or for an economic form of their own God. Those Englishmen who would consider this to have been a fantastic thing to do should remember that such a shrine is precisely the thing I cannot escape noticing in every normal Hindu home, even though it may be Westernized up to a certain point. In all these homes there is a little sanctum, unfortunately most tawdrily furnished and decorated in these days, which is devoted to the goddess Lakshmi, who confers prosperity. Of course it goes without saying that I did not find any such shrine in any English home, though in a number of great houses I saw private chapels, which were, however, devoted to normal Christian worship.

In the shops, too, I missed the image of any god who was likely to be a counterpart of our elephant-headed god of success, Ganesa, who presides over all our enterprises, particularly financial one. Our religiosity covers every aspect of money-making, including the dishonest and violent. There were no more devoted worshippers of the goddess Kali than the Thugs. Christianity does not seem to have been directly involved in financial transactions, and so far as I have read the Anglican liturgy I do not find in it any reference to money-making though there are prayers for protection against natural calamities.

It might be thought that I am drawing a more or less fictitious comparison, and making too much of a state of affairs which was prevalent in the past and is now disappearing in Hindu society. That is not so. Among us the religious approach to economic affairs is as common today as it ever was, though perhaps it should be admitted that in one sense we have become ultra-modern. There is no other country in the world today in which the tribe of pundits called economists are held in greater honour. Perhaps they are the only pundits who are at all honoured by us now. So India has become an El Dorado for every kind of economist from every part of the world. We are engaged in creating a gigantic syncretistic economic cult, in which are to be combined American, English, German, French, Soviet and Japanese economics, and we are ready, for fear of giving offence to any economic theory about which we have not heard as yet, to erect an altar to the Unknown Economist.

But this has not involved, and on account of its very catholicity could not involve, any repudiation of the most ancient of our economic cults. Ever since the Rigvedic age we have had economic gods, and we shall continue to have them. Just as we do not even now leave medical treatment solely to the doctor or the surgeon, but requisition the priest and the astrologer, so also we call upon the gods to help us in our economic and technological ventures even in what is described in current economic jargon as the public sector. For instance, when the great dam at Bhakra was formally opened there were Vedic rites to ensure its success. In the

personal sphere the economist has no place at all. There, in so far as our own efforts are inadequate, we rely upon the occult powers.

This should be enough to show that I was not setting up a forced contrast between our outlook and that of the English people when I said that I failed to get any clue to their devotion to money from their religious observance. But since I did fail, I tried another approach, and watched their secular behaviour. Here, too, I came up against a barrier of reticence which baffled me. In our society money making is an open conspiracy, if it is a conspiracy at all. We do not, however, regard it as such. In our eyes it is an occupation which can be avowed with pride by every honest and honourable man. Indeed, as long as we remain in the world we are expected to put money above everything else. The notion of sordidness simply does not exist among us. As a consequence, the process of money making can be observed as easily in our country as love-making, about which I shall have to say something presently, can be in the West. But in English society there is a good deal of prudery over this. I could not help thinking that it was curious for a people who were described as shopkeepers, and are admitted to be acquisitive and capitalistic, not do discuss the problems and methods of acquisition openly, and to refrain from true shop-talk.

The only thing in their behaviour which seemed to throw an indirect light on the subject was the smoothness with which monetary transactions could be put through. England appeared to be a country of easy money, in the moralist's sense of the term. That is to say, everybody there was not only expected to pay his dues, promptly and regularly, but also, generally speaking, did so. In our society the willingness to pay decreases as the capacity to pay increases. What struck me even more forcibly was the readiness of public bodies to part with money, and trust individuals.

I have already said that every nation gets the cats it deserves; so it is with banks, and that was an important discovery. I made it as soon as I presented my first cheque in England. The clerk looked at it, pulled out a drawer, and handed me the money across the counter. I was so astounded by this that I could not help asking, 'But do you not send cheques to the ledger for verifying the signature and balance?' The clerk only smiled in reply, but a lady who was standing by my side said. 'We don't do any such thing in this country.'

Other Public bodies seemed to have the same pattern of behaviour. As soon as I arrived in London my friend from the B.B.C. took out some money from his pocket, gave it to me, and said that it was for the expenses of my first few days. Two things in this transaction surprised me: first, that the Accounts Department of the B.B.C. had trusted him with cash, and, secondly, that I was paid the money without any formality. What followed was even more exceptional in my experience of dealing with public departments. I had agreed to write some talks for the B.B.C., and it paid me half the fee, a large sum of money by my standards, in advance. I was also permitted to leave England without any guarantee as to the fulfillment of the contract. I am ashamed to say that I did not reciprocate this treatment by even delivering the script within the stipulated time, but took nearly a year to finish them.

In the shops, too, I found a general attitude of unsuspectingness. At Stratford-upon-Avon I was buying some silver, and finding that I had not enough ready money with me I gave a cheque to the owner of the shop, and requested her to send the articles to my London address when it had been cashed. She gave me the goods then and there. Elsewhere, too, I found no difficulty in paying by cheque, though I have been told that many shops do not accept cheques from unknown customers.

These incidents, small as they were, could not but influence my opinion of the English people. Personally, I was put in a very happy mood to find banks and shops so trustful, and as regards a formal moral judgement I shall say that even if no very high virtues could be attributed to the English people on the strength of these indications, they at least revealed the existence of commercial honesty on a more or less wide scale. The English people seemed to have extended the principle they had put forward in regard to personal and political liberty to their monetary transactions, to say that love of money in order to be enjoyed must be restricted.

But even this belongs to the negative side of the English character, about which I have written and does not reveal any positive approach to money. My search for this was virtually futile on the earning front, and I could only assume *a priori* that, like all other people, they also liked to have money, and as much of it as possible. But as soon as I moved over to the spending front the whole aspect of the search changed. On this side there was as much assertiveness as there was secrecy on the other. Indeed, here they gave their position away.

What I had read about the English people had given me the idea that they had a two-party system in their spending, as they had in their politics. There was the party of the savers, and there was the party of the spenders. Since in English politics the party names originated as terms of abuse and were boastfully taken over by the abused party, I shall follow the precedent and call these two parties the Misers and the Spendthrifts. Like the political parties, or like ritualism and anti-ritualism and High Church and low Church doctrines, they have alternated in English life from age to age. On the whole, I believe, it is the Spendthrifts who have made rough calculation that between December 1783, when William Pitt the Younger became Prime Minister, and 1958, the Conservatives or Conservative equivalents have been in power for one hundred and thirteen years, while the Liberals or Liberal equivalents have held it for sixty-two years, giving a ratio of nearly 3 to 2. The period in which spending has been fashionable and highly regarded in England must bear about the same proportion to the periods in which thrift has been equally respectable.

It is natural to infer from this that spending is the positive urge of the English people, and saving the corrective. Or to put it in slightly different words, spending is the ideal, and frugality the practical correlative of that ideal. With us, on the contrary, hoarding is a pleasure as well as a virtue (a formidable combination), and spending as best stern duty, but normally a pain. An associated difference between us and the English people is that we cannot, like them, spend money in a planned and deliberate manner, but stand in need of some external pressure or stimulus. For people of moderate means among us, who are of course the majority, this

force is the compulsion of living. But for those who have wealth, it is temptation, passion, or panic.

But to come back to what I saw in England I was there the Spendthrifts seemed to be in power as decisively as the so called Tories. If nothing else had indicated that to me, the shops did, in their number and splendour – continuous as the stars that shine and twinkle on the Milky Way. If anybody had told me about them before I saw them myself I should have had difficulty in believing him. Not that I had not read about the shop in London and Paris, but actually to go into them was like falling in love after having only read novels.

There was an incredible variety and abundance of goods, and at all prices. For instance, I was specially advised to buy a pair of shoes. In India if I want to buy them I have choice of only two makes and about four styles acceptable to me. In London and four other towns of England I contemplated hundreds of them, till I lost my faculty for making a selection. So, if in the end I did buy a pair, it was through the help of an obliging shop assistant in Bond Street. I think I should have gone mad if I had had to decide about clothes, or furniture, or glass, or china.

What really astonished me was the amount of wholly superfluous merchandise on sale even in small towns. Among these I shall only mention two, the flowers and the silver. Flowers, which today are and tomorrow are not and which therefore do not constitute investment, could be bought in cartloads in every part of London. I was told that they were expensive, and expensive they were, but unless there had been people who were willing to pay for them they would not have been stocked. As regards silver, I am fully aware of the connection that exists between the second-hand silver in the shop-windows and taxation, but in similar circumstances the metal would have been melted down in my country, and not been allowed to retain its useless art form. I made two token purchases of both just to show my loyalty to the cult of superfluous expenditure.

Now about food. What silly thing had I not been told about its being both scarce and monotonous! After seeing things for myself I wrote to my family, and that too very soon after my arrival, not to have any fears on that score. If for nothing else I should have been grateful for the simple facts that I was having good cows' milk for the first time in about twenty years, in London of all places, after coming from a cow-worshipping country. But I was not wholly a boy in matters of food, so I had other things as well. Indeed, I could lunch or dine on anything I liked. The very first thing that I had in London was a Camembert, which I had been wanting to taste for years. I related my gastronomical adventures in detail to my family, and here is an extract from one of my letters :

‘One of the highlights of the day (on which I also met Bertrand Russell) was the lunch. The restaurant cooks sole in thirty-two different ways, and I had one kind which was cooked in white wine, with shrimps, oysters, mussels and mushrooms. For *hors-d-oeuvres* we had smoked salmon, which was amazingly good, and as dessert I had such pineapple as I had not eaten since I left East Bengal nearly thirty years ago, and we washed it all down with a fine

bottle of Chablis, which cost more than my Chateau-Yquem at home.' (I hope the sordid reference will be forgiven, it was a private letter in which I wanted to show my gratitude to my hosts.)

People in my country tell me that this was exceptional. Of course it was. When one speaks of French gastronomy one does not have the everyday food of the French in mind. The question was whether anyone wanting it could have good living in England. I found that I could. All this must sound absurd to English good-livers, but I have to convince my people who have come to believe from what they have heard from those who have lived in England that the English eat only potato chips and cabbage.

There were not only a large number of shops, there also seemed to be a hierarchy and even caste system among them, which in its own way threw some light on the English people's philosophy of spending. When I told a young lady at Cambridge that I had seen some good shops in a certain street in London she observed that there were some frightfully cheap one's at the upper end. Cambridge, she explained, was different from London in this respect. In London there were very expensive as well as very cheap shops, but Cambridge was not extreme in either direction, and yet was very good in the middle ranges, with however, sufficient elbow room within that range.

I think it is this kind of attitude to shops which had led the Bond Street Association to adopt and display a rather attractive slogan in their windows: 'It costs you no more to buy, but it means so much more to you.' I have, however, been told recently that middle-class people in England feel shy of going into Bond Street shops on account of their clothes, which they fear are not smart enough for the shop-assistants, who will therefore look down their noses at them. I had no idea that in order to shop in Bond Street one had to be tailored in Savile Row, and so I walked into the shop in the most nondescript of clothes. I suppose the fact of my being a dark-skinned foreigner condoned my inadequacy.

But if what I have heard is true, I would say that the owners of the Bond Street shop should do something about it. They should not allow the effect of their nice slogan as an invitation to spend in Bond Street to be whittled down by the manners of their assistants. I should certainly hesitate in the future to enter a Bond Street shop.

I can hardly say how it gladdened the heart of spendthrift in both principle and, so far as my means have permitted, in practice to find myself in a country in which spending was respectable. I like the English people for their devotion to spending "That's the way the money goes".

Of course, I also know that their Government and economists have black looks for them on account of this, and are doing their best to wean them from the habit. It is quite possible that the Government and the economists are right in their way, they know their business; but I am sure that they do not know the psychology of their people. They are also inconsistent. They cannot go on boasting about the so-called Welfare State in the way they do, and yet do

things which deprive this Welfare State of all meaning. Does the Welfare State stand for meanness for the sake of maintaining the balance of payments, or does it constitute an opportunity for realizing one of the most deep-seated ambitions of the English People?

I do not call it the desire for a high standard of living, which is a shabby economists' catchword. The English people have always desired a much more generous thing- style in living. To live in style and be careless about money has in the past been the privilege of the English upper classes. So even those who could not afford to be careless have pretended to be so. At last, with the coming of the Welfare State the opportunity for living like their betters has come to the English people at large. If they are going to be prevented from doing so, they are bound to feel sore. I will say that in the event their victory over poverty will be too much like their victory in two World Wars. I hope the English people will resist the insidious degradation. In any case, they have taught me that the best use for money is to spend it on the good things of life.

7.3.1 Glossary

A priori	:	using facts or principles that are known to be true in order to decide what the probable results of something will be.
Abundance	:	a large quantity that is more than enough.
Acquisitive	:	wanting very much to buy or get new possessions.
Analogy	:	a comparison of one thing with another thing that has similar features.
Astounded	:	surprised or shocked by something.
Camembert	:	a type of soft French cheese with a strong flavour
Catholicity	:	including many or most things.
Chateau-yquem:		a castle or large country house.
Condoned	:	to accept behaviour that is morally wrong.
Contemptuous	:	Scornful
Depraved	:	Corrupt
Dessert	:	sweet food eaten at the end of a meal.
El Dorado	:	the imaginary land of fabulous gold.
Enterprises	:	companies or business
Fantastic	:	extremely good ; excellent
Frugality	:	using as much money as is necessary.
Gastronomy	:	the art and practice of cooking and eating good food.

Hoarding	:	to collect and keep large amounts of money especially secretly.
Homage	:	something that is said or done to show respect for somebody.
Hors-d' oeuvres:		small amount of food usually cold, served before the main part of a meal.
Hypocrisy	:	behaviour in which somebody pretends to have moral standards that they do not actually have.
Incredible	:	impossible or difficult to believe.
Infer	:	to reach an opinion or decide that something is true on the basis of information that is available.
Insidious	:	spreading gradually or without being noticed, but causing serious harm.
Jargon	:	Words or expressions that are used in a particular profession or by a group of people.
Liturgy	:	a fixed form of public worship used in churches.
Merchandise	:	goods that are bought or sold.
Mussels	:	Small shellfish that can be eaten
Nondescript	:	having no interesting or unusual features or qualities.
Oysters	:	large flat shell fish.
Precedent	:	tradition
Privilege	:	a special right or advantage
Prudery	:	The attitude or behaviour of people who seem very easily shocked by things connected with sex.
Reciprocate	:	To behave or feel towards somebody in the same way as they feel or behave towards you.
Repudiation	:	disowned
Resort	:	the act of using something bad or unpleasant because nothing else is possible.
Reticence	:	unwilling to tell people about things.
Sanctum	:	a private room where somebody can go not to be disturbed.
Shrimps	:	small shellfish that can be eaten

Shrine	:	a place where people come to worship
Stipulated	:	specified
Superfluous	:	more than you need or want
Tawdrily	:	involving low moral standards
Thugs	:	violent persons, especially criminals
Wary	:	Cautions
Wean	:	to make somebody gradually stop doing something
Whittled	:	to reduce the number of something

7.3.2 Summary of the Essay

The author was interested in everything English. He was unable to understand the economics. However, he realized that economics had become an integral part of modern life. In this extract, the author has expressed his views about the Englishman's relations with money from the moral standpoint.

Englishmen are undemonstrative to the attraction of money. They do not evince any easily recognizable symptoms of money. Indians inordinately demonstrate their love for money and the religious symptoms of the love of money are found in every Hindu house. In the homes and shops of Hindus, Lakshmi, the Indian goddess of wealth, and Ganesh, the elephant headed god of success and financial enterprises, are worshipped. Their religiosity covers every aspect of money-making, including the dishonest and violent. But the author did not find such things in Christianity. The people of the two countries have different attitude in this matter. Ever since the Rigvedic age the Hindus have had economic gods, and they will continue to have them. For instance, when the great dam at Bhakra was formally opened there were observed Vedic rites to ensure its success. The author did not get any clue of Englishman's devotion to money from their religious observances. So the author tried another approach and watched their secular behaviour. But their reticence confused the author. For Hindus, money-making is an occupation which can be avowed with pride by every honest and honourable man. But in English society there is a good deal of prudery over this.

The only thing in the behaviour of the Englishmen which seemed to throw an indirect light on the subject is that they believe in smoothness in monetary transactions. In England, everybody pays his dues regularly and promptly, but in India the willingness to pay decreases as the capacity to pay increases. The author illustrates this aspect of their life with his personal experience. Once he presented a cheque, he was handed the money without verifying the signature and balance. When he arrived in London, the B.B.C. official gave him money without any formality. Once he did not have enough ready money, he wrote a cheque and his cheque was accepted though he was an unknown customer.

The author observed that there were two types of people in England. There was the party of the savers, and the party of the spenders. The author called them the Misers and the Spendthrifts. He felt that in England the Spendthrifts were in power. They believe in spending money. On the contrary in India, hoarding is a pleasure as well as a virtue and spending at best a stern duty, but normally a pain. The noticeable difference between the Indians, and the English people is that Indians cannot spend money in a planned and deliberate manner, but stand in need of some external pressure or stimulus. People of moderate means are compelled to spend and for wealthy people, it is temptation, passion or panic.

In England, there was an incredible variety and abundance of goods, at all prices in shops. One can select from many options. In India, however, limited options are given to the customers to decide about. The author noticed this feature in every field. He goes to the extent of saying that he got good cows' milk for the first time in about twenty years, in London of all places, after coming from a cow-worshipping country. Similarly, he got quality camembert and other good items in England.

There were not only a large number of shops, there also seemed to be a hierarchy and even caste system among them. There were very expensive as well as very cheap shops. Some people feel shy of going into Bond Street shops on account of their clothes. However, the author did not notice such thing. He advises the shopkeepers to do something to remove such doubts from the mind of the customers. In a nutshell, the author liked the English people for their devotion to expenditure – “*that's the way the money goes.*”

The Government and economists of England are trying to wean the people from the habit of spending. The author does not agree with them. He says that England is a Welfare State and people should be allowed to do what they like. Time has changed. Now people are careful regarding their expenditure and income. In brief, the author comes to realize that the best use of money is to spend it on the good things of life.

7.3.3 Some Model Explanations

(a) In the shops, too, I natural calamities.

These lines have been taken from the essay entitled *Money and Englishman*. The essay is an extract from Nirad C. Chaudhuri's famous book *A Passage to England*. It was published in 1959. It describes the experiences and observations of the author during his stay in England. The author observed that Indians are money-minded. Englishmen show a general non-attachment to money. The images of Laxhmi and Ganesh are worshipped in Indian houses and shops with a view to becoming prosperous. The author visited the houses of Englishmen to find out if they also have a private shrine for a god or goddess of money. But he did not find such god or goddess in their houses. In these lines he says that he did not see any image of Ganesh, who is considered to preside over all business activities of Hindus, in the shops of the English. On the other hand, in India every aspect of money-making involves the worship of

such gods and goddess. Even the criminals who earn their money by dishonest and violent means worship goddesses of money. For instance, the Thugs are regarded as the great devotees of Kali. On the contrary, the author observed no such signs in Christianity. It seemed to him that Christianity keeps itself aloof from financial transactions. The author did not notice it anywhere. However, he observed that the English people pray to god to protect them from natural calamities. The author has observed this particular aspect of the English people minutely and has used Indian analogy to make his point clear.

(b) There was an incredible..... or glass, or china.

The author observed that the English people are fond of using money to get things of their use. They can be termed as spendthrifts. They spend money in a planned and deliberate manner. As a consequence of this habit, the English shops are packed with an incredible variety and abundance of goods, and at all prices. The author illustrates this fact from a personal experience. Once the author was advised to buy a pair of shoes. He says that if he had to buy them in India, he might have to choose from three or four varieties of shoes. He did not have enough options. On the other hand, in London and four other cities of England, he was shown hundreds of varieties. The result was that he was at a loss to select the right one. So at the end he had to request the shop-assistant to guide him in this connection. The author feels that if he had to decide about clothes, or furniture, or glass, or china, he must have gone mad. What the author wants to say is that in India one has to choose a required item from limited number of options whereas in England options are unlimited.

The author has described his experience regarding the options which are available for different articles in England in an effective manner. He has compared the situations in India and England to bring home his point.

7.3.4 Literary Devices

Chaudhari's meticulous use of various figures of speech, especially of simile, enhances the vehemence of his style. The appropriate use of simile imparts picturesqueness to his style. His style is conspicuous for the aptness of diction. He chooses apt words and phrases from a rich stock and spares no pain in polishing them. The aptness of diction enables him to pack his arguments effectively and precisely. In spite of the controversial character writing, he enjoys a privileged place in Indian English prose by virtue of his vigorous logic, eloquent, flexible and lucid style, intellectual sharpness and wide scholarship, his boundless capacity for original thinking and immaculate command over English.

7.4 Self Assessment Questions

Answer the following questions in two or three lines

- Q.1 Why did the author fail to read and hear about the economic conditions and problems of the English ?

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Q.2 What according to the author is the most difficult thing in the west?

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Q.3 What did the author do when he visited the house of an English family?

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Q.4 Do the Indians leave medical treatment solely to the doctor or the surgeon?

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Q.5 What attitude is shown by the Englishmen in monetary transactions?

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Q.6 Describe the experience of the author when he presented his first cheque.

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Q.7 Describe the author's experience when he went to buy a pair of shoes.

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Q. 8 The author says that Englishmen had a two-party system in their spending. Name them.

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Q.9 How do the Englishmen spend their money ?

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Q.10 Why do middle-class people in England feel shy of going to Bond Street shops ?

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Q.11 What lesson does the author learn from his experience of the attitude of the Englishmen regarding money ?

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7.5 Answers SAQs

1. The author failed to read and hear about the economic conditions and problems of the English because he knew he would not be able to understand them. He was not only ignorant of the subject but even contemptuous of it.
2. The most difficult thing in the west, or to be more precise in Great Britain and Western Europe is to know a man's exact degree of attachment to money . The reason is that the man of this region can confess to even the most depraved of passions, but not to his love to money.
3. The author wanted to know about the religious symptoms for the love of money of Englishmen. So when he visited the house of an English family he tried quietly to find out if in any part of it there was a private shrine for a god or goddess of money, or for an economic form of their own God.
4. No, Indians do not leave medical treatment solely to the doctor or the surgeon. They call upon the gods to help them.
5. The Englishmen believe in the smoothness of monetary transactions. In England, everybody pays his dues regularly and promptly, but in India the willingness to pay decreases as the capacity to pay increases.
6. When the author presented his first cheque in England, the clerk looked at it, pulled out a drawer, and handed him the money across the counter. He was astonished at this important discovery.

7. The author noticed that the shop was full of different varieties of shoes. He was unable to select the right one. So he requested the shop assistant to help him.
8. The author observed that the Englishmen had a two-party system in their spending, as they had in their politics. They are- the Misers and the Spendthrifts.
9. The Englishmen spend money in a planned and deliberate manner.
10. Some middle-class people in England feel shy of going into Bond street shops on account of their-clothes. They feel that they will be looked down upon by the shop-assistants.
11. The author learns from his experience of the attitude towards money of the Englishmen that the best use for money is to spend it on the good things of life.

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit we have acquainted you with:

- The life and personality of Nirad C. Chaudhuri
- Nirad C. Chaudhuri's critical interpretation of his impressions of his visit to England.
- The literary devices used by Chaudhuri.
- Social, moral and religious influence on Nirad C. Chaudhuri of his visit to England.

7.7 Review Questions

1. Discuss in detail the attitude of an Englishman towards money.
2. Differentiate the attitudes of an Englishman and an Indian towards money.

7.10 Bibliography

1. Nirad C. Chaudhuri : A Passage to England
2. K.R.S Iyengar : Indian Writing in English
3. Tara Sinha : Nirad C. Chaudhuri – A Sociological and Stylistic Study of His Writings During the period 1951-72.
4. C. Paul Verghese : Nirad C. Chaudhuri

UNIT-8

JANE AUSTEN : *EMMA* (I)

Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Jane Austen : *Emma*
 - 8.2.1 About the Age: Romantic Period
 - 8.2.2 Novel as a Genre and its Development
 - 8.2.3 About the Author: Jane Austen
 - 8.2.4 About the Novel : *Emma*
- 8.3 Self Assessment Questions
- 8.4 Answers to SAQs
- 8.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 8.6 Review Questions
- 8.7 Bibliography

8.0 Objectives

In this Unit we aim at giving you details about what a novel is and how it is different from other literary forms. You have been given a short history of the development of the novel as a literary form. By the end of this Unit you will be able to

1. tell what the important elements of a novel are.
2. know about important novelists of the age.
3. know about Jane Austen as a novelist of the Romantic period.
4. know about the important events and characters in *Emma*.
5. know about certain devices used by the novelist.

8.1 Introduction

In this Unit you have been given details about what makes a novel. You will also learn about the development of novel and its main characteristics. The whole original text cannot be given due to the limited length of the unit. But you should study the whole novel at your end.

You should try to know how to study a novel. Answers to questions are given to help you develop your own vocabulary and composition skills. Exercise has been given for you in the form of Review Questions. Reading Materials from internet and other critical books have been adapted and provided to you keeping in view the undergraduate level. You should develop habit to consult books recommended for further readings;

8.2 Jane Austen : *Emma*

8.2.1 About the Age: Romantic Period

The Romantic period in English literature is usually considered from 1789 (The beginning of the French Revolution) or 1798 (The Publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth & Coleridge) up to the beginning of the Victorian era. This is considered a great literary period with a strong contrast with the Neoclassical period (From Restoration 1660 to the beginning of the Romanticism) in theme and style. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley, Keats as poets ; Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey and Leigh Hunt as essayists; Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott as novelists are well-known writers of this age.

Dryden, Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson, Goldsmith and Edmund Burke are important writers of neoclassicism who imitated the classical writers in form & style; and specially they had high respect for the Roman writers who acted as their models.

The Romantic writers of the first three decades of the 19th Century differ from the neo classical writers in their approach of ideals and writings. Their materials, form and style of literature are different from their predecessors. The Romantic manifesto or statement of revolutionary aims begin with the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by Wordsworth. Wordsworth rejected the use of artificiality in theme and style. Common man from the country side in common man's language became the subject matter. This was in contrast with the urban ideas and artificial diction of the neoclassical writers. Thus the Romantics violated the norms of decorum according to which poetry should be with serious subjects in appropriately elevated style. Use of supernatural element became one of the other innovations in the poetry of Coleridge and Keats. Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley acted as the poet-prophets of the era.

In his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth defines poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility. Thus it is free from artificial rules and traditions of the neoclassic predecessors. Keats said "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all". Thus the Romantics were against artificiality in theme and style. Imagination played an important role in the poetic process of the Romantics.

Nature, the landscape alongwith its flora and fauna became the subject matter of the Romantic poetry. Wordsworth is considered the high priest of nature. Accurate description and sensuousness became the integral part of the poetry of Keats. Nature became an important medium for human thinking and human problems. Nature became an important theme

against the fever and the fret of this world, against the evils of industrialization which deserted the solitude of the countryside, the evils of urban life & the satanic mills.

Much of the Romantic works are full of autobiographical details representing the poet himself. While the works of the neoclassicists were mainly about other men. Most of the Romantic poems reflect the life and mood of the poet for example Wordsworth's *Prelude* or odes of Shelley or Keats or Byron's *Childe Harold*. In a similar manner we find autobiographical details in the personal essays of Lamb and Hazlitt. In all these works the writer appears as a solitary figure, socially non-conformist or outcaste. He is usually away from society. Many a time the chief character of a Romantic work is a rebel, whether for good or evil.

While the neo-classical writers rejoiced in perfect accomplishment in form and style in the manner of their Greco-Roman models, the Romantics preferred the glory of the imperfect. The Romantics rejoiced at the notion of unachievable ideals. The poet's faculty of imagination leads into limitless aspirations. The French Revolution and its ideas of fraternity, liberty, equality and humanity affected the Romantics to various limits and thus the Romantic era became an age of new beginnings and great possibilities in subject matter as well as in style.

8.2.2 Novel as a Genre and its Development

The term novel is now applied to a great variety of writings that have in common only the attribute of being extended works of prose fiction. As an extended narrative, the novel is distinguished from the short story and from the work of middle length called the "novelette"; its magnitude permits a greater variety of characters, greater complication of plot (or plots), an ampler development of milieu, and a more sustained and subtle exploration of character than do the shorter, hence necessarily more concentrated, modes. As a prose narrative, the novel is distinguished from the long verse narratives of Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton which, beginning with the eighteenth century, it has increasingly supplanted. Within these limits the novel includes such diverse works as Richardson's *Pamela* and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*; Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* and Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove*; Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Joyce's *Ulysses*; C.P.Snow's *Strangers and Brothers* and Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*.

After the Italian novella and the picaresque narratives and many others including the seventeenth century character (a brief sketch of a typical personality or way of life) the novel as we now think of it emerged in England in the early eighteenth century. In 1719 Daniel Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, and in 1722 *Moll Flanders*. Both of these are picaresque in type, in the sense that they are a sequence of episodes held together largely because they happened to one person.

The credit for having written the first English "novel of character" is nearly unanimously given to Samuel Richardson for his *Pamela*; or *Virtue Rewarded* (1740)

The distinction between the novel of incident and the novel of character cannot be

drawn sharply; but in the novel of incident the greater weight of interest is on what the character will do next and on how the story will come out; in the novel of character, it is on his motives for what he does, and on how he as a person will turn out.

Pamela, like its greater and tragic successor, Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747-1748), is an epistolary novel; that is, the narrative is conveyed entirely by an exchange of letters.

Novels may have any kind of plot form – tragic, comic, satiric, or romantic. A distinction – which was introduced by Hawthorne (for example, in his Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables*) and has been adopted and expanded by a number of recent critics – is that between two basic types of prose fiction ; the novel proper and the “romance.” The novel is characterized as the fictional attempt to give the effect of realism, by representing complex characters with mixed motives who are rooted in a social class, operate in a highly developed social structure, interact with many other characters, and undergo plausible and everyday modes of experience. The prose romance has as its ancestors the chivalric romance of the Middle Ages and the Gothic novel of the later eighteenth century. It typically deploys simplified characters, larger than life, who are sharply discriminated as heroes and villains, masters and victims; the protagonist is often solitary, and isolated from a social context; the plot emphasized adventure, and is often cast in the form of the quest for an ideal, or the pursuit of any enemy; and the nonrealistic and occasionally melodramatic events are sometimes claimed to project in symbolic form the primal desired, hopes and terrors in the depths of the human mind, and to be therefore analogous to the materials of dream, myth, ritual, and folklore. Examples of romance novels (as distinct from the realistic novels of Jane Austen, George Eliot, or Henry James) are Walter Scott's *Rob Roy*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, and the mainstream of American fiction, from Poe, Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville, and Mark Twain to William Faulkner and Saul Bellow.

Other common classifications of novel types are based on differences in subject matter, emphasis, and artistic purpose.

The subject of the “novels of formation” or “novels of education” is the development of the protagonist's mind and character, as he passes from childhood through varied experiences – and usually through a spiritual crisis – into maturity and the recognition of his identity and role in the world.

“Artist novel” which represents the development of a novelist or other artist into the stage of maturity in which he recognizes his artistic destiny and achieves mastery of his artistic craft. Instances of this type include some of the major twentieth century novels; Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*,

The sociological novel emphasizes the influence of social and economic conditions on characters and events; often it also embodies an implicit or explicit thesis recommending social reform: H.B.Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*.

The Historical novel takes its setting and some of its characters and events from history; the term is usually applied only if the historical milieu and events are fairly elaborately developed, and important to the central narrative: Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Dickens' *A tale of Two Cities*, Kenneth Roberts' *Northwest Passage*.

The regional novel emphasizes the setting, speech, and customs of a particular locality, not merely as local color, but as important conditions affecting the temperament of the characters, and their ways of thinking, feeling and acting. "Wessex" in Hardy's novels.

Since its flowering time in the second half of the nineteenth century, the novel has displaced all other literary forms in popularity, and has replaced long verse narratives almost entirely. The novelistic art has received the devoted attention of some of the supreme craftsmen of modern literature – Flaubert, Henry James, Proust, Mann, and Joyce. There has been constant experimentation with new fictional techniques and procedures, such as the control of the *point of view* so as to minimize the apparent role of the author-narrator, the use of *symbolist* and *expressionist* techniques and of devices adopted from the art of the cinema, the dislocation of time – sequence, the adaptation of forms and motifs from myths and dreams, and the exploitation of the stream of consciousness method in way that converts the narrative of outer action and events into a drama of the life of the mind. Henry James's Prefaces, gathered into one volume as *The Art of the Novel (1934)*, exemplify the care and subtlety lavished on the craft of fiction, while the novels of Proust, Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Faulkner show how drastic – and successful – have been modern innovation in narrative methods, form, and the interrelations of the novelistic parts.

8.2.3 About the Author: Jane Austen

Jane Austen was a major English novelist, whose brilliantly witty, elegantly structured satirical fiction marks the transition in English literature from 18th century neo-classicism to 19th century romanticism.

Jane Austen was born on 16 December, 1775, at the rectory in the village of Steventon, near Basingstoke, in Hampshire. The seventh of eight children of the Reverend George Austen and his wife, Cassandra, she was educated mainly at home and never lived apart from her family. She had a happy childhood amongst all her brothers and the other boys who lodged with the family and whom Mr Austen tutored. From her older sister, Cassandra, she was inseparable. To amuse themselves, the children wrote and performed plays and impersonation, and even as a little girl Jane was encouraged to write. The reading that she did of the books in her father's extensive library provided material for the short satirical sketches she wrote as a girl.

At the age of 14 she wrote her first novel, *Love and Freindship* and then *A History of England by a partial, prejudiced and ignorant Historian*, together with other very amusing juvenilia. In her early twenties Jane Austen wrote the novels that were later to be re-worked

and published as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*. She also began a novel called *The Watsons* which was never completed.

As a young woman Jane enjoyed dancing (an activity which features frequently in her novels) and she attended balls in many of the great houses of the neighbourhood. She loved the country, enjoyed long country walks, and had many Hampshire friends. It therefore came as a considerable shock when her parents suddenly announced in 1801 that the family would be moving away to Bath. Mr Austen gave the Steventon living to his son James and retired to Bath with his wife and two daughters. The next four years were difficult ones for Jane Austen. She disliked the confines of a busy town and missed her Steventon life. After her father's death in 1805, his widow and daughters also suffered financial difficulties and were forced to rely on the charity of the Austen sons. It was also at this time that, while on holiday in the West country, Jane fell in love, and when the young man died, she was deeply upset. Later she accepted a proposal of marriage from Harris Bigg-Wither, a wealthy landowner and brother to some of her closest friends, but she changed her mind the next morning and was greatly upset by the whole episode.

After the death of Mr Austen, the Austen ladies moved to Southampton to share the home of Jane's naval brother Frank and his wife Mary. There were occasional visits to London, where Jane stayed with her favourite brother Henry, at that time a prosperous banker, and where she enjoyed visits to the theatre and art exhibitions. However, she wrote little in Bath and nothing at all in Southampton.

Then, in July, 1809, on her brother Edward offering his mother and sisters a permanent home on his Chawton estate, the Austen ladies moved back to their beloved Hampshire countryside. It was a small but comfortable house, with a pretty garden, and most importantly it provided the settled home which Jane Austen needed in order to write. In the seven and a half years that she lived in this house, she revised *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* and published them (in 1811 and 1813) and then embarked on a period of intense productivity. *Mansfield Park* came out in 1814, followed by *Emma* in 1816 and she completed *Persuasion* (which was published together with *Northanger Abbey* in 1818, the year after her death). None of the books published in her life-time had her name on them — they were described as being written "By a Lady". In the winter of 1816 she started *Sanditon*, but illness prevented its completion.

Jane Austen had contracted Addisons Disease, a tubercular disease of the kidneys.. No longer able to walk far, she used to drive out in a little donkey carriage which can still be seen at the Jane Austen Museum at Chawton. By May 1817 she was so ill that she and Cassandra, to be near Jane's physician, rented rooms in Winchester. Tragically, there was then no cure and Jane Austen died in her sister's arms in the early hours of 18 July, 1817. She was 41 years old. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Year	Important Event	Age of the Writer
1775	(16 Dec) Jane Austen born at Steventon in Hants, seventh child of the Rev. George Austen (1731-1805) and Cassandra Leigh (1739-1827)	
1784/5	Jane Austen and her sister, Cassandra, leave the Abbey School, Reading	9
1795	<i>Elinor and Marianne</i> written. <i>Lady Susan</i> written	20
1796	(Oct) <i>First Impressions</i> begun (finished Aug 1797)	21
1797	(Nov) <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> begun. <i>First Impressions</i> unsuccessfully offered to Cadell	22
1798/9	<i>Northanger Abbey</i> (Susan) written.	
1801	Austens settle in Bath	26
1805	Rev. George Austen dies. <i>The Watsons</i> and <i>Lady Susan</i> written about this time	30
1806	Austens leave Bath for Clifton with ‘happy feelings of escape’, and visit Adlestrop and Stoneleigh	31
1807	(Mar) Austens settle in at Castle Square, Southampton	32
1809	Austens move to Chawton, Hampshire (owned by Jane’s brother Edward)	34
1811	<i>Mansfield Park</i> begun (Feb). <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> published 36 (Nov.)	36
1812	(Nov) <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> sold to Egerton	37
1813	(Jan) <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> published (Nov.) second editions of this and <i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	38
1814	(21 Jan) <i>Emma</i> begun (finished 29 Mar 1815) (May) <i>Mansfield Park</i> published by Egerton	39
1815	<i>Persuasion</i> begun (finished August 1816) (Dec) <i>Emma</i> published by John Murray.	40
1816	<i>Mansfield Park</i> , second edition.	41
1817	(Jan-Mar) <i>Sanditon</i> begun (28 July) Jane Austen dies at Winchester; buried in Winchester Cathedral (Dec) <i>Northanger Abbey</i> ; and <i>Persuasion</i> published by Murray	

8.2.4 About the Novel: *Emma*

Emma is a comic novel by Jane Austen, first published in 1816, about the perils of misconstrued romance. The main character, Emma Woodhouse, is described in the opening paragraph as “handsome, clever, and rich” but is also rather spoiled. Prior to starting the novel, Austen wrote, “I am going to take a heroine whom no-one but myself will much like.”

(a) Summary of *Emma*

Emma Woodhouse is a young woman in Regency England. She lives in Surrey in the village of Highbury with her father, a valetudinarian (one who is afraid he will become ill) who is principally characterized by excessive concern for the health and safety of his loved ones. Emma’s friend and only critic is the gentlemanly Mr. Knightley, her neighbour from the adjacent estate of Donwell, and brother of her elder sister Isabella’s husband. As the novel opens, Emma has just attended the wedding of Miss Taylor, her old governess and best friend. Having introduced Miss Taylor to her future husband, Mr Weston, Emma takes credit for their marriage, and decides that she rather likes matchmaking.

Against Mr. Knightley’s advice, Emma forges ahead with her new avocation; this time she tries to match her new friend Harriet Smith, a sweet but none-too-bright girl of seventeen — described as “the natural [illegitimate] daughter of somebody” to Mr. Elton, the local vicar. However, first she must persuade Miss Smith to refuse an advantageous marriage proposal from a respectable young farmer, Mr. Martin, whom Emma believes is too socially inferior for Harriet. Against her wishes, the easily-influenced Harriet refuses the proposal. However, soon her schemes go awry when Mr. Elton, a social climber himself, declares he wants to marry Emma — not the socially inferior Harriet. After Emma rejects Mr. Elton, he leaves for a while for a sojourn in Bath, and Harriet fancies herself heartbroken. Emma now tries to convince Harriet that Mr. Elton is beneath her after all.

An interesting development is the arrival in the neighbourhood of Frank Churchill, Mrs Weston’s stepson, whom Emma has never met, but has a long-standing interest. Also, Mr. Elton (who will reveal himself to be more and more arrogant and pompous as the story continues — much like Mr. Collins of *Pride and Prejudice*) returns with another newcomer — a common, vulgar but rich wife who becomes part of Emma’s social circle, though the two women soon loathe each other. A third new character is the orphaned Jane Fairfax, the reserved but beautiful niece of Emma’s impoverished neighbour, the loquacious Miss Bates. Miss Bates is an aging spinster, who is well-meaning but increasingly poor; Emma strives to be polite and kind to her, but is irritated by her dull and incessant chattering. Jane, who is very accomplished musically, is Miss Bates’ pride and joy; Emma, however, envies her talent and initially dislikes her for her apparent coldness and reserve. Jane had lived with Miss Bates until she was nine, but Colonel Campbell, a friend indebted to her father for seeing him through a life-threatening illness, welcomed her into his own home where she became fast friends with his unfortunately plain daughter and received a first-rate education. On the marriage of Miss

Campbell, Jane returned to her relations, ostensibly to regain her health and prepare to earn her living as a governess.

In her eagerness to find some sort of fault with Jane — and also to find something to amuse her in her pleasant but dull village — Emma indulges in the fantasy, apparently shared with Frank, that Jane was an object of admiration for Miss Campbell's husband, Mr. Dixon, and that it is for this reason she has returned home, rather than going to Ireland to visit them. This suspicion is further fuelled by the arrival of a piano for Jane from a mysterious anonymous benefactor.

Emma tries to make herself fall in love with Frank largely because everyone says they make a handsome couple. Frank seems to everyone to have Emma as his object, and the two flirt together in public, including on a day-trip to Box Hill, a local beauty spot. Emma ultimately decides, however, that he would suit Harriet better after an episode where Frank 'saves' her protégée from a band of Gypsies. At this time, Mrs. Weston wonders if Emma's old friend Mr. Knightley might have taken a fancy to Jane. Emma promptly decides that she does not want Mr. Knightley to marry anyone, but rather than further explore these feelings, she claims that this is because she wants her nephew Henry to inherit the family property.

When Mr. Knightley scolds her for a thoughtless insult to Miss Bates, Emma is privately ashamed, and tries to atone. Though the kind-hearted Miss Bates readily forgives her, Jane initially refuses to see her or accept her gifts causing Emma to despair of ever making amends for her behaviour. She believes that Jane's dislike of her stems from her behaviour towards Miss Bates. However, Emma learns that Jane and Frank have been secretly engaged for almost a year. In striving to disguise the love between them, Frank pretends to admire Emma. Jane's distress was due to the fact that she believed that Frank's behaviour towards Emma was genuine. Emma is discomfited at her lack of insight into others' behaviour, as she has seen only what she wanted to see, rather than the truth.

When Harriet confides that she thinks Mr. Knightley is in love with her, jealousy forces Emma to realize that she loves him herself. Mr. Knightley has been in love with Emma for the duration of the book and after the engagement of Jane and Frank had been discovered, he proposes to her. Shortly thereafter Harriet reconciles with her young farmer Mr. Martin and Jane and Emma reconcile and everyone lives happily.

Austen's setting is that of a provincial community, particularly as it involves the gentry of the region. One is hardly aware of the geography of the locale. The closeness of the town of Highbury and the estates of Hartfield, Donwell Abbey, and Randalls is made clear, as is the fact that London is sixteen miles away; but, except for the description of Donwell (which is shown for the purpose of giving Emma's reaction to it), physical aspects of the country are not dwelt upon. For instance, Harriet meets the gypsies on the Richmond road and is "saved" by Frank; but, other than the fact that there is an embankment over which her original companion scrambles, all we learn is that there is a Richmond road.

Primarily the setting is the drawing room or its equivalent. Even the scene at Box Hill is in essence merely an outdoor drawing room and so is the shrubby walk where George proposes to Emma. Vegetation and terrain are barely mentioned if at all, for the real setting is the social involvement, the human relations, which are not connected with the specifics of geography. Instead, they find their natural setting among the drawing rooms, the dining rooms, the rooms for dancing, the carriages, and the paraphernalia of entertainment such as charades and word games.

(b) A Brief Description of Important Characters

Emma Woodhouse, the female protagonist of the story, is a beautiful, high-spirited, intellectual, and 'slightly' spoiled woman of almost 21. Her mother died when she was very young, and she has been mistress of the house ever since, certainly since her older sister got married. In some ways, Emma is mature for her age, although she makes some serious mistakes. Though vowing she will never marry, she acts as a match-maker for others. She seems unable to fall in love, until jealousy makes her realize that she has loved Mr. Knightley all along. Emma Woodhouse is the main character and hers is the most fully rounded, three-dimensional characterization. Her dominant trait is willful imagination, but she also has the elements of goodwill, rationality, and proportion when her willfulness does not lead her into self-deception. She is the fundamental changing character in the book, for she goes through a slow and bumpy growth from self-deception to self-knowledge. She is the book's aberration from the static social norm, and at the end she has developed to the point of fitting properly into her social milieu. Her characterization has been so well done that one cannot be absolutely sure that she will never scheme again, but one can feel that she has a good chance of remaining on terms with herself and her environment because of her growth and because she now has George Knightley beside her.

Mr George Knightley, about 37 years of age, is a close friend of Emma, and her only critic, though he cares deeply for her. Mr. Knightley is the owner of the neighbouring estate of Donwell, which includes extensive grounds and a farm. He is the older brother of John Knightley, the husband of Emma's elder sister Isabella. George Knightley is one of the most important figures in the book, though during much of the time he is rather in the background of events. He is a man of benevolence. He is the only one strong enough to impress Emma with critical good sense, and he is thus the only logical one that she can marry. He is particularly significant to the novel, however, because he is the spokesman character for Miss Austen. His reasoning and comment upon events are pretty much those of the author, and he constitutes a rational thread of cohesiveness running through the novel.

Mr Frank Churchill is Mr. Weston's son by his previous marriage. He is an amiable young man who manages to be liked by everyone except for Mr Knightley, who considers him quite immature, although this partially results from his jealousy of Frank's supposed 'pursuit' of Emma. After his mother's death he was raised by his wealthy aunt and uncle, whose last name he took. Frank thoroughly enjoys dancing and music and likes to live life to the fullest. Frank may be viewed as a careless but less villainous version of characters from other Novels

of Austen, such as Mr. Wickham from *Pride and Prejudice* or Willoughby from *Sense and Sensibility*.

Jane Fairfax is an orphan whose only family consists of an aunt, Miss Bates, and a grandmother, Mrs Bates. She is regarded as a very beautiful, clever, and elegant woman, with the best of manners, and is also very well-educated and exceptionally talented at singing and playing the piano; in fact, she is the sole person that Emma envies. She has little fortune, however, and seems destined to become a governess – a prospect she dislikes. Jane Fairfax is a skillfully employed foil for Emma, but we do not get to know her in dramatic detail because she is involved in a mystery and much about her must remain unknown until it is revealed in summary. On the other hand, Frank Churchill, though he too is involved in the mystery, comes through with better delineation. He has admirable abilities but is too frivolous to be truly admirable; his mainstay is social charm and wit. He is important partly because in many respects he is the male counterpart of Emma: Both get a certain enjoyment out of seeing others labor under misapprehensions, and it is significant that Emma recognizes this lively similarity near the end of the story.

Harriet Smith is a young friend of Emma. She is a very pretty but unsophisticated girl who is too easily led by others, especially Emma; she has been educated at a nearby school. The illegitimate daughter of initially unknown parents, she is revealed in the last chapter to be the daughter of a fairly rich and decent tradesman, although not a “gentleman”). Emma takes Harriet under her wing early in the novel, and she becomes the subject of some of Emma’s misguided matchmaking attempts. Harriet initially rebuffs a marriage proposal from farmer Robert Martin because of Emma’s belief that he is beneath her, despite Harriet’s own doubtful origins. Ultimately, Harriet and Mr Martin are wed, despite Emma’s meddling. Though one of the more important characters, Harriet Smith is mostly a counter to be moved about by Emma and the plot of the novel. She is a simple but pretty girl who, once in love, will always be in love and who evinces one very interesting though momentary development when she decides that she is after all perhaps worthy of George Knightley.

Philip Elton is a good-looking, well mannered and ambitious young vicar. Emma wants him to marry Harriet; but he wants to marry Emma. Mr Elton displays his mercenary nature by quickly marrying another woman of means after Emma’s rejection.

Augusta Elton is Mr Elton’s moneyed but obnoxious wife. She is a boasting, domineering, pretentious woman who likes to be the centre of attention and is generally disliked by Emma and her circle. She patronizes Jane, which earns Jane the sympathy of others.

Mrs Weston, formerly Miss Taylor, was Emma’s governess for sixteen years and remains her closest friend and confidante after she marries Mr Weston in the opening chapter. She is a sensible woman who adores Emma.

Mr Weston, a recently wealthy man living in the vicinity of Hartfield. He marries Emma’s former governess, Miss Taylor, and by his first marriage is father to Frank Churchill,

who was adopted and raised by his late wife's brother and sister-in-law. Mr Weston is a sanguine, optimistic man, who enjoys socializing.

Miss Bates, a friendly, garrulous spinster whose mother, Mrs Bates, is a friend of Mr Woodhouse. Her accomplished niece, Jane Fairfax, is the light of her life. One day, Emma humiliates her on a day out in the country, when she pointedly alludes to her tiresome prolixity. Afterward, Mr Knightley sternly rebukes her and Emma, shamed, tries to change her attitude. Miss Bates deserves a bit of special attention. She is like an archetype of the boring non-stop talker. But she takes on added dimension by the very fact that her gush of words encompasses everything around her—so much so, in fact, that the small and the important apparently have equal significance for her. A thwarted woman (though she would never recognize herself as such), she has a driving need to express herself, though her expression is never egocentric. She is, indeed, one of the most kindhearted and thankful persons imaginable; but she is also capable of being hurt and of forgiving. She undergoes no observable change in the novel, but hers is possibly the most fully rounded characterization among the minor ones.

Henry Woodhouse, Emma's father, is always concerned for his own health and that of his friends, to the point of trying to deny his visitors foods he thinks too rich. He laments that "poor Isabella" and "poor Miss Taylor" shouldn't have married and been taken away from him.

From a close reading of the novel it can be observed that with the exception of Emma, most of the characters are generally static ones. They do not change. Rather, they are likely to be simply confirmed in their views, for they live in and accept a stable life in a static society. Nonetheless, the type of characters portrayed is varied and so is the degree of their realistic development.

Among the lesser developed but important ones, we may note Mr. Woodhouse, John Knightley, and Augusta Elton. They appear to be one-dimensional because they consistently show their one dominant coloring, and so far as treatment of them in the novel is concerned, they are one-dimensional. Mr. Woodhouse, in his gentle selfishness, is the petty arch-conservative, wanting absolutely nothing to change and constantly being apprehensive about matters of health. John is similar but in domestic terms; he is rather nonsocial because he wants to rest content with his family in his domestic comforts. Augusta is always seen as the talkative busybody. They serve their purposes in the novel best by being one-sided, and they come very close to being caricatures in their social context.

In considering the characters of the novel, one should remind himself that, no matter how well they are developed for their individuality, they also serve for purposes of satirical contrast and comparison. The distancing that Austen achieves through point of view effects a kind of balance between the individual as such and his place in a satirically social context.

The heroine of the novel, *Emma*, can be compared and contrasted with the other female protagonists of the other novels. Emma Woodhouse is the first heroine of Jane Austen

who has no financial concerns, as she declares to the naïve Miss Smith, is the reason that she has no inducement to marry. This is a great departure from Austen's other novels, in which the quest for marriage and financial security is the main focus and theme of the story. Emma's ample financial resources are one of the factors that make this novel much lighter than Austen's earlier works, such as *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane Fairfax's prospects, in contrast, are bleak.

Emma also proves surprisingly immune to romantic attraction and sexual desire. In contrast to Austen heroines like Elizabeth Bennet and Marianne Dashwood, who are attracted to the wrong man before they settle on the right one, Emma shows no romantic interest in the men she meets. She is genuinely surprised and somewhat disgusted when Mr. Elton declares his love for her. Her fancy for Frank Churchill represents more of a longing for a little drama in her life than a longing for romantic love. Notably, too, Emma utterly fails to understand Harriet Smith and Robert Martin's budding affection for each other; she interprets the prospective match solely in terms of financial settlements and social ambition. Only after Harriet Smith reveals her interest in Mr. Knightley does Emma realize her own feelings for him. Although never outright stated as such, it may be postulated that the reason for Emma's inability to fall in love with another man is that she has been unconsciously in love with Mr. Knightley for years.

While Emma differs strikingly from Austen's other heroines in these two respects, she resembles Elizabeth Bennet and Anne Elliot, among others, in another way: she is an intelligent young woman with too little to do and no ability to change her location or everyday routine. Though her family is loving and her economic circumstances comfortable, her everyday life is dull indeed, and she has few companions of her own age when the novel begins. Emma's determined and inept matchmaking may represent a muted protest against the narrow scope of a wealthy woman's life, especially that of a woman who is single and childless.

(c) **Popularity of *Emma***

The novel *Emma* is featured in the film *Naked* (1993) by Mike Leigh, in which the character Johnny (played by David Thewlis) confuses the title and the name of the author.

Emma provides the basis for the plot of *Clueless* (1995) by Amy Heckerling.

Joan Aiken wrote a companion novel, *Jane Fairfax: The Secret Story of the Second Heroine in Jane Austen's Emma*.

Reginald Hill wrote a 1987 short story "Poor Emma" (included in the 2007 paperback "There are no Ghosts in the Soviet Union") in which finances and security play the central role (and lead to a villainous deed!) All the characters from Austen's "Emma" are there, as is the style and sly wit of the original.

Appeal of the Novel

Emma is a beautiful, privileged, pampered young lady who decides to play Cupid for her friends, but finds that people don't fall in love according to plan.

When Jane Austen created Emma Woodhouse, she did so with the belief that she was “going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like.” Emma is a high-handed, overbearing, meddling, self-satisfied, snob of a young woman who dictates, or at least attempts to dictate, the lives of all her friends and family. Yet despite her flaws, or perhaps because of them, Emma has become one of Austen’s most beloved heroines.

The language used in the novel, being nearly 200 years old, is inevitably stilted and verbose in places, and the plot tends to drag at times. This is not to say that the novel is not well-written. *Emma* sparkles with Austen’s characteristic wit and charm, and many critics consider the work to be Austen’s best.

In addition to Emma, Austen creates a wide array of memorable characters within the pages of this novel. She introduces readers to Emma’s cautious, querulous father, who is nevertheless endearing. There are also the Westons, Emma’s dear friends who adore her, Frank Churchill, the charming but foolish son of Mr. Weston, and the beautiful and mysterious Jane Fairfax, as well as a host of others inhabiting Highbury.

Austen’s famous wit and sense of irony are prevalent within the pages of *Emma*. Her examination of 19th century England’s complex and confounding social hierarchies and the interplay between the varying social classes is as adept here as in any of her works. The story centres on the theme of matchmaking. Emma fancies herself to be quite gifted at playing matchmaker for her friends. Naturally, her intricate schemes to pair everyone off fail, and events go out of control. But through it all, *Emma* is a lighthearted “comedy of manners,” and readers are never in doubt as to a happy ending for all.

To understand the novel, its theme, its structure, its plot and its characters in a better way, you should first understand the social atmosphere of the contemporary period.

Emma is structured around a number of marriages recently consummated or anticipated, and, in each case, the match solidifies the participant’s social status. In Austen’s time, social status was determined by a combination of family background, reputation, and wealth—marriage was one of the main ways in which one could raise one’s social status. This method of social advancement was especially crucial to women, who were denied the possibility of improving their status through hard work or personal achievement.

Yet, the novel suggests, marrying too far above oneself leads to strife. Mr. Weston’s first marriage to Miss Churchill had ostensibly been a good move for him, because she came from a wealthy and well-connected family as Mr. Weston is a tradesman but the inequality of the relationship caused hardship to both. He marries Mrs. Weston just prior to the novel’s opening, and this second marriage is happier because their social statuses are more equal—Mrs. Weston is a governess, and thus very fortunate to be rescued from her need to work by her marriage. Emma’s attempt to match Harriet with Mr. Elton is also shunned by the other characters as inappropriate. Since Harriet’s parentage is unknown, Emma believes that Harriet may have noble blood and encourages her to reject what turns out to be a more appropriate

match with Robert Martin. By the time it is revealed that Harriet is the daughter of a tradesman, Emma admits that Mr. Martin is more suitable for her friend.

The relationship between marriage and social status creates hardship for other characters. Frank Churchill must keep his engagement to the orphan Jane Fairfax secret because his wealthy aunt would disapprove. Jane, in the absence of a good match, is forced to consider taking the position of a governess. The unmarried Miss Bates is threatened with increasing poverty without a husband to take care of her and her mother. Finally, the match between Emma and Mr. Knightley is considered a good one not only because they are well matched in temperament but also because they are well matched in social class.

The novel's limited, almost claustrophobic scope of action gives us a strong sense of the confined nature of a woman's existence in early-nineteenth-century rural England. Emma possesses a great deal of intelligence and energy, but the best use she can make of these is to attempt to guide the marital destinies of her friends, a project that gets her into trouble. The alternative pastimes depicted in the book—social visits, charity visits, music, artistic endeavors—seem relatively trivial, at times even monotonous. Isabella is the only mother focused on in the story, and her portrayal suggests that a mother's life offers a woman little use of her intellect. Yet, when Jane compares the governess profession to the slave trade, she makes it clear that the life of a working woman is in no way preferable to the idleness of a woman of fortune. The novel focuses on marriage because marriage offers women a chance to exert their power, if only for a brief time, and to affect their own destinies without adopting the labours or efforts of the working class. Participating in the rituals of courtship and accepting or rejecting proposals is perhaps the most active role that women are permitted to play in Emma's world.

The novel offers sharply critical illustrations of the ways in which personal biases or desires blind objective judgment. Emma cannot understand the motives that guide Mr. Elton's behaviour because she imagines that he is in love with Harriet. Meanwhile, Mr. Elton's feelings for Emma cause him to mistake her behaviour for encouragement. The generally infallible Mr. Knightley cannot form an unbiased judgment of Frank Churchill because he is jealous of Frank's claim on Emma, and Emma speaks cruelly of Jane because her vanity makes her jealous of Jane's accomplishments. Emma's biases cause her to invent an attachment between Harriet and Frank and blind her to the fact that Harriet actually has feelings for Knightley. At the same time, Frank's desire to use Emma as a screen for his real preference causes him to believe mistakenly that she is aware of the situation between him and Jane. The admirable, frequently ironic detachment of the narrator allows us to see many of these misunderstandings before the characters do, along with the humorous aspects of their behaviour. And the plot is powered by a series of realizations that permit each character to make fuller, more objective judgments.

The misunderstandings that permeate the novel are created, in part, by the conventions of social propriety. To differing degrees, characters are unable to express their feelings directly and openly, and their feelings are therefore mistaken. While the novel by no means suggests that the manners and rituals of social interaction should be eliminated, Austen implies

that the overly clever, complex speech of Mr. Elton, Frank Churchill, and Emma deserves censure. She presents Mr. Martin's natural, warm, and direct manner of expressing himself as preferable to Mr. Elton's ostentatious and insincere style of complimenting people. Frank too possesses a talent for telling people exactly what they want to hear, and Knightley's suspicions of Frank's integrity are proven valid when it turns out that Frank has been misleading Highbury and hiding his true feelings for Jane. The cleverness of Frank's and Emma's banter gets them both into trouble by upsetting Jane, about whom Emma says reckless and unfair things. Emma and Frank's flirting at the Box Hill party hurts both Knightley and Jane. Moreover, Emma forgets herself to the extent that she cruelly insults Miss Bates. Austen seems to prefer Knightley and Martin's tactful taciturnity to the sometimes overly expansive commentary of Emma, Mr. Elton, and Frank, and, as a result, the author gives the latter characters' contrived speech a misleading influence on the story as a whole.

8.3 Self Assessment Questions

1. At the beginning of the novel, Emma has just made a love match between her neighbor Mr. Weston and
 - a. her governess, Miss Taylor
 - b. her sister, Isabella
 - c. her friend, Harriet
 - d. her acquaintance, Augusta Hawkins
2. Why does Emma think that Robert Martin is an unsuitable match for her new friend Harriet?
 - a. He is not titled.
 - b. He lives at home with his family.
 - c. His landlord, Mr. Knightley, distrusts him.
 - d. He is not genteel enough.
3. How does Emma's first match for Harriet end?
 - a. Augusta appears and claims that Mr. Elton is already betrothed to her.
 - b. Mr. Elton falls in love with Emma, then marries Augusta.
 - c. Harriet rejects Mr. Elton's advances.
 - d. Mr. Elton's family refuses to give consent.
4. What incident in particular reinforces George Knightley's opinion that Frank Churchill is a "trifling, silly fellow"?

- a. Frank's purchase of a pianoforte
 - b. Frank's excessive flirting with Augusta at the dance
 - c. Frank's traveling to London for a haircut
 - d. Frank's insistence at having a ball at the Crown Inn
5. How does Frank Churchill "rescue" Harriet?
- a. He marries her and saves her from having to become a governess.
 - b. He gives her money to pay off a debt.
 - c. He saves her from a band of gypsies.
 - d. He defends her against Augusta's attacks.
6. George Knightley reprimands Emma for which of the following?
- a. Her treatment of her father
 - b. Her rudeness to Miss Bates on a picnic.
 - c. Her disrespect of Mrs. Weston's position.
 - d. Her love of dancing.
7. All of the following couples are engaged by the end of the book EXCEPT for who?
- a. Emma and Mr. Knightley
 - b. Harriet and Mr. Martin
 - c. Miss Bates and Mr. Perry
8. Who says the following: "Better be without sense than misapply it as you do."
- a. Harriet
 - b. Emma
 - c. George Knightley
 - d. Frank Churchill
9. Who is valetudarian? Give example from the novel
10. Who is the only critic of Emma?
11. Who is Miss Taylor?
12. Why does Emma want Harriet to reject Mr. Martin?
13. Whom does Emma marry in the End?
14. Who is Mrs Weston's stepson?

8.4 Answers To SAQs

1. a 2. a 3. b 4. c 5. c 6. b
7. c 8. c
9. One who is excessively conscious about the health and safety of himself and his loved ones. For example Emma's Father.
10. Mr Knightley, her neighbour for the adjacent Estate.
11. Emma's old governess, married to Mr. Weston.
12. Because Emma thinks that he is too socially inferior.
13. Mr Knightley.
14. Frank Churchill.

8.5 Let Us Sum Up

After going through this Unit you have known how novel is different from other literary forms. You have studied about its development through various phases. You have got a broad idea about various novels in English Literature. In particular you are acquainted with Jane Austen as a novelist of the Romantic Period. You have studied the summary, various characters and some of the criticism about *Emma*.

8.6 Review Questions

1. Is *Emma* a unified novel? If so, where does the unity lie—in the plot, the characters, the setting, the theme, the style, the mood? Explain by citing examples from the novel.
2. How does the fact that Jane Austen stretches out her climaxes relate to her concentrating her interest on exploring the effects of emotion rather than on the critical high moments of emotion?
3. Look up the term *sentimental novel* and determine whether any major elements of that form are used in *Emma*.
4. Describe the plot structure of the novel. Is only one structure involved?
5. Explain the ways in which Jane Austen uses contrast to effect irony. Are the contrasts simple and clear-cut?
6. Are there any general contrasts such as the difference between generations? Explain citing examples from the novel.
7. What evidence from this novel can you give for or against the critical statement that Jane Austen's point of view is a feminine one?

8. Many have noted that Miss Austen's novels lack any large historical perspective and lack making use of historical events of the day. Can you defend these lacks in *Emma*? Cite examples from the novel.
9. Critics have remarked that the character Emma refuses to let herself be basically involved with or committed to fundamental human concerns. Discuss.
10. In what ways is the setting important to the theme of the novel? Discuss with reference to the novel *Emma*.

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UNIT -9

JANE AUSTEN : *EMMA* (II)

Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Jane Austen : *Emma*
 - 9.2.1 Theme of the Novel
 - 9.2.2 Literary Devices Used
 - 9.2.3 Plot Structure
 - 9.2.4 Style
 - 9.2.5 Readers' Response
- 9.3 Self Assessment Questions
- 9.4 Answers to SAQs
- 9.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 9.6 Review Questions
- 9.7 Bibliography

9.0 Objectives

1. To further enhance your critical knowledge of the themes in the novel.
2. To discuss plot structure in *Emma*
3. To discuss use of irony and symbols in the novel.
4. To discuss the language, style and point of view used in the novel
5. To take you to a discussion of a higher level than that of the previous unit of the novel

9.1 Study Guide

As both the units are about Austen's *Emma*, you should study the background material about the age, novel as a genre and its development, about Jane Austen and the general background of the novel *Emma* from the previous unit. You should study this unit in continuation with the material provided in the previous unit. Certain topics which have not been covered in the previous unit are discussed in this unit, for example plot structure, theme, irony,

symbols, style, point of view etc. Thematic and structural questions have also been given in here. Materials from internet and other critical texts have been adapted and used for your benefit. For further development you should study the books and articles referred to at the end of this unit.

9.2 Jane Austen : *Emma*

9.2.1 Theme of the Novel

In her completed novels, Austen generally explores the same issues or questions, though she explores them from different perspectives, under different situations, and with varied consequences. However, this does not mean that the endings are necessarily different; being comic novels, they all end with at least one marriage. While studying novels you should keep the following questions in your mind.

(a) The individual and society

- What is the proper relationship of the individual to society and to others? What are the consequences for the individual, for others, and for society when the individual ignores or even deliberately transgresses society's rules? What are the consequences when the individual conforms?
- How should conflict between the individual's desires and the individual's responsibility to society be resolved? How are the individual and society affected by the resolution, which may range from self-fulfillment to self-sacrifice?
- Do the society and the values Austen presents give a portrayal of actual society or are they an idealization, goals to be striven for?
- Does Austen uncritically accept the values and attitudes of her society? If so, does her acceptance of society give her the freedom to show the limitations and perhaps even the corruption and cruelties of her society?
- Is she concerned with the social responsibility of the privileged? If so, does she idealize their responsibilities and show the consequences of not fulfilling them?
- How is individual worth perceived and determined in a class-conscious society? What is proper consciousness of class difference and what is snobbery in Austen's view? Modern readers may also ask the question, is there such a thing as proper consciousness of class difference, or is such consciousness merely one expression of snobbery? What are the proper class responsibilities of the individual?
- How may concern for others be properly expressed?

(b) Freedom and constraint

- Is constraint or limitation a condition of living in society? Some critics find this issue at

the heart of Austen's achievement: Martin Price suggests, "The larger irony that informs all of Jane Austen's comic art is a sense of human limitations." And Walter Allen believes, "Dickens recognizes no limits at all; the art of Jane Austen is made possible precisely by the recognition of limits."

- Are the rigid rules of conduct in the society Austen depicts necessary to protect the weak and the powerless and to control aggression and violence?
- A formal code of behavior or manners prescribes conduct and distances feelings. But do the individuals in a society with such a code feel less, or are they merely less able to express emotion freely and openly? What are the advantages and the drawbacks of living in such a society as Austen presents them? The advantages and drawbacks may seem quite different from the perspective of a twenty-first century reader.
- What use does the individual make of freedom and with what consequences?

(c) Imagination/fancy or reason / judgment

- What are the consequences of yielding to imagination, which may take the form of prejudice, rather than listening to the dictates of reason?
- Do her protagonists generally learn their errors through experience and, as a result, reform? May such a change also be described as movement from innocence to rational experience?
- Are any of her characters held up as flawless models, or is even the most rational character flawed?

(d) Love, courtship, and marriage

- What is proper love? Is it intelligent love, and does Austen understand love "in the fullest sense," as Lionel Trilling suggests? If so, do her protagonists naturally have the ability to love intelligently, or do they develop it?
- What qualities and behavior lead to a happy marriage?

Though critics generally regard *Emma* as Austen's most carefully crafted or skillfully written novel, most readers prefer *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility*. Austen herself acknowledged that *Emma* might present a problem for readers, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." And much about Emma is indeed unlikable; she is snobbish, vain, manipulative, power-hungry, self-deluded, often indifferent to the feelings of others, and on at least one occasion cruel.

But do these traits necessarily make her unlikable? Do her admirable traits redeem her, such as her love for her father, her wit, her good judgment, her sense of social responsibility, and her gradual admission of error? Although Emma knows what the right thing to do is, she still behaves badly; does this all too common human trait make her sympathetic because

readers can identify with her?

The attitude of the narrator is another consideration in evaluating Emma. Though most of the novel presents Emma's point of view, an omniscient narrator tells the story. Do the narrator's choice of language, her tone, the details she adds, and her comments upon both Emma and the action affect the way we feel about Emma? The narrator clearly presents Emma's faults and her misguided behaviour and unsparingly identifies them as such, but does the narrator also suggest a sympathy or even an affection for Emma that helps to moderate the reader's negative response to her? Or is even the narrator's attitude unable to overcome the negative effect of her faults and irresponsible behaviour?

The theme of *Emma* deals with man's follies—not the high-minded and exceptional absurdities of tragedy or the grim ones, but those common, frequent, and more laughable ones of society, its code of manners, and its fabricated engagement of man's time, thought, and energy.

Beneath Austen's satiric comedy is a moralistic realism. By picturing the real problems of social matters, she implies what may be right: the ideal balance between head and heart, between common sense and goodness, between rationality and imagination or emotion. Hers is not a naturalistic world inimical to or destructive of the individual. Rather, it is a fairly stable social world that operates comfortably. It can, in fact, if we judge from the outcome of the story, operate effectively in spite of irregularity, secure that the deviation can be rectified and absorbed so that Emma finds and accepts her proper place.

It is against this background that Emma pursues her willful and subsequently crossed-purpose way. In the end her change is not into something new and different from her time and place, but into something that is the standard of her environment. Her change is not the kind associated with a liberal idea of progress, but the kind found in the conservative idea of progress: she develops into, not out of, a social tradition. Thus a major thematic irony of the book is that at the end Austen lets the reader see that, in spite of the surface doubts and disturbance, there was never any real danger that the environmental fabric would be changed because of, or for, Emma. This certainty is driven home by the comfortable pairing off of the marriageable couples.

Nevertheless, the triumph of this social world does not mean that it is necessarily the best of its kind. Thematic satire at the expense of the manners and people of this world is given throughout the book. A crowning irony comes at the very end when Emma and George can be comfortably paired off in marriage only because the robbing of poultry houses makes Mr. Woodhouse want George around for protection. Such a relationship between cause and effect—between the ludicrous and the desirable—underscores the inclusive satirical theme of incongruity. By moralistic implication a world of balanced views is yet to be attained.

9.2.2 Literary Devices Used

Motifs : Visits , Parties , Dialogues

Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.

The main events of the novel take place during visits that the characters pay to each other. The frequency and length of visits between characters indicates the level of intimacy and attachment between them. Frank's frequent visits to Hartfield show his relationship with Emma to be close, though we recognize that Frank also continually finds excuses to visit Jane. Mr. Knightley's constant presence at Hartfield indicates his affection and regard for Emma. Emma encourages Harriet to limit a visit with the Martin family to fifteen minutes, because such a short visit clearly indicates that any former interest has been lost. Emma is chastised for her failure to visit Miss Bates and Jane more often; when she takes steps to rectify this situation, she indicates a new concern for Miss Bates and a new regard for Jane.

More formal than visits, parties are organized around social conventions more than around individual attachments—Emma's hosting a dinner party for Mrs. Elton, a woman she dislikes, exemplifies this characteristic. There are six important parties in the novel: the Christmas Eve party at Randalls, the dinner party at the Coles', the dinner party given for Mrs. Elton, the dance at the Crown Inn, the morning party at Donwell Abbey, and the picnic at Box Hill. Each occasion provides the opportunity for social intrigue and misunderstandings, and for vanities to be satisfied and connections formed. Parties also give characters the chance to observe other people's interactions. Knightley observes Emma's behaviour toward Frank and Frank's behaviour toward Jane. Parties are microcosms of the social interactions that make up the novel as a whole.

Much of the dialogue in Emma has double or even triple meanings, with different characters interpreting a single comment in different ways. Sometimes these double meanings are apparent to individual characters, and sometimes they are apparent only to the alert reader. For example, when Mr. Elton says of Emma's portrait of Harriet, "I cannot keep my eyes from it," he means to compliment Emma, but she thinks he is complimenting Harriet. When, during the scene in which Mr. Knightley proposes to Emma, Emma says, "I seem to have been doomed to blindness," Knightley believes she speaks of her blindness to Frank's love of Jane, but she actually refers to her blindness about her own feelings. One of our main tasks in reading the novel is to decode all of the subtexts underlying seemingly casual interactions, just as the main characters must. The novel concludes by unraveling the mystery behind who loves whom, which allows us to understand Austen's subtext more fully.

Symbols : Riddles, Word game and Tokens

Symbols are objects, characters, figures, or colours used to represent abstract ideas

or concepts.

Riddles in the novel take the form of elaborate wordplay. They symbolize the pervasive subtexts that wait to be decoded in characters' larger social interactions. In Chapter 9, Mr. Elton presents a riddle to Emma and Harriet. Emma decodes it immediately, as "courtship," but she decodes it wrongly in the sense that she believes it is meant for Harriet rather than herself. This wordplay also makes an appearance during the Box Hill party.

Similar to the riddle, a word game is played in Chapter 41 between Emma, Frank, and Jane. It functions as a metaphor for the partial understandings and misunderstandings that exist among Emma, Frank, Jane, and Mr. Knightley. As Mr. Knightley looks on, Frank uses child's blocks to create words for the ladies to decode, though these words mean different things to each of them. Frank makes the word "blunder," which Jane understands as referring to a mistake he has just made, but whose meaning is opaque to Emma and Knightley. He then makes the word "Dixon," which Emma understands as a joke on Jane, and which baffles Knightley. In truth, everyone "blunders" in different ways that evening, because no one possesses complete enough information to interpret correctly everything that is going on.

A number of objects in the novel take on symbolic significance as tokens of affection. Mr. Elton frames Emma's portrait of Harriet as a symbol of affection for her, though Emma misunderstands it as a symbol of affection for Harriet. Harriet keeps court plaster and a pencil stub as souvenirs of Mr. Elton. When the engagement between Jane and Frank is briefly called off, she returns his letters to symbolize her relinquishment of his affection.

In the context of Austen, irony is best understood as a mode of expression that calls into question the way things appear. As Marvin Mudrick remarks, 'irony ... consists in the discrimination between impulse and pretension, between being and seeming, between ... man as he is and man as he aspires to be'. Irony, he adds, is not always comic: 'it becomes comic when its very neutrality is exploited as a kind of relief from man's conventional response of outrage and involvement toward delusion and error'. Austen, however, used irony for satiric as well as comic effect. Often, then, the ironic comments in her novels do more than expose her characters' misguided assumptions; irony helps her condemn the social norms that help foster such beliefs.

In Austen's novels, irony can appear in innumerable ways. It can occur during a verbal exchange. Sometimes Austen's irony is visual. For example, in *Emma*, the fact that Emma blithely idealizes a portrait of Harriet Smith underscores the fact that Emma imagines much that is not true about her new friend. Austen's irony may also depend upon a disparity between what can be seen and what is invisible.

In *Emma*, the heroine's ignorance of her own heart is suggested thus: Emma continued to entertain no doubt of her being in love [with Frank Churchill]. Her ideas only varied as to the how much. At first, she thought it was a good deal; and afterwards, but little. She had great pleasure in hearing Frank Churchill talked of ...

she was very often thinking of him, and quite impatient for a letter. ... But, on the other hand, she could not admit herself to be unhappy, nor, after the first morning, to be less disposed for employment than usual; she was still busy and cheerful; and, pleasing as he was, she could yet imagine him to have faults.

By the end of this passage, the only thing more apparent than Emma's indifference to Frank Churchill is the absurdity of her criteria for judging the extent of her own affections. As Rachel Brownstein points out, the danger facing Emma, and all of Austen's heroines, is that they may 'let the right man and the chance for action pass them by'. Consequently, she adds, the happy conclusions of the novels depend upon the heroines' ability to know their own hearts and to interpret the world around them correctly. Often, as in *Sense and Sensibility* or *Emma*, this requires that the heroines reject romantic conventions. Despite her earlier prejudice against them, Marianne finally realizes that second attachments may actually work while Emma eventually accepts the difference between her real and imagined worlds.

Emma is a story about how a girl learns to be kind. Set on a pedestal by virtue of her social position, spoiled by her father, Emma 'dangerously imagines herself a splendid free young goddess whose connection to most people is an amused puppeteer's'. Throughout the novel, Emma gradually learns that she is like everyone else. However, until she learns to value and join a community, the third-person narration mercilessly exposes Emma's delusions and satirizes the social conventions that nurture them.

Austen herself wrote that Emma was a heroine that 'no one but myself will much like', and to all intents, she should have been right.

9.2.3 Plot Structure

There is a difference between story and plot. Plot is right arrangement of incidents, especially structured and planned, and organized events by the writer. The same story can be written into various plots by different writers and can have varied effect upon the readers.

While a story relates events in order of sequence, a plot shows the interaction between characters and events in the light of the writer's unifying theme. *Emma* shows that Jane Austen is a good storyteller as well as skilled constructor of plot. The story narrates the tale of Emma as a scheming matchmaker and self-deluded weaver of imaginative fantasies. She takes Harriet under her care to mold her into a proper wife for a husband of Emma's choosing. At first, Emma tries to involve Harriet with Elton, but she is rejected. Then Emma tries to have Harriet fall in love with Frank, who is already secretly engaged. Ironically, as Emma meddles and manipulates, Harriet becomes attracted to Knightley. When she reveals her infatuation to her friend, Emma is forced to realize that she herself loves Knightley. The rest of the story sorts out the complications. Knightley proposes to Emma, Frank announces his engagement to Jane to everyone, and Harriet accepts a proposal of marriage from Martin. During the course of the novel, Jane Austen makes a skillful use of conventional means of surprise and suspense to make the story interesting.

The plot of *Emma* is one of comedy, dealing with the follies and stupidities of humanity as social beings. In comedy, however, the characters overcome their foolish ways to develop happy and healthy human relations. Comedy is, therefore, a kind of social corrective, and the author of comedy becomes a social critic. The plot of *Emma* aims at correcting the vanity and self-delusion of the heroine, Emma Woodhouse. The main character to teach her about her follies is Knightley, who points out that Emma's behaviour is rude, foolish, and socially unacceptable at any level, and particularly to the upper class. Emma listens to, learns from, and falls in love with this teacher. At the end of the plot, Emma is a totally changed character, considerate of others and humble. The plot of *Emma* is thus developed as a moral fable on the subject of self-deception vs. perception and controlled reason vs. emotional response or the head vs. the heart.

The first eighteen chapters are basically introductory, presenting the main characters, describing the setting, and setting up the plot structure. For the most part, these chapters contain the exposition about self-deception, with its roots in Emma's imagining herself the perfect matchmaker. The plot proceeds after this exposition in a slow series of rising actions through the next twenty-five chapters. Emma's meddling and machinations, driven by romantic fancy and self-delusion, are described, along with the often upsetting results.

After the Box Hill picnic, Knightley forces Emma into self-analysis, and she realizes that she has made a mess of things and behaved very poorly. The plot from the forty-fourth chapter forward attempts, through the falling action, to resolve the entanglements that Emma's misguided efforts have caused. The conclusion presents the happy picture of three couples who have been able to come together and plan to marry.

The three stages of the plot illustrate the folly of self-deception. Because Emma misjudges people, like Elton, Frank Churchill, Jane Fairfax, and Harriet Smith, she almost creates disaster. The moral of Emma's self-deception is to show the demerits of romantic fancy. Jane Austen, an enemy of romanticism, is in favor of emotion controlled by reason. During the course of the novel, Emma has been educated to balance emotion and reason and thus understand that social values cannot be separated from a set of moral values.

Some generalization should be kept in mind when one considers the plot of *Emma*. Perhaps first should be a reminder of the seeming leisureliness with which Miss Austen puts her story together. Practically none of the material is, in the usual sense, exciting—that is, there is little external climactic action, and there is no adventurous action. Primarily the reasons are that it is a satirical novel about social manners and modes and that the satire comes more from the effects of emotion than from emotion itself. However, the novel will appear leisurely written only on one's first reading. Once the reader knows the outcome of events and repeats the novel, he will find that it is one of the most tightly knit works ever done. For, since much of the book is plotted for purposes of irony (which shows the difference between intention and performance or the difference between what a character knows and what others, including the reader at times, know), the repeating reader can relish the minuteness with which Miss Austen

has prepared for and then exploits to the full the misunderstandings and the foibles of the people in her provincial community, especially those of Emma. For instance, all that Frank Churchill does and says on the party to Box Hill takes on the meaning of *double meaning* for the re-reader, who now discovers that it is leisurely only in appearance. Similarly, one can sense the irony in how Emma misconstrues Mr Elton's gallantry or Harriet's attachment for Mr Knightley simply because the characters are too mannered to speak directly.

The plot structure of the novel is regulated in part by division into three volumes: In Volume One Emma deceives herself about Mr Elton and that deception reaches its climax in his declaration in the carriage; Volume Two shows her deceiving herself about Frank Churchill and getting over it in a much less climactic fashion; Volume Three continues her self-deception about people but reaches its major climax in the ultimate revelation about herself and George Knightley. Obviously many other developing facets are involved, but in brief outline these are the three rising and falling stages of action in the novel. Only the last one, however, is final, for Emma throughout is more and more self-deceived, though at the same time she is also moving toward self-knowledge which will let her come to terms with herself and her situation.

This is only the skeletal plot structure, and it is fleshed out in many ways. To comprehend this fleshing out, the reader should remember that the motive force for plot in fiction is generally one or more of three kinds of conflict: man against man, man against environment, or man against himself. The force of man-against-man is incidental but important to the overall satire of the novel and can be seen in the social efforts of various characters. The force of man-against-environment is seen primarily in terms of Emma versus her social milieu: She goes against the accepted manners and social ranks in trying to manipulate Harriet either from or into the social and personal lives of others. But the most consistent plot force in the novel is man-against-himself: Emma is constantly deceiving herself and is thus in conflict with herself. All three motive forces for plot, then, are found in *Emma*, but the last two predominate and are in essence the same, for Emma is ironically against herself because she is against her environment. She has accepted the code of her society but at the same time, due to her imbalance of imagination and reason, she wants to go against it; both the code and her opposing willfulness are important to her—hence the conflict happens.

The overall pattern of plot movement is rather classic. Emma's conflict begins when her willful imagination is released by the loss of Miss Taylor; her situation is like a vacuum to be filled—and fulfilled—in accordance with her nature. The result is a continuous rising interest for the reader as Emma's self-deception realizes and manifests itself. The major climax, the highest point of reader interest, comes in Chapters XI, XII, and XIII in the final volume, followed by an unraveling denouement. This movement designed to increase the interest of the reader can be charted like the rising, peaking, and falling on a graph.

Finally, another major plot pattern used in the novel is that of contrast. Plot manipulation not only arranges to juxtapose significantly different characters (Frank and George, for instance) but also often develops a special rhythm by placing introspective scene or chapter

next to one of social interaction.

Thus the plot is quite complex, with more than one element often working at once. Composed of classic pattern, contrast, and planned general social satire, all facets are based upon conflict. Though not as obvious as the others, even the last-mentioned element (which is man-against-man) stems from the conflict between social intention and performance. Underlying all of these conflicts is the motive of comic irony.

9.2.4 Style

Perhaps the best description of style in *Emma* is that it is quietly subtle. The tone of the book is one of absolute ease and surety on the part of the author, who handles her material with such deft touches that an unperceptive reader may conclude that the story and the writing are very ordinary. But Austen's method is nearer that of the magician than that of the boxer.

She can be disarmingly simple and direct as, for instance, she sets up Emma's situation at the very beginning of the book; but she is also carefully setting up objects of satire when she refers to Emma's always doing just as she liked or to Mr Woodhouse's having been a valetudinarian all his life. When she describes Mr Elton as "a young man living alone without liking it," she pins down a character specimen as neatly intact as can be done. The wit and sharp edge of her phrasing are illustrated when she describes Isabella's Christmas visit with her father and sister: "It was a delightful visit; —perfect, in being much too short." She also makes use of the subtle antithetic balance of word and phrasing derived from the eighteenth-century literary stylists: When Frank Churchill's visit is again postponed, Mrs Weston, "after all her concern for what her husband was to suffer, suffered a great deal more herself." Although she avoids figurative images, Austen is adept at coining pregnant abstractions in the manner of Dr. Samuel Johnson: note the "apparatus of happiness" placed in the dialogue of Mrs Elton.

In general, her style achieves exactly the proper distancing she wants between the reader and the fictional subject, and the reader is affected whether he is aware of it or not. For instance, in reference to Mr Elton's marriage and Harriet's feelings for him, Emma's thoughts are stated with third-person indirectness as "It was not to be doubted that poor Harriet's attachment had been an offering to conjugal unreserve"; to grasp the irony one may note the connotations of the word *offering*, while to comprehend the distancing of phraseology he may compare a direct statement like "At some intimate moment he told his wife of Harriet." A major difference is that Austen's phrasing disengages us just enough to let us laugh at what is, after all, a natural process of married communication.

Another way of stylistic distancing is the use of anticlimax. When Emma and George have become engaged and return to the house, Mr Woodhouse is anxious that George not take a cold from his earlier ride; the author's strange comment is that "Could he have seen the heart, he would have cared very little for the lungs." Anticlimax can also be brutally though subtly frank in observations on mankind. The authorial statement about the death of Mrs

Churchill is this: "It was felt as such things must be felt. Everybody had a degree of gravity and sorrow; tenderness towards the departed, solicitude for the surviving friends; and, in a reasonable time, curiosity to know where she would be buried." This is an acute and realistic observation, but the concluding anticlimax ironically points to the difference between human intention and performance. Immediately following this observation is a stylistic illustration of the influence from the eighteenth-century concern for balancing phrasing and the eighteenth-century penchant for epigram: "Goldsmith tells us, that when lovely woman stoops to folly, she has nothing to do but to die; and when she stoops to be disagreeable, it is equally to be recommended as a clearer of ill-fame." Only through stylistic treatment such as this could Austen have provided for the reader the necessary esthetic distance to appreciate the latent satire connected with a serious subject like death.

Finally, in discussing Austen's style, one has to point to what has been called her mastery of dialogue. Her ear for the way women in particular talk is very good indeed. And though Augusta Elton's attempts at cleverness make a fine example, the best is Miss Bates' fragmentary speech, her habitual tone. But in terms of authorial style, it should be further noted that the use of direct and indirect conversation varies according to how much the reader needs to be involved in the immediate material, for the indirect reportage puts more distance between the reader and the material and allows at times a better satirical view.

Thus, from the smallest choice of words to the largest presentation of conversations and scenes, Austen's style is subtle and may be witty, sharp, epigrammatic, terse, proverbial, abstract, or distancing according to the satiric need.

The point of view in *Emma* is an important part of style. By and large the point of view is that of Emma, a necessary one if Austen is to explore the character of a willful and somewhat snobbish young lady and at the same time keep the reader's sympathy for her. Only thus can we be convinced that Emma's character really blends honesty and goodwill with its negative qualities; it is thus too that we can best view the effects of emotion rather than dwell upon climactic emotion itself.

At times the point of view is that of the author. It should be said here that, in order to get the necessary ironic distance from her characters, the author not only very occasionally gets briefly into the point of view of other characters but also skillfully pulls the reader back to her own point of view in order to see things in terms of ironic satire. If he is too close, his reader involvement may lead merely to critical disgust. At the proper distance, he is involved only enough to appreciate the comic satire. When necessary for proper distancing, then, Austen simply moves into authorial point of view as, for instance, in the scene where George proposes to Emma: "What did she say?—Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does.—She said enough to show there need not be despair—and to invite him to say more himself." This shift to authorial point of view avoids sentimentality and allows both humor and irony in reference to the coyness and indirection that a consistently social person may give to a vital and

personal occasion. And it does all this better than in the details of dialogue, where the point might be lost without brevity.

Point of view, then, is omniscient when it is to the author's purpose. We do not, for instance, get into the points of view of Jane or Frank, for doing so would give away too much. But the character whose point of view is most before us is Emma, the focal personage of the novel.

9.2.5 Readers' Response

Jane Austen is generally acknowledged to be one of the great English novelists, so it is no surprise that her novels have remained continuously in print from her day to the present. Contemporary reviewers found much to praise in them. Reviewing *Emma* for the *Quarterly Review* (1816), Sir Walter Scott characterized its strengths and weaknesses:

The author's knowledge of the world, and the peculiar tact with which she presents characters that the reader cannot fail to recognize, reminds us something of the merits of the Flemish school of painting. The subjects are not often elegant, and certainly never grand; but they are finished to nature, and with a precision which delights the reader....

Her merits consist much in the force of a narrative conducted with much neatness and point, and a quiet yet comic dialogue, in which the characters of the speakers evolve themselves with dramatic effect. The faults arise from the minute detail which the author's plan comprehends. Characters of folly or simplicity, such as those of old Woodhouse and Miss Bates, are ridiculous when first presented, but if too often brought forward or too long dwelt upon, their prosing is apt to become as tiresome in fiction as in real society.

George Henry Lewes, writing in 1852, accorded her the status and identified issues that critics would be repeating and arguing about for the next century and a half:

First and foremost let Austen be named, the greatest artist that has ever written, using the term to signify the most perfect mastery over the means to her end. There are heights and depths in human nature Miss Austen has never scaled nor fathomed, there are worlds of passionate existence into which she has never set foot; but although this is obvious to every reader, it is equally obvious that she has risked no failures by attempting to delineate that which she has not seen. Her circle may be restricted, but it is complete. Her world is a perfect orb, and vital. Life, as it presents itself to an English gentlewoman peacefully yet actively engaged in her quiet village, is mirrored in her works with a purity and fidelity that must endow them with interest for all time.

Appreciation of her greatness snowballed with the publication of James Edward Austen-Leigh's *Memoir* and Richard Simpson's perceptive critical essay, both in 1870. Macaulay, for

instance, called her a prose Shakespeare because of “the marvellous and subtle distinctive traits” of her characterizations.

Austen’s novels have aroused intense emotional attachments among readers. E.M. Forster admitted to reading and re-reading her with “the mouth open and the mind closed.” Some readers carry admiration to the point of sentimental adoration; for them, her characters are beloved friends and Austen is dear Aunt Jane, a proper, sedate, kindly Victorian old maid. Such readers are often called *Janeites*, after a short story called *The Janeites* which Rudyard Kipling wrote in 1924.

Not every reader has responded positively to Austen, however. Perplexed, Joseph Conrad wrote H.G. Wells asking, “What is all this about Jane Austen? What is there in her? What is it all about?” Probably the most famous rejection of Austen was penned by Charlotte Bronte:

Anything like warmth or enthusiasm, anything energetic, poignant, heartfelt, is utterly out of place in commending these works: all such demonstrations the authoress would have met with a well-bred sneer, would have calmly scorned as *outré* or extravagant. She does her business of delineating the surface of the lives of genteel English people curiously well. There is a Chinese fidelity, a miniature delicacy, in the painting. She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement, disturbs him with nothing profound. The passions are perfectly unknown to her: she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood ... What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study: but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of life and the sentient target of death—this Miss Austen ignores.... Jane Austen was a complete and most sensible lady, but a very incomplete and rather insensible (not *senseless* woman), if this is heresy—I cannot help it.

Bronte’s preference for passion over reason in fiction is not uncommon. Horace Walpole suggested a principle that explains the differing responses of Austen and Bronte to life and writing novels: “This world is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel.” Building on this comment, Ian Watt suggested that Jane Austen’s novels, which are comedies, “have little appeal to those who believe thought inferior to feeling.” Not all readers agree with Bronte, however, that Austen’s novels lack emotion. For Virginia Woolf, Austen was “a mistress of much deeper emotion than appears on the surface. She stimulates us to supply what is not there.”

In addition to the question of passion, one of the most frequent criticisms of Austen is the narrowness of her subject matter. Her characters’ interests and Austen’s interests may seem trivial, unimportant, particularly since she wrote at a time when England was engaged in a life and death struggle with the French and Napoleon. Though she focuses on the everyday

lives and concerns of a few families in a small country circle, her novels still have a profound effect on many readers. Lord David Cecil offered one way to resolve this paradox; Austen's is a profound vision. There are other views of life and more extensive; concerned as it is exclusively with personal relationships, it leaves out several important aspects of experience. But on her own ground Jane Austen gets to the heart of the matter; her graceful unpretentious philosophy, founded as it is on an unwavering recognition of fact, directed by an unerring perception of moral quality, is as impressive as those of the most majestic novelists.

Another common criticism of Austen is her complacent acceptance of the class structure of her society, its values, and its modes. One response to this charge is to find implicit social criticism in her novels. D. W. Harding theorized that because Austen was torn between her perception of the cruelties and corruptions of her society and her strong emotional attachments to family and friends, she expressed her criticisms of society in ways that were not necessarily conscious; he calls this covert criticism "regulated hatred." Arnold Kettle in effect dismissed the charge of Austen's complacency by finding its source in a historical change in society and in literary practice:

...after Jane Austen, the great novels of the nineteenth century are all, in their different ways, novels of revolt. The task of the novelists was the same as it had always been—to achieve realism, to express (with whatever innovations of form and structure they needs must discover) the truth about life as it faced them. But to do this, to cut through the whole complex structure of inhumanity and false feeling that ate into the consciousness of the capitalist world, it was necessary to become a rebel... The great novelists were rebels, and the measure of their greatness is found in the last analysis to correspond with the degree and consistency of their rebellion. It was not of course always a conscious, intellectualized rebellion; very seldom was it based on anything like a sociological analysis. It was, rather, a rebellion of the spirit, of the total consciousness, and it was only indirectly reflected in the lives the writers led. Emily Bronte, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad, outwardly appearing to conform to the accepted standards of their day, sensed no less profoundly than the radicals Dickens and George Eliot and Samuel Butler the degradation of human existence in Victorian society.

It would be appropriate to provide you with important critical opinions about various aspects of *Emma*. J.W. Beach says that While seeming to assume the point of view of her leading characters, and not really out of sympathy with them, she lights up their absurdities with many a sly stroke of drollery and wit. Her story is carried largely in lively scenes of dialogue ; and her dialogue is one of the great achievements of fictional art. It has a correctness and formality that were doubtless characteristic of well bred speech in her age, but was also partly her tribute to an artistic ideal. This talk is somewhat better than life – more pointed and articulate, more selective. It reads aloud admirably, and it is so pat and well prepared that many a

line would do for the stage. In happier circumstances, Miss Austen might have made a success as a playwright. But the theatre was a sorry affair in the nineteenth century, and perhaps we should be grateful that she chose the finer medium of the novel.

Marry Lascelles says that Jane Austen's literary reputation established itself unobtrusively but steadily. Within her own generation she obtained recognition : Scott was among her earliest and most spontaneous admirers ; but, to the generation that followed, her novels necessarily appeared old – fashioned : the very language belonged to the past century. Macaulay's enthusiasm, when he likened her to Shakespeare and Moliere, was premature, and perhaps unguarded. Other writers, from Southey to Henry James, have been content to cherish a private appreciation of her art. General approbation grew, however, until in 1910 E.V. Lucas called her 'an English classic'. Since A.C. Bradley recalled critical attention to the peculiar quality of her genius (in 1911), her standing as a novelist has not been seriously challenged ; detraction has fastened on her character, alleging that her apprehension was dull, her temperament cold, her mind and heart narrow – despite the contrary witness of biographical accounts based on personal recollection or family tradition. Appreciation of the moral sensibility and seriousness discoverable in her novels has lately advanced, at some cost to the enjoyment of her wit.

But if her range was thus limited, within it she was supreme. Absolutely sure of her material, undistracted by external interests, she wrote with a singular freedom from uncertainty; and her novels have, in consequence, an exactness of structure and a symmetry of form which are to be found more often in French literature than in English. Of this precious, *Pride and Prejudice* is an admirable example. Here the plot is the chief interest ; simple, but pervasive ; controlling every incident, but itself depending for its outcome upon the development or revelation of the principal characters. Surrounding these characters is the world of provincial folk which Miss Austen handled brilliantly – cynical Mr. Bennet and his fatuous wife : Mary Bennet, the pedant, and Lydia, the flirt : Mr. Collins, the type of pretentious conceit, and Sir William Lucas, of feeble dullness. These 'humours' Miss Austen develops chiefly through her wonderful faculty for saying the thing appropriate to the character at the moment. . . Miss Austen's later stories, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* are longer and slightly more elaborate than *Pride and Prejudice* but in them the essentials of her art are still the same : a well – defined story, growing naturally out of the influence of character on character, and developed in the midst of a society full of the mild humours of provincial life.

William J. Long opines that very few English writers ever had so narrow a field of work as Jane Austen. Like the French novelists, whose success seems to lie in choosing the tiny field that they know best, her works have an exquisite perfection that is lacking in most of our writers out of fiction. With the exception of an occasional visit to the watering place of Bath, her whole life was spent in small country parishes, whose simple country people became the characters of her novels. Her brothers were in the navy, and so naval officers furnished the only exciting element in her stories; but even these alleged heroes lay aside their imposing martial

ways and act like themselves and other people. Such was her literary field, in which the chief duties were of the household, the chief pleasures in country gatherings, and the chief interests in matrimony. Life, with its mighty interests, its passions, ambitions, and tragic struggles swept by like a great river; while the secluded interests of a country parish went round and round quietly. We can easily understand, therefore, the limitations of Jane Austen; but within her own field she is unequalled. Her character are absolutely true to life, and all her work has the perfection of a miniature painting. The most widely read of her novels is *Pride and Prejudice*: but three others, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, and *Mansfield Park*, have slowly won their way to the front rank of fiction. From a literary view point *Northanger Abbey* is perhaps the best; for in it we find that touch of humour and delicate satire with which this gentle little woman combated the grotesque popular novels of the *Udolpho* type.

Faithful observation, personal detachment, and fine sense of ironic comedy are among Jane Austen's chief characteristics as a writer . . . She did not pretend to be a social reformer, and it is useless and foolish to gird at her because the under world is always kept out of the view . . . Folly she ridicules wherever she finds, it. Sin she excuses wherever she can.

The Secret of her power lies in the complete mastery she has as an artist over her material. She was finely alive to her limitations, never touched a character or scene she did not thoroughly know, and never invented a story or personage which she did not subject to such minutely intimate treatment that the reader feels as if it was all a fragment of autobiography.

There is no didacticism, no philosophy, no propaganda in her fictions. We have a perfect picture of provincial life in the early eighteenth century.

Most contemporary readers of Jane Austen, though remote from her social and moral milieu, find her novels vivid slices of life, presenting living characters whose foibles lead to ridiculous and entertaining mischances. So Austen's intended readers are shocked when they encounter readers who, lacking ironic vision, are repelled by her comic irony, call her "detached," even "cynical," and argue that her characters are merely objects of comic ridicule, or when they encounter readers who, seeking hermeneutic mastery, argue that the reward of reading her novels is discovery of an abstract tenet embedded in the text, such as a feminist view of society, rather than enjoyment of an entertaining slice of life in a satisfying work of art.

Probably there is no resolution of the disagreements about a novel revealing human character, but no interdiction lies on enjoyment of Jane Austen novels. Janeites are free to enjoy the novels, but should remember that the source of the celebration is a work of art whose beauty is to be revealed. Claudia Johnson observes that if Samuel Johnson was right in asserting that the purpose of literature is to help us better enjoy or endure life, "we must be glad . . . that 'Jane' is 'theirs,' 'yours,' and 'ours' after all". So "Jane" belongs to us all—all, that is, except those who miss her ironic comedy. And even some of those are appreciative readers who may claim a share as well.

9.3 Self Assessment Questions

1. Who uses child's blocks to create words for the ladies to decode ?
2. Cite two words made by Frank in word game in chapter 41 .
3. In which chapter does the word game take place ?
4. What does Harriet keep as souvenirs of Mr Elton ?
5. What is described in these words- "It was a delightful visit, - perfect, in being much too short" ?
6. Who is "a young man living alone without liking it"?
7. Why does Mr Woodhouse want Mr George Knightley after the marriage of his daughter?
8. Name the six parties that take place in the novel.
9. Who says about whom. "Mr Knightley loves to find fault with me – in a joke. We always say what we like to one another"?
10. Describe some of the illusions and misconceptions of Emma.
11. Give three examples of Emma's snobbery.
12. "There is nobody in Highbury who deserves him; and he has been here a whole year, and has fitted up his house so comfortably that it would be a shame to have him single any longer." Who is the speaker and about whom are these words spoken ?
13. "She will never submit to anything requiring industry and patience; and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding". Who is the speaker and about whom are these words spoken ?
14. "My idea of him is, that he can adapt his conversation to the taste of everybody, and has the power as well as the wish of being universally agreeable. To you, he will talk of farming; to me, of drawing or music; and so on.... that is my idea of him." Who is the speaker and about whom are these words spoken ?
15. Who, in fact, was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them.?
16. "You will puff her (Harriet) up with such ideas of her own beauty and of what she has a claim to that, in a little while, nobody within her reach will be good enough for her. Vanity working on a weak head, produces every sort of mischief. Nothing so easy as for a young lady to raise her expectations too high." Who is the speaker and to whom are these words spoken ?

17. "I am convinced of her being an artless, amiable girl, with very good notions, very seriously good principles, and placing her happiness in the affections and utility of domestic life." Who speak these lines? Who is being described?
18. Who is described as "a chattering coxcomb, the most insufferable fellow breathing" by Mr Knightley?
19. "I do not accuse her of want of feeling. Her sensibilities, I suspect are, strong and her temper excellent in its power of forbearance, patience, I self control, but it wants openness. She is reserved, more reserved, I think, than she used to be. And I love an open temper." Who speak these lines? Who is being described in these lines.?
20. "She is poor, She has sunk from the comforts she was born to; and, if she live to old age, must probably sink more. Her situation should secure your compassion. It was badly done, indeed. You, whom she had known from an infant;" Who is the speaker of these lines? To whom are these lines spoken? Who is being described in these lines?
21. "Why do you talk of success? Where is your merit? What are you proud of? You made a lucky guess; and that is all that can be said." Who rebukes in these lines? Who is being rebuked?
22. "I will do you the justice to say that you would have chosen for him better than he has chosen for himself. Harriet Smith has some first rate qualities which Mrs Elton is totally without. An unpretending, single minded, artless girl – infinitely to be preferred by any man of sense and taste to such a woman as Mrs Elton." Who speak these words? Who is being addressed to?
23. "Mrs Bates, let me propose your venturing on one of these eggs. An egg boiled very soft is not unwholesome. Serle understands boiling an egg better than anybody. I would not recommend an egg boiled by anybody else – but you need not be afraid- they are very small, you see-one of our small eggs will not hurt you. Miss Bates, let Emma help you to a little bit of tart – a very little bit. Ours are all apple tarts. You need not be afraid of unwholesome preserves here. I do not advise the custard Mrs Goddard, what say you to half a glass of wine? A small half glass – put into a tumbler of water? I do not think it could disagree with you." From the vocabulary used in the passage, can you guess who the speaker of these lines is? What does it reflect upon his character?
24. "He only wanted to aggrandize and enrich himself; and if Miss Woodhouse of Hartfield, the heiress of thirty thousand pounds, were not quite so easily obtained as he had fancied, he would soon try for Miss Somebody else with twenty, or with ten". Who is being described? What does it reflect upon his character?
25. Who goes to London especially for a hair cut? Who calls him "The trifling, silly-fellow"?

9.4 Answers To SAQs

1. Frank Churchill.
2. Blunder and Dixon.
3. Chapter 41
4. Court plaster and a pencil stub.
5. Isabella's Christmas visit with her father and sister.
6. Mr Elton.
7. He still wants Mr Knightley for the protection of Poultry houses.
8. There are six important parties in the novel: the Christmas Eve party at Randalls, the dinner party at the Coles', the dinner party given for Mrs Elton, the dance at the Crown Inn, the morning party at Donwell Abbey, and the picnic at Box Hill.
9. Emma says about Mr Knightley.
10. She considers that she has a hand in bringing about the marriage of Miss Taylor and Mr Weston. She can find a suitable wife for the Vicar, Mr Elton. She takes a liking to Harriet Smith whom she takes under her wings.
11.
 - a. Emma does not think Robert Martin to be a suitable husband for Harriet.
 - b. She thinks it is beneath her dignity to mix with the Coles.
 - c. Emma's indifferent attitude towards Miss Bates.
12. Emma says these words about Mr Elton.
13. Mr Knightley says these words about Emma.
14. Emma speaks these words about Frank Churchill
15. Mr Knightley
16. Mr Knightley says these words to Emma.
17. Mr Knightley speaks these lines about Harriet Smith.
18. Mr Frank Churchill
19. Mr Knightley speaks these lines about Jane Fairfax.
20. Mr Knightley speaks these lines to Emma. Miss Bates is being described in these lines.
21. Mr Knightley rebukes Emma about her role as a match maker.
22. These words are spoken to Emma by Mr Knightley.

23. Mr Woodhouse speaks these lines. It is about eating habits. He is an invalid himself. He is extra conscious of his own health as well as of others.
24. Mr Elton is being referred to in these lines. It means he demands dowry in marriage.
25. Frank Churchill goes to London for a haircut. Mr Knightley calls him “The trifling, silly-fellow.

9.5 Let Us Sum Up

In continuation with the previous unit you have studied the material given in this unit. This material was intended to increase your critical knowledge of those topics which were not covered in the previous unit. For example we have discussed the various themes of the novel, plot structure, use of various devices like irony, symbols, motifs, visits, parties, dialogues, riddles, word game and tokens. You have studied the style and the point of view used by the writer. In this way you can say that you have studied the novel at a higher level than that discussed in the previous unit.

9.6 Review Questions

1. Describe the character of Miss Bates and point to instances in which she is important for the satirical delineation of manners.
2. Compare and contrast Miss Bates and Augusta Elton as two compulsive talkers.
3. Re-examine man’s absurdities as they are treated in this novel. Are they absurd because they are exceptional? Why or why not?
4. In what ways is *Emma* a realistic novel, or is it not realistic at all? Justify your answer.
5. What would you say is the largest and most controlling ironic treatment in the novel? Is the reader aware of it most of the time?
6. Enumerate ways in which the eighteenth-century attitude toward social ranks is exemplified in the novel.
7. What are some elements of literary style that Miss Austen inherited from the eighteenth century?
8. What is meant by a *esthetic distance*? How is it achieved in *Emma*?
9. Why do you suppose Miss Austen, who could liken her literary work to a little bit of ivory, avoids figurative imagery in *Emma*? Is this avoidance related to esthetic distance?
10. It is often stated that good literature bears re-reading. In what ways is this particularly true of *Emma*?
11. Consider in order the instances when Emma arrives at some degree of self-knowl-

edge. Can you relate these instances to the plot pattern?

12. What characters other than Emma show an awareness of self-importance? How do they function thematically in relation to Emma?
13. Miss Austen has been accused of cold detachment from her fictional subject matter. What reasons can you give for this accusation? Can a satirist be thoroughly detached from what he is writing about?
14. Why do you suppose Miss Austen once said that Emma is “a heroine whom no one but myself will much like?” Is a liking of subject matter necessary for proper appreciation of a work of art? Is someone else equally or more important?

9.7 Bibliography

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UNIT – 10

CHARLES DICKENS: *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* (I)

Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
 - 10.1.1 About the author
 - 10.1.2 About the story
- 10.2 The Story: *A Christmas Carol* (Text)
 - 10.2.1 Glossary
 - 10.2.2 Summary of the Story
 - 10.2.3 Some Model Explanations
- 10.3 Self Assessment Questions
- 10.4 Answers SAQs
- 10.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 10.6 Review Questions
- 10.7 Bibliography

10.0 Objectives

The present unit aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To enable you to grasp the essence of story writing.
- To help you to understand the beauty and true spirit of Christmas festival.
- To enable you to comprehend the virtues essential for a true human being.
- To acquaint you with the art of story writing of Charles Dickens.

10.1 Introduction

The story selected for this unit is entitled *A Christmas Carol* written by Charles Dickens, one of the greatest novelists in English language. The story was published in 1843 just after the publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The latter work was not so well received by the readers as his other earlier works. However, *A Christmas Carol* was an instant success and greatly applauded by the readers of Dickens. This story stands first among the other stories

written on the Christmas theme. The others being *The Chimes* (1845), *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1846), *The Battle of life* (1847), and *The Haunted Man* (1848). All these stories were later published as Christmas Books.

10.1.1 About the Author

Charles Dickens was born to John and Elizabeth Dickens in 1812 at Portsea. He was the first son, but second child among the eight children born in the Dickens family. Due to the transfer of John Dickens the family moved to London when Charles was nine year old and this was his home for the rest of his life. Charles was a delicate child and was thrown back at an early age on the companionship of books such as *Roderick Random*, *Tom Jones*, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *Don Quixote*, and *Robinson Crusoe* to name a few. Charles suffered a serious setback in his life when his father was thrown into the poor debtor's prison for not being able to pay his debts.

At the age of eleven young Charles was taken out of school and sent to work in the cellar of Warren's blacking factory, sitting in the front window of the factory, pasting labels from sunrise to sunset. At twenty he became a parliamentary reporter and a writer of fictitious sketches of London life by night. These writings were published as *Sketches by Boz* (1836). This debut work of Dickens attracted the attention of some publishers of his day and they commissioned him to write for them. The result was that he wrote about 15 major novels and many short stories. Dickens earned enormous fame as a writer and a speaker by giving public readings from his works. Dickens traveled to America and other countries on the Continent and earned great admiration wherever he went. On June 8, 1870 he wrote the whole day and before dinner he said suddenly that he had to go to London at once, he got up from the table and collapsed never to regain consciousness and the next evening he died. He was buried in the Westminster Abbey.

10.1.2 About the Story

A Christmas Carol (1843) is a ghost story having the Christmas festival in the background. Charles Dickens himself writes in the 'Preface' of this story: "I have endeavored in this Ghostly little book, to raise the ghost of an Idea...." This makes it very clear that the story deals with ghosts and spirits. This is the most read story of Dickens and every English speaking person knows by memory the unforgettable Scrooge, the jolly Bob Cratchit, and the lovable Tiny Tim. The story shows the reform of the miserly Scrooge, which has become one of the greatest symbols of humanity making the meaning of Christmas clear to every Christian and non Christian as well.

The center of attraction in the story is Scrooge, the half owner of a counting house. He is a thorough miser and hates every kind of celebration including Christmas. The writer changes the heart of Scrooge gradually by introducing him to the three Spirits that take Scrooge on a journey of his past, present and future life. At the end of the story Scrooge is a changed man

like a fairy godfather, and the story that begins on the note of pain and suffering ends in peace and pleasure.

10.2 The Story: *A Christmas Carol* (Text)

STAVE I

MARLEY'S GHOST

MARLEY was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change for anything he chose to put his hand to.

Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain.

The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot—say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance—literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley.

The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone. Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The

cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days, and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, "No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!"

But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call "nuts" to Scrooge.

Once upon a time—of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve—old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already—it had not been light all day—and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!" cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of

Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said Scrooge, "Humbug!"

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

"Christmas a humbug, uncle!" said Scrooge's nephew. "You don't mean that, I am sure?"

"I do," said Scrooge. "Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," returned the nephew gaily. "What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough."

Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, "Bah!" again; and followed it up with "Humbug."

"Don't be cross, uncle!" said the nephew.

"What else can I be," returned the uncle, "when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will," said Scrooge indignantly, "every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should?"

"Uncle!" pleaded the nephew.

"Nephew!" returned the uncle, sternly, "keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" repeated Scrooge's nephew. "But you don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then," said Scrooge. "Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," returned the nephew. "Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not

another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!”

The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever.

“Let me hear another sound from you,” said Scrooge, “and you’ll keep your Christmas by losing your situation! You’re quite a powerful speaker, sir,” he added, turning to his nephew. “I wonder you don’t go into Parliament.”

“Don’t be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us to-morrow.”

Scrooge said that he would see him—yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

“But why?” cried Scrooge’s nephew. “Why?”

“Why did you get married?” said Scrooge.

“Because I fell in love.”

“Because you fell in love!” growled Scrooge, as if that were the “only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. “Good afternoon!”

“Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?”

“Good afternoon,” said Scrooge.

“I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?”

“Good afternoon,” said Scrooge.

“I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I’ll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!”

“Good afternoon!” said Scrooge.

“And A Happy New Year!”

“Good afternoon!” said Scrooge.

His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to bestow the greetings of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially.

“There’s another fellow,” muttered Scrooge; who overheard him: “my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I’ll retire to Bedlam.”

This lunatic, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him.

"Scrooge and Marley's, I believe," said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. "Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?"

"Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years," Scrooge replied. "He died seven years ago, this very night."

"We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner," said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was; for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word "liberality," Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

"At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge," said the gentleman, taking up a pen, "it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir."

"Are there no prisons?" asked Scrooge.

"Plenty of prisons," said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

"And the Union workhouses?" demanded Scrooge. "Are they still in operation?"

"They are. Still," returned the gentleman, "I wish I could say they were not."

"The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?" said Scrooge.

"Both very busy, sir."

"Oh! I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course," said Scrooge. "I'm very glad to hear it."

"Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude," returned the gentleman, "a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?"

"Nothing!" Scrooge replied.

"You wish to be anonymous?"

"I wish to be left alone," said Scrooge. "Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there."

“Many can’t go there; and many would rather die.”

“If they would rather die,” said Scrooge, “they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides—excuse me—I don’t know that.”

“But you might know it,” observed the gentleman.

“It’s not my business,” Scrooge returned. “It’s enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people’s. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!”

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping silly down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowing sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers’ and grocers’ trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the mighty Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor’s household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up to-morrow’s pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Foggier yet, and colder. Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan had but nipped the Evil Spirit’s nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge’s keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of “God bless you, merry gentleman! May nothing you dismay!”

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge

dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

“You’ll want all day to-morrow, I suppose?” said Scrooge.

“If quite convenient, sir.”

“It’s not convenient,” said Scrooge, “and it’s not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you’d think yourself ill-used, I’ll be bound?”

The clerk smiled faintly.

“And yet,” said Scrooge, “you don’t think me ill-used, when I pay a day’s wages for no work.”

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

“A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every twenty-fifth of December!” said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. “But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.”

The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman’s-buff.

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker’s-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that Scrooge had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the city of London, even including— which is a bold word—the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-years’ dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of

change—not a knocker, but Marley’s face.

Marley’s face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.

He did pause, with a moment’s irresolution, before he shut the door; and he did look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley’s pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said “Pooh, pooh!” and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant’s cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs; slowly too: trimming his candle as he went. You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs, or through a bad young Act of Parliament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the splinter bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought he saw a locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom. Half-a-dozen gas-lamps out of the street wouldn’t have lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge’s dip.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

Sitting-room, bedroom, lumber-room. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (Scrooge had a cold in his head) upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet; nobody in his dressing-gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Lumber-room as usual. Old fireguard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in,

which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was an old one, built by some Dutch merchant long ago, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels, Pharaoh's daughters, Queens of Sheba, Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like feather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats, hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts; and yet that face of Marley, seven years dead, came like the ancient Prophet's rod, and swallowed up the whole. If each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from the disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of old Marley's head on every one.

"Humbug!" said Scrooge; and walked across the room. After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset, that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below, then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

"It's humbug still!" said Scrooge. "I won't believe it."

His colour changed though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, "I know him; Marley's Ghost I" and fell again.

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-shirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel. His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

“How now!” said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. “What do you want with me?”

“Much!”—Marley’s voice, no doubt about it.

“Who are you?”

“Ask me who I was.”

“Who were you then?” said Scrooge, raising his voice. “You’re particular, for a shade.” He was going to say “to a shade,” but substituted this, as more appropriate.

“In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.”

“Can you—can you sit down?” asked Scrooge, looking doubtfully at him.

“I can.”

“Do, it, then.”

Scrooge asked the question, because he didn’t know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

“You don’t believe in me,” observed the Ghost.

“I don’t,” said Scrooge.

“What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?”

“I don’t know,” said Scrooge.

“Why do you doubt your senses?”

“Because,” said Scrooge, “a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There’s more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!”

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre’s voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

To sit, staring at those fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with' him. There was something very awful, too, in the spectre's being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but this was clearly the case; for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

“You see this toothpick?” said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

“I do,” replied the Ghost.

“You are not looking at it,” said Scrooge.

“But I see it,” said the Ghost, “notwithstanding.”

“Well!” returned Scrooge, “I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you! humbug!”

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear in-doors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast.

Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

“Mercy!” he said, “Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?”

“Man of the worldly mind!” replied the Ghost, “do you believe in me or not?”

“I do,” said Scrooge. “I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?”

“It is required of every man,” the Ghost returned, “that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world—oh, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness I”

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.

“You are fettered,” said Scrooge, trembling. “Tell me why?” “I wear the chain I forged in life,” replied the Ghost. “I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you?” Scrooge trembled more and more.

“Or would you know,” pursued the Ghost, “the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have

laboured on it since. It is a ponderous chain!”

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

“Jacob,” he said, imploringly. “Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!”

“I have none to give,” the Ghost replied. “It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house —mark me!—in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me!”

It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches pockets. Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so now, but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

“You must have been very slow about it, Jacob,” Scrooge observed, in a business-like manner, though with humility and deference.

“Slow!” the Ghost repeated.

“Seven years dead,” mused Scrooge. “And travelling all the time!”

“The whole time,” said the Ghost. “No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.”

“You travel fast?” said Scrooge.

“On the wings of the wind,” replied the Ghost.

“You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years,” said Scrooge.

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

“Oh! captive bound, and double-ironed,” cried the phantom, “not to know that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life’s opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!”

“But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,” faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

“Business!” cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. “Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were

all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!”

It held up its chain at arm’s length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

“At this time of the rolling year,” the spectre said, “I suffer most.

Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me!”

Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly.

“Hear me!” cried the Ghost. “My time is nearly gone.”

“I will,” said Scrooge. “But don’t be hard upon me! Don’t be flowery, Jacob! Pray!”

“How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day.”

It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

“That is no light part of my penance,” pursued the Ghost. “I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.”

“You were always a good friend to me,” said Scrooge. “Thank’ee!”

“You will be haunted,” resumed the Ghost, “by Three Spirits.”

Scrooge’s countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost’s ha’d done.

“Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?” he demanded, in a faltering voice.

“It is.”

“I—I think I’d rather not,” said Scrooge.

“Without their visits,” said the Ghost, “you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One.”

“Couldn’t I take ‘em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?” hinted Scrooge.

“Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night

when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!”

“When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound its teeth made, when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm.

The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

It beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were within two paces of each other, Marley’s Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley’s Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a doorstep. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home.

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say “Humbug!” but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

STAVE II

THE FIRST OF THE THREE SPIRITS

WHEN Scrooge awoke, it was so dark that, looking out of bed, he could scarcely

distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He was endeavouring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour.

To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from seven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The clock was wrong. An icicle must have got into the works. Twelve.

He touched the spring of his repeater, to correct this most preposterous clock. Its rapid little pulse beat twelve; and stopped.

“Why, it isn’t possible,” said Scrooge, “that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn’t possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!”

The idea being an alarming one, he scrambled out of bed, and groped his way to the window. He was obliged to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his dressing-gown before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make out was that it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no noise of people running to and fro, and making a great stir, as there unquestionably would have been if night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world. This was a great relief, because “three days after sight of this First of Exchange pay to Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge or his order,” and so forth, would have become a mere United States’ security if there were no days to count by.

Scrooge went to bed again, and thought, and thought, and thought it over and over and over, and could make nothing of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was; and the more he endeavoured not to think, the more he thought.

Marley’s Ghost bothered him exceedingly. Every time he resolved within himself, after mature inquiry, that it was all a dream, his mind flew back again, like a strong spring released, to its first position, and presented the same problem to be worked all through, “Was it a dream or not?”

Scrooge lay in this state until the chime had gone three quarters more, when he remembered, on a sudden, that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled one. He resolved to lie awake until the hour was passed; and, considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to Heaven, this was perhaps the wisest resolution in his power.

The quarter was so long, that he was more than once convinced he must have sunk into a doze unconsciously, and missed the clock. At length it broke upon his listening ear.

“Ding, dong!”

“A quarter past,” said Scrooge, counting.

“Ding, dong!”

“Half-past!” said Scrooge.

“Ding, dong!”

“A quarter to it,” said Scrooge.

“Ding, dong!”

“The hour itself,” said Scrooge, triumphantly, “and nothing else!”

He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep dull, hollow, melancholy ONE. Light flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn.

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

It was a strange figure—like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child’s proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was not its strangest quality. For, as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again, distinct and clear as ever.

“Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?” asked Scrooge.

“I am!”

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

“Who, and what are you?” Scrooge demanded.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.”

“Long Past?” inquired Scrooge: observant of its dwarfish stature.

“No. Your past.”

Perhaps Scrooge could not have told anybody why, if anybody could have asked him; but he had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap, and begged him to be covered.

“What!” exclaimed the Ghost, “would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow!”

Scrooge reverently disclaimed all intention to offend or any knowledge of having wilfully “bonneted” the Spirit at any period of his life. He then made bold to inquire what business brought him there.

“Your welfare!” said the Ghost.

Scrooge expressed himself much obliged, but could not help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end. The Spirit must have heard him thinking, for it said immediately:

“Your reclamation, then. Take heed!”

It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him gently by the arm.

“Rise! and walk with me!”

It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the weather and the hour were not adapted to pedestrian purposes; that bed was warm, and the thermometer a long way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and night-cap; and that he had a cold upon him at that time. The grasp, though gentle as a woman’s hand, was not to be resisted. He rose: but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped his robe in supplication.

“I am a mortal,” Scrooge remonstrated, “and liable to fall.”

“Bear but a touch of my hand there,” said the Spirit, laying it upon his heart, “and you shall be upheld in more than this!”

As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground.

“Good Heaven!” said Scrooge, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. “I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!”

The spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten!

"Your lip is trembling," said the Ghost. "And what is that upon your cheek?"

Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimple; and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

"You recollect the way?" inquired the Spirit.

"Remember it!" cried Scrooge with fervour; "I could walk it blindfold."

"Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!" observed the Ghost. "Let us go on."

They walked along the road, Scrooge recognising every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers.

All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed to hear it!

"These are but shadows of the things that have been," said the Ghost. "They have no consciousness of us."

The jocund travellers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them! Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past! Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways, for their several homes! What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

"The school is not quite deserted," said the Ghost. "A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still."

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself

somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed waterspout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty storehouse door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

The Spirit touched him on the arm, and pointed to his younger self, intent upon his reading. Suddenly a man, in foreign garments: wonderfully real and distinct to look at: stood outside the window, with an axe stuck in his belt, and leading by the bridle an ass laden with wood.

“Why, it’s Ali Baba!” Scrooge exclaimed in (ecstasy. “It’s dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy! And Valentine,” said Scrooge, “and his wild brother, Orson; there they go! And what’s his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the Gate of Damascus; don’t you see him! And the Sultan’s Groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is upon his head! Serve him right. I’m glad of it. What business had he to be married to the Princess!”

To hear Scrooge expending all the earnestness of his nature on such subjects, in a most extraordinary voice between laughing and crying; and to see his heightened and excited face; would have been a surprise to his business friends in the city, indeed.

“There’s the Parrot!” cried Scrooge. “Green body and yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out of the top of his head; there he is! Poor Robin Crusoe, he called him, when he came home again after sailing round the island. ‘Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe?’ The man thought he was dreaming, but he wasn’t. It was the Parrot, you know. There goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloo! Hoop! Halloo!”

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character, he said, in pity for his former self, “Poor boy!” and cried again.

“I wish,” Scrooge muttered, putting his hand in his pocket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with his cuff. “but it’s too late now.”

“What is the matter?” asked the Spirit.

“Nothing,” said Scrooge. “Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that’s all.”

The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand: saying as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!"

Scrooge's former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty. The panels shrunk, the windows cracked; fragments of plaster fell out of the ceiling, and the naked laths were shown instead; but how all this was brought about, Scrooge knew no more than you do. He only knew that it was quite correct; that everything had happened so; that there he was, alone again, when all the other boys had gone home for the jolly holidays.

He was not reading now, but walking upland down despairingly.

Scrooge looked at the Ghost, and with a mournful shaking of his head, glanced anxiously towards the door.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her "Dear, dear brother."

"I have come to bring you home, dear brother!" said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. "To bring you home, home, home!"

"Home, little Fan?" returned the boy.

"Yes!" said the child, brimful of glee. "Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man!" said the child, opening her eyes, "and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world."

"You are quite a woman, little Fan!" exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried, "Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!" and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people: at the same time, sending out a meagre servant to offer a glass of "something" to the postboy, who answered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the same tap as he had tasted

before, he had rather not. Master Scrooge's trunk being by this time tied on to the top of the chaise, the children bade the school-master good-bye right willingly; and getting into it, drove gaily down the garden-sweep: the quick wheels dashing the hoarfrost and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like spray.

"Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered," said the Ghost. "But she had a large heart!"

"So she had," cried Scrooge. "You're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!"

"She died a woman," said the Ghost, "and had, as I think children,"

"One child," Scrooge returned.

"True," said the Ghost. "Your nephew!"

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, "Yes."

Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battled for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it.

"Know it!" said Scrooge. "Was I apprenticed here!"

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig, sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement:

"Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!"

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:

"Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!"

Scrooge's former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-prentice.

"Dick Wilkins, to be sure!" said Scrooge to the Ghost. "Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear > dear!"

"Yo ho, my boys!" said Fezziwig. "No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up," cried old Fezziwig, with a sharp clap of his hands, "before a man can say Jack Robinson!"

You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged into the street with the shutters—one, two, three—had 'em up in their places—four, five, six—barred 'em and pinned 'em—seven, eight, nine—and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

“Hilli-ho!” cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. “Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!”

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ballroom, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler with a music book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her brother's particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her mistress. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; all top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them! When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig, clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, “Well done!” and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, especially provided for that purpose. But scorning rest, upon his reappearance, he instantly began again, though there were no dancers yet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, on a shutter, and he were a bran-new man resolved to beat him out of sight, or perish.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was negus, and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind! The sort of man who knew his business better than you-or I could have told it him!) struck up “Sir Roger de Coverley.” Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs. Fezziwig. Top couple, too: with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who would dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many—ah, four times—old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs. Fezziwig. As to her, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs. Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsy, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig "cut"—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr. and Mrs. Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two 'prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

"A small matter," said the Ghost, "to make these silly folks so full of gratitude."

"Small!" echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig: and when he had done so, said,

"Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?"

"It isn't that," said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. "It isn't that. Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count 'em up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune."

He felt the Spirit's glance and stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked the Ghost.

"Nothing particular," said Scrooge.

"Something, I think?" the Ghost insisted.

“No,” said Scrooge, “No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That’s all.”

His former self turned down the lamps as (he gave utterance to the wish; and Scrooge and the Ghost again stood side by side in the open air.

“My time grows short,” observed the Spirit. “Quick!”

This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to any one whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect. For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

“It matters little,” she said, softly. “To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.”

“What Idol has displaced you?” he rejoined.

“A golden one.”

“This is the even-handed dealing of the world!” he said. “There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!”

““You fear the world too much,” she answered, gently. “All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?”

“What then?” he retorted. “Even if I have grown so much, what then? I am not changed towards you.”

She shook her head.

“Ami?”

“Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.

“I was a boy,” he said impatiently.

“Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are,” she returned. “I am. That

which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.”

“Have I ever sought release?”

“In words. No. Never.”

“In what, then?”

“In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us,” said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him; “tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!”

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle, “You think not.”

“I would gladly think otherwise if I could,” she answered, “Heaven knows! When / have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl—you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.”

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.

“You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!”

She left him, and they parted.

“Spirit!” said Scrooge, “show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?”

“One shadow more!” exclaimed the Ghost.

“No more!” cried Scrooge. “No more. I don’t wish to see it. Show me no more!”

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same, until he saw her, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter. The

noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there, than Scrooge in his agitated state of mind could count; and, unlike the celebrated herd in the poem, they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child was conducting itself like forty. The consequences were uproarious beyond belief; but no one seemed to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily, and enjoyed it very much; and the latter, soon beginning to mingle in the sports, got pillaged by the young brigands most ruthlessly. What would I not have given to be one of them! Though I never could have been so rude, no, no! I wouldn't for the wealth of all the world have crushed that braided hair, and torn it down; and for the precious little shoe, I wouldn't have plucked it off, God bless my soul! to save my life. As to measuring her waist in sport, as they did, bold young brood, I couldn't have done it; I should have expected my arm to have grown round it for a punishment and never come straight again. And yet I should have dearly liked, I own, to have touched her lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and never raised a blush; to have let loose waves of hair, an inch of which would be a keepsake beyond price: I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest licence of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value.

But now a knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and plundered dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group, just in time to greet the father, who came home attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter! The scaling him with chairs for ladders to dive into his pockets, despoil him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round the neck, pommel his back, and kick his legs in irrepressible affection! The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received! The terrible announcement that the baby had been taken in the act of putting a doll's frying-pan into his mouth, and was more than suspected of having swallowed a fictitious turkey, glued on a wooden platter! The immense relief of finding this a false alarm! The joy, and gratitude, and ecstasy! They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour, and by one stair at a time, up to the top of the house; where they went to bed, and so subsided.

And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fire-side; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

"Belle," said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, "I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon." "Who was it?" "Guess!"

"How can I? Tut, don't I know?" she added in the same breath, laughing as he laughed. "Mr. Scrooge."

“Mr. Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside, I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.”

“Spirit!” said Scrooge in a broken voice, “remove me from this place.”

“I told you these were shadows of the things that have been,” said the Ghost. “That they are what they are, do not blame me!”

“Remove me!” Scrooge exclaimed, “I cannot bear it!”

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

“Leave me! Take me back. Haunt me no longer!”

In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light, which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

10.2.1 Glossary

Abel	: second son of Adam and Eve killed by his brother Cain.
Aldermen	: members of municipal council.
Anonymous	: with no name known or acknowledged.
Apparition	: a strange figure appearing suddenly and thought to be a ghost.
Apprentices	: trainees for a specific job.
Bleak	: gloomy.
Boisterous	: noisy and unruly.
Bonneted	: covered with a hat or hood.
Cain	: the oldest son of Adam and Eve who killed his brother Abel.
Celestial	: heavenly.

Cellar	: underground room esp. used for storage purpose.
Chimes	: a set of bells.
Christmas	: a festival of Christians to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Dec.25.
Christmas Carol	: a song of joy or praise sung on Christmas.
Comely	: pleasant to look at.
Condemn	: to pass an adverse judgment on something or somebody.
Condescension	: a patronizing manner or behaviour.
Conducive	: allowing or helping something to happen.
Countenance	: facial features or expression.
Counting – house	: an ancient form of modern times bank.
Damascus	: capital of Syria; a very ancient city dating to c.2000B.C.
Despairingly	: hopelessly.
Dwarfish	: very small.
Enshrouded	: covered with a veil.
Faltering	: moving uncertainly or unsteadily.
Fathom	: a length of six feet.
Foretold	: told in advance.
Gainsay	: to deny; contradict or act against.
Genii	: plural of genius.
Gruel	: porridge cooked in water or milk to be digested easily.
Hamlet	: the hero of Shakespeare’s play <i>Hamlet</i> who avenges the murder of his father after the spirit of his father appears before him.
Humbug	: dishonest person; talk or behaviour that is intended to deceive and win sympathy.
Immortal	: living or lasting forever.
Impropriety	: indecent or unsuitable behaviour.
Lamentation	: act or expression of grief.
Legatee	: person who receives a legacy.
Legion	: a military division in Roman history.

Lettuce	: a plant with crisp, succulent green leaves used for salad.
Lunatic	: a madman.
Matron	: a woman attendant or guard.
Misanthropic	: a person hating mankind.
Mourner	: a person who mourns the death of a friend or relative.
Ominous	: suggesting that something bad is going to happen.
Pharaoh	: the title of the kings of ancient Egypt often used as a proper name in the Bible.
Persecuted	: punished cruelly esp. for reasons of religion, politics or race.
Perspiration	: act of sweating.
Pinioned	: confined.
Queen of Sheba:	a biblical figure who visited King Solomon to investigate his reputed wisdom.
Reclamation	: recovery of useful materials from waste.
Recumbent	: reclining; resting.
Robin Crusoe	: the title hero of Daniel Defoe's novel (1719) known for his courage and cleverness.
Simile	: a figure of speech in which two dissimilar things are compared.
Sir Roger de Coverley:	a very famous character known for his gallantry in <i>The Spectator Club</i> (1709) written by Richard Steele.
Stave	: a stanza of song etc.
Supplication	: the act of humble request or prayer.
Syllable	: a word or part of a word pronounced with a single, uninterrupted sounding of the voice.
Terrestrial	: worldly or earthly.
Tunic	: a loose gown like garment worn by men and women in ancient Greece and Rome.
Ventured	: exposed to danger or risk.
Weathercock	: a weather vane in shape of a rooster.

10.2.2 Summary of the Story

The very title of the story suggests that it is about Christmas. The opening of the story initiates the theme. The writer at the outset tells that Scrooge and Marley were partners by profession for a very long period and Marley was now dead. After his death all the legal rights were in the sole possession of Scrooge. The writer refers to the ghost of Hamlet's father to prepare the readers that the story will be about spirits at the centre of the story.

We are told that Scrooge is a hard-hearted, old and covetous sinner. The coldness of heart and cruelty of head were prominent on the face and figure of Scrooge. He is an isolated figure and does not enjoy any kind of social relations. Neither human beings nor animals had a fellow feeling with him. The story is set on a Christmas Eve. Old Scrooge is shown busy in his counting-house. It was late afternoon and the clerk in the counting-house was copying letters in candle light. Everything was dull and damp when Scrooge suddenly heard a cheerful voice of his nephew wishing him 'a merry Christmas'. Scrooge retorts coldly and cruelly and wishes that everybody wishing merry Christmas should be killed. Both the uncle and the nephew have a heated argument over the issue and when the clerk tries to interfere he is bluntly silenced by Scrooge. At the departure of Scrooge's nephew two people enter the office and ask for some donation to help the poor and destitutes. The two gentlemen too are rebuked and forced out without a single penny from Scrooge's pockets.

Next came a singer of Christmas Carol, but he too was forced to run away in fear lest he should be hit by Scrooge. By this time the hour of departure of the clerk arrived and after a long debate he is provided with the next day's holiday though quite reluctantly on the part of Scrooge. The office was closed and Scrooge went to his residence after having meals. As he reached the door of his bedroom he had a strange feeling of seeing Marley's face on the door. He was surprised and frightened but soon discarded the feeling of fear considering it to be nothing but a hallucination of his mind.

He shut the door behind him and retired to bed. But very soon there was a booming sound and with that entered a spirit through the closed door into his room. Scrooge gathered courage to take to the spirit and learnt that it was the spirit of his deceased partner Jacob Marley, who had died seven years ago on the same day. The spirit is seen fettered and when Scrooge asks the reason for it, the ghost of Marley replies that it was the chain forged by him in his life by his own free will and he wore it by the same free will. Now Scrooge pleads Marley's ghost to speak to him. When Scrooge reminds the ghost that during his life time he was a good man of business, the ghost painfully replied that his true business was the welfare of mankind to which he did not attend honestly. The ghost of Marley further says that his purpose to visit him that night was to warn him that he (Scrooge) still had chance to escape the same painful fate. The ghost also tells Scrooge that very soon three Spirits will visit him. With these words Marley's ghost disappeared and Scrooge went straight to bed and immediately fell asleep.

Scrooge opened his eyes only to hear twelve strokes by the chimes of a nearby church and was surprised to think that he had slept till twelve in the noon and anxiously looked through the window to see everything covered in extreme darkness, he then realized that still it was midnight. He started thinking about his meeting with Marley's ghost. Time passed and the church clock struck one and suddenly there was light in his room and the curtains of his bed were drawn aside. At that moment Scrooge found a Spirit standing near him with strange looks. It was dressed in purest white. Scrooge spoke to the spirit asking if it was the some Spirit as was told by Marley's ghost, and the Sprit replied in the affirmative. The Spirit told Scrooge that it was "the ghost of Christmas Past". The Spirit said that it had come to him for his welfare. It asked Scrooge to ride and walk with him. The Spirit air-lifted Scrooge and took him to his childhood days into the past.

Scrooge saw a school where a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire, he also saw some other things dear to him during his childhood and Scrooge for the first time had tears in his eyes and wished he should have helped the poor boy singing Christmas Carol at his door the previous night. Scrooge was shown another scene by the Spirit in which he saw a little girl calling him "Dear, dear brother". She told him that it was Christmas time and she had come to fetch him to home, at this the poor, hopeless boy jumped in delight and the school master granted leave to the little boy. This entire scene delighted old Scrooge and he remembered his dear sister who was already dead and was survived by one son.

The Spirit further carried Scrooge to his place of apprenticeship and old Scrooge was pleased to see his master old Fezziwig who was a jolly fellow. Scrooge sees the scene of his apprenticeship and the Christmas Eve when Fezziwig prohibited them from work and asked them to join the ball at his home. The scene now shifts to Fezziwig's house where a huge gathering is seen dancing and enjoying. Scrooge also heard the words spoken by him in praise of Fezziwig, and feels that Fezziwig deserved such praise on account of the extra money spent on him, which provided him greatest pleasure. Just at that instant old Scrooge recollected his own harsh treatment towards his clerk and wished he could also do something for him like old Fezziwig.

Now the scene shifts to a young woman conversing with a young man who has turned hostile to her on account of newly acquired riches. She said that he would never choose a dowerless girl and so she will no more trouble him with her love, with these words she left him. Old Scrooge was pained to see all this, as the young man in the scene was nobody else but his own self. The Spirit shows one last scene in which this young woman is shown leading a happy married life as mother of one sweet daughter. Old Scrooge feels the pinch in his heart for his foolish decision of marrying money and profit and losing the real wealth of life that is true love.

Finally, Scrooge pleads earnestly before the Spirit to free him and carry him back to his present life, which being done by the Spirit, Scrooge sank into a heavy sleep immediately.

10.2.3 Some Model Explanations

- (i) “Christmas among the rest.....God bless it!”

These lines have been extracted from the story *A Christmas Carol* penned by Charles Dickens. These lines are a part of the conversation between Scrooge and his nephew Fred. Here Fred tells his uncle that there are many things which have not profited him and one such thing is Christmas. He says that his true interest in Christmas time is not only because of the sacredness associated with it but that it is a good time. People love this time because a feeling of kindness, pleasure and charity looms large in the environment. People forgive and are forgiven for their ills and evils. Fred further says that it is the only time during the whole year that the upper classes of the society freely and frankly fuse with the lower classes offering every kind of help and hope to them. Finally, Fred says to Scrooge that though this Christmas time has not added to his stock of silver or gold, it certainly has done good to him and wishes it may do so in future as well.

The passage throws light on the true spirit of Christmas and the welfare activities performed during the period.

- (ii) “Heaven knows!.....love of him you once you were”

These lines have been taken from the famous Christmas story entitled *A Christmas Carol* written by the most popular Victorian novelist Charles Dickens. In these lines we find Scrooge’s beloved speaking to him. The scene is set in such a time when Scrooge has deserted her for the sake of money. She says to Scrooge that she has realized that he is no more interested in her because she is not as rich as he is. His love for money is very strong, stronger than her love for him. It is true, she says, that he cannot marry a lady of lower social status at present, but supposing he were free to do it in the present, future or the past, he would not be able to do it without the feeling of repentance. She is wise and humane and thus she announces his freedom from the bond of love binding them both. She sets an example of true love, which necessarily means thinking above and beyond profit and loss.

Thus, these lines highlight the avarice inherent in the character of Scrooge because of which he loses true love and a caring beloved.

10.3 Self Assessment Questions

I Answer the following questions in two – three lines each.

1. Why does the author say “Old Marley was as dead as a door nail.”? Which figure of speech is employed here?

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2. What was the motive of the gentleman in seeking donation from Scrooge. ?

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3. Why does Scrooge doubt his senses when he first meets the ghost of Marley. ?

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4. What is the symbolic significance of the chain in which the ghost of Marley is bound.?

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5. What is the purpose of Marley's ghost's visit to Scrooge.?

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6. Describe the appearance of the First of the three Spirits.

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7. What was the reaction of Scrooge on seeing his old self as a poor and lonely young boy.?

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8. What according to Scrooge is significant about a few pounds spent by Fizziwig upon his workers at Christmas.?

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9. “Another idol has displaced me,” what does Scrooge’s beloved mean by this statement.?

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10. Why does Scrooge not want to see any scene after his beloved departs from him.?

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10.4 Answers To SAQs

1. The author says that “ Old Marley was as dead as a door nail” because there was no doubt about Marley’s death as he had died seven years ago. The writer has used simile in this statement.
2. The portly gentlemen wanted to help the poor and destitutes who suffered greatly due to extreme cold. Another cause was to make them cheerful since it was the festive season.
3. Scrooge doubts his senses on first meeting with the ghost of Marley because according to him it may be some disorder of the stomach which affects the mind and it in turn visualizes such things as ghosts.
4. The chain in which the ghost of Marley was bound symbolizes the large number of materialistic desires which every person breeds during his life time.
5. Its purpose was to warn Scrooge so that he might escape the fate met by Marley, since it yet had a chance and hope of escape.
6. The first Spirit was a strange figure having the features both of a child and an old man. The hair on his head were white but the face was wrinkle free. There was a crown on its head from which emitted a strong and bright ray of light.
7. On looking at his own poor and lonely self Scrooge pitied the poor child who came to him the previous evening singing Christmas Carol and was turned away cruelly by him.
8. The few pounds spent by Fezziwig on his workers at Christmas were very significant

because his words and looks at that time were so tender and humane that they made the workers feel rich of the richest.

9. Scrooge's beloved means to say that before becoming rich he loved her as a goddess but now money had replaced her and Scrooge is madly in love with money paying scant attention to her.
10. Because he is totally crestfallen on looking at his misdeeds done in the past life.

10.5 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit we have studied about the author, the text in original, and its critical interpretation. This reading has enriched our knowledge by comprehending the true spirit of Christmas. The character of Scrooge contrasted with that of his nephew and his beloved shows the evil and the noble faces of human beings respectively who wander on this earth.

10.6 Review Questions

1. What according to you, is the message of the story '*A Christmas Carol*'?
2. Who all are presented to Scrooge by the first ghost and what lesson did Scrooge learn?

10.7 Bibliography

1. S Leacock :Charles Dickens: His life and work.
2. G. Gissing:Critical Studies of the Work of Charles Dickens
3. K J Fielding:Charles Dickens
4. J. Butt & K Tillotson:Dickens at Work.

UNIT-11

CHARLES DICKENS: *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* (II)

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 About the Author
 - 11.2.1 Life and personality
 - 11.2.2 Literary background
 - 11.2.3 His works
- 11.3 Text of the Story: *A Christmas Carol*
 - 11.3.1 Glossary
 - 11.3.2 Summary of the Story
 - 11.3.4 Literary Devices
- 11.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 11.5 Answers to SAQs
- 11.6 Let Us sum up
- 11.7 Review Questions
- 11.8 Bibliography

11.0 Objectives

This unit will help you to learn:

1. About the life, personality and works of Charles Dickens.
2. About the main characteristics of Victorian Age's literary scene.
3. About the theme and content of the story.
4. About the changes taking place in the attitude of the protagonist of the story.
5. About the literary devices used by Dickens.

11.1 Introduction

This unit covers the remaining five staves of the story i.e. III – V, since stave I and II

have already been covered in the previous unit. The time at which *A Christmas Carol* was written was not conducive to the temperament of Dickens. The earlier sales had declined sharply and the author was in a fix regarding the causes of this decline. He wrote to a friend at that time “that a wrong kind of fire is burning in my head and I don’t think I can write”. This shows that the author was passing through moments of despair while writing this work and this despair is visible in the thoughts of the protagonist of the story. However, *A Christmas Carol* was so well received by the public that its prodigious immediate success provided unmitigated pleasure to Dickens. It was a little book full of brilliancy of promise. It was published a few days before Christmas in 1843 and was hailed from every side with enthusiastic greeting. Thackeray, the contemporary novelist wrote about the story. “It seems to me a national benefit, and to every man or woman who reads it is a personal kindness.” Such praises expressed what man of genius felt.

11.2 About the Author

11.2.1 Life and Personality

Some facts about the author’s life have already been discussed to you in the previous unit. Here we shall concentrate upon aspects of his personality which made him a writer of masses and classes as well. Dickens was not a self-made writer, in the sense that he owed nothing to those who had gone before him. Though not a classical scholar himself, he was influenced by Smollett and Fielding to a great extent but he owed a lot more to his natural gifts. His sensibility which gave birth to humour and pathos in his works was his greatest asset as a writer. His art of characterization is unique. He had no command over a wide range of characters, but within his own range Dickens was a perfect master. Critics like Sir Arthur Quiller Couch put Dickens second only to Shakespeare in the art of characterization. Apart from being an entertainer he was a social reformer as well. He used the platform of fiction in awakening social conscience and succeeded in it largely. Dickens throughout his life believed in the kindly fatherhood of God and in the triumphant power of love, both of which can be seen in the story under consideration.

11.2.2 Literary Background

Charles Dickens suffered from many restrictions during his childhood; poverty and a frail figure being the greatest ones. However, these restrictions were a blessing in disguise as he took to reading literature at a very small age. Dickens began as a follower of the traditions of Smollett i.e. to say that he made little attempt to organize his materials into an artistic whole. His earlier stories are simply strings of incidents woven with the thread of humour and pathos. Like Smollett he depicts the world as a dirty and dingy place inhabited by very disagreeable fellows. However, Dickens is not a blind follower of his master and his later works cannot be classified with any other writer rather they are a class in themselves. Humanitarianism was the keynote of his age and his work. Dickens belonged to the group of writers who write with a

purpose. In spite of all the dirt and squalor present in the society, the greed and hypocrisy prevalent in the era, for Dickens it was still a very good world to live in and as such he cannot be labeled a pessimistic person or writer.

11.2.3 His Works

The famous works of Charles Dickens are as follows:

1. *Pickwick Papers* (1836-37)
2. *Oliver Twist* (1837-38)
3. *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840)
4. *David Copperfield* (1849-50)
5. *Bleak House* (1852-53)
6. *Hard Times* (1854)
7. *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)
8. *Great Expectations* (1861)
9. *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65)
10. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870)

11.3 Text of the Story : *A Christmas Carol* (Stave III-V)

STAVE III

THE SECOND OF THE THREE SPIRITS

AWAKING in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention. But, finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands, and lying down again, established a sharp look-out all round the bed. For he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise, and made nervous.

Gentlemen of the free-and-easy sort, who plume themselves on being acquainted with a move or two, and being usually equal to the time-of-day, express the wide range of their capacity for adventure by observing that they are good for anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter; between which opposite extremes, no doubt, there lies a tolerably wide and comprehensive range of subjects. Without venturing for Scrooge quite as hardily as this, I

don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances, and that nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and so shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was-powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combustion, without having the consolation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think—as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too—at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

“Come in!” exclaimed the Ghost. “Come in! and know me better, man!”

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Present,” said the Spirit. “Look upon me!”

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was

bare, as if disdainful to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round the middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

“You have never seen the like of me before!” exclaimed the Spirit.

“Never,” Scrooge made answer to it.

“Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?” pursued the Phantom.

“I don’t think I have,” said Scrooge. “I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?”

“More than eighteen hundred,” said the Ghost.

“A tremendous family to provide for!” muttered Scrooge.

The Ghost of Christmas Present rose.

“Spirit,” said Scrooge submissively, “conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have ought to teach me, let me profit by it.

“Touch my robe!”

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast.

Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, puddings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of night, and they stood in the streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses, whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snowstorms.

The house fronts looked black enough, and the windows blacker, contrasting with the smooth white sheet of snow upon the roofs, and with the dirtier snow upon the ground; which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows by the heavy wheels of carts and waggons; furrows that crossed and re-crossed each other hundreds of times where the great streets branched off; and made intricate channels, hard to trace in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in a shower of sooty atoms, as if all the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear

hearts' content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain.

For the people who were shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball—better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest—laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made in the shop-keepers' benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner.

The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

The Grocers'! oh the Grocers'! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses! It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running back to fetch them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best humour possible; while the Grocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws to peck at if they chose.

But soon the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of bye-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the bakers' shops. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was!

In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners and the progress of their cooking, in the thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

"Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?" asked Scrooge. "There is. My own."

"Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?" asked Scrooge. "To any kindly given. To a poor one most." "Why to a poor one most?" asked Scrooge. "Because it needs it most."

"Spirit," said Scrooge, after a moment's thought, "I wonder you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment." "I!" cried the Spirit.

"You would deprive them of their means of dining every seventh day, often the only day on which they can be said to dine at all," said Scrooge. "Wouldn't you?" "I!" cried the Spirit.

"You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day?" said Scrooge. "And it comes to the same thing." "I" seek!" exclaimed the Spirit.

"Forgive me if I am wrong. It has been done in your name, or at least in that of our family," said Scrooge.

"There are some upon this earth of yours," returned the Spirit, "who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and all our kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us."

Scrooge promised that he would; and they went on, invisible, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the town. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost (which Scrooge had observed at the baker's), that notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully and like a supernatural creature, as it was possible he could have done in any lofty hall.

And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's; for there he went, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; and on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch. Think of that! Bob had but fifteen "Bob" a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house!

Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits, boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

"What has ever got your precious father then?" said Mrs. Cratchit. "And your brother, Tiny Tim! And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour?"

"Here's Martha, mother!" said a girl, appearing as she spoke. "Here's Martha, mother;" cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!"

"Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are!" said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother!"

"Well! Never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless

ye!"

"No, no! There's father coming," cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. "Hide, Martha, hide!"

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least, three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame! "Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit, looking round. "Not coming," said Mrs. Cratchit.

“Not coming!” said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim’s blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. Not coming upon Christmas Day! Martha didn’t like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

“And how did little Tim behave?” asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart’s content.

“As good as gold,” said Bob, “and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.”

Bob’s voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty. His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby—compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course—and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs. Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs. Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn’t believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by applesauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs. Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn’t ate it all at last! Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular, were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now,

the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs. Cratchit left the room alone—too nervous to bear witnesses—to take the pudding up and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out! Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose—a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs. Cratchit entered—flushed, but smiling proudly—with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quarter of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs. Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs. Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass. Two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle.

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

“A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!”

Which all the family re-echoed.

“God bless us every one!” said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

“Spirit,” said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, “tell me if Tiny Tim will live.”

“I see a vacant seat,” replied the Ghost, “in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch

without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.” “No, no,” said Scrooge. “Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared.” “If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race,” returned the Ghost, “will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.” Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirits and was overcome with penitence and grief.

“Man,” said the Ghost, “if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man’s child. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust!”

Scrooge bent before the Ghost’s rebuke, and trembling cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily, on hearing his own name.

“Mr. Scrooge!” said Bob; “I’ll give you Mr. Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!”

“The Founder of the Feast indeed I” cried Mrs. Cratchit, reddening. “I wish I had him here. I’d give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he’d have a good appetite for it.”

“My dear,” said Bob, “the children! Christmas Day.” “It should be Christmas Day, I am sure,” said she, “on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert! Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!”

“My dear,” was Bob’s mild answer, “Christmas Day.” “I’ll drink his health for your sake and the Day’s,” said Mrs. Cratchit, “not for his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year! He’ll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!”

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn’t care two pence for it. Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes.

After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the mere relief of Scrooge the Baleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter’s being a man of business; and Peter himself looked thoughtfully at the : fire from between his collars, as if he were deliberating what particular investments he should favour when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income. Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner’s, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at

home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord “was much about as tall as Peter”; at which Peter pulled up his collars so high that you couldn’t have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chestnuts and the jug went round and round; and by-and-bye they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim, who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed.

There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker’s. But they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit’s torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

By this time it was getting dark, and snowing pretty heavily; and as Scrooge and the Spirit went along the streets, the brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens, parlours, and all sorts of rooms, was wonderful. Here, the flickering of the blaze showed preparations for a cosy dinner, with hot plates baking through and through before the fire, and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to shut out cold and darkness. There all the children of the house were running out into the snow to meet their married sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to greet them. Here, again, were shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling; and there a group of handsome girls, all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering at once, tripped lightly off to some near neighbour’s house; where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter—artful witches, well they knew it—in a glow!

But, if you had judged from the numbers of people on their way to friendly gatherings, you might have thought that no one was at home to give them welcome when they got there, instead of every house expecting company, and piling up its fires half-chimney high. Blessings on it, how the Ghost exulted! How it bared its breadth of breast, and opened its capacious palm, and floated on, outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and harmless mirth on everything within its reach! The very lamplighter, who ran on before, dotting the dusky street with specks of light, and who was dressed to spend the evening somewhere, laughed out loudly as the Spirit passed, though little kenned the lamplighter that he had any company but Christmas!

And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself wheresoever it listed, or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze, and coarse rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowning lower, lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night.

“What place is this?” asked Scrooge.

“A place where Miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth,” returned the

Spirit. "But they know me. See!"

A light shone from the window of a hut, and swiftly they advanced towards it. Passing through the wall of mud and stone, they found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire. An old, old man and woman, with their children and their children's children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their holiday attire. The old man, in a voice that seldom rose above the howling of the wind upon the barren waste, was singing them a Christmas song—it had been a very old song when he was a boy—and from time to time they all joined in the chorus. So surely as they raised their voices, the old man got quite blithe and loud; and so surely as they stopped, his vigour sank again.

The Spirit did not tarry here, but bade Scrooge hold his robe, and passing on above the moor, sped—whither? Not to sea? To sea. To Scrooge's horror, looking back, he saw the last of the land, a frightful range of rocks, behind them; and his ears were deafened by the thundering of water, as it rolled and roared, and raged among the dreadful caverns it had worn, and fiercely tried to undermine the earth.

Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some league or so from shore, on which the waters chafed and dashed, the wild year through, there stood a solitary lighthouse. Great heaps of sea-weed clung to its base, and storm-birds—born of the wind one might suppose, as seaweed of the water—rose and fell about it, like the waves they skimmed.

But even here, two men who watched the light had made a fire, that through the loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea. Joining their horny hands over the rough table at which they sat, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog; and one of them: the elder, too, with his face all damaged and scarred with hard weather, as the figure-head of an old 'ship might be: struck up a sturdy song that was like a Gale in itself.

Again the Ghost sped on, above the black and heaving sea—on, on—until, being far away, as he told Scrooge, from any shore, they lighted on a ship. They stood beside the helmsman at the wheel, the look-out in the bow, the officers who had the watch; dark, ghostly figures in their several stations; but every man among them hummed a Christmas tune, or had a Christmas thought, or spoke below his breath to his companion of some bygone Christmas Day, with homeward hopes belonging to it. And every man on board, waking or sleeping, good or bad, had had a kinder word for another on that day than on any day in the year; and had shared to some extent in its festivities; and had remembered those he cared for at a distance, and had known that they delighted to remember him.

It was a great surprise to Scrooge, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness over an unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as profound as Death: it was a great surprise to Scrooge, while thus engaged, to hear a hearty laugh. It was a much greater surprise to Scrooge to recognise it as his own nephew's, and to find himself in a bright, dry, gleaming room, with the

Spirit standing smiling by his side, and looking at that same nephew with approving affability!

“Ha, ha!” laughed Scrooge’s nephew. “Ha, ha, ha!”

If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge’s nephew, all I can say is, I should like to know him too. Introduce him to me, and I’ll cultivate his acquaintance.

It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour. When Scrooge’s nephew laughed in this way: holding his sides, rolling his head, and twisting his face into the most extravagant contortions: Scrooge’s niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily,

“Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!”

“He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!” cried Scrooge’s nephew. “He believed it too!”

“More shame for him, Fred!” said Scrooge’s niece, indignantly. Bless those women; they never do anything by halves. They are always in earnest. She was very pretty: exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled, surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed—as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature’s head. Altogether she was what you would have called provoking, you know; but satisfactory too. Oh, perfectly satisfactory.

“He’s a comical old fellow,” said Scrooge’s nephew, “that’s the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.”

“I’m sure he is very rich, Fred,” hinted Scrooge’s niece. “At least you always tell me so.”

“What of that, my dear!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “His wealth is of no use to him. He don’t do any good with it. He don’t make himself comfortable with it. He hasn’t the satisfaction of thinking—ha, ha, ha!—that he is ever going to benefit US with it.”

“I have no patience with him,” observed Scrooge’s niece. Scrooge’s niece’s sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion.

“Oh, I have!” said Scrooge’s nephew. “I am sorry for him; I couldn’t be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims! Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won’t come and dine with us. What’s the consequence? He don’t lose much of a dinner.”

“Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner,” interrupted Scrooge’s niece. Everybody else said the same, and they must be allowed to have been competent judges, because they had just had dinner; and, with the dessert upon the table, were clustered round the fire, by lamplight.

“Well! I’m very glad to hear it,” said Scrooge’s nephew, “because I haven’t great faith in these young housekeepers. What do you say, Topper?”

Topper had clearly got his eye upon one of Scrooge’s niece’s sisters, for he answered that a bachelor was a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion on the subject. Whereat Scrooge’s niece’s sister—the plump one with the lace tucker: not the one with the roses—blushed.

“Do go on, Fred,” said Scrooge’s niece, clapping her hands. “He never finishes what he begins to say! He is such a ridiculous fellow!”

Scrooge’s nephew revelled in another laugh, and as it was impossible to keep the infection off; though the plump sister tried hard to do it with aromatic vinegar; his example was unanimously followed.

“I was going to say,” said Scrooge’s nephew, “that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can’t help thinking better of it—I defy him—if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying, Uncle Scrooge, how are you? If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that’s something; and I think I shook him yesterday.”

It was their turn to laugh now at the notion of his shaking Scrooge. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so that they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and passed the bottle joyously.

After tea, they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a Glee or Catch, I can assure you: especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. Scrooge’s niece played well upon the harp; and played among other tunes a simple little air (a mere nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes), which had been familiar to the child who fetched Scrooge from the boarding-school, as he had been reminded by the Ghost of Christmas Past. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him, came upon his mind; he softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton’s spade that buried Jacob Marley.

But they didn't devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blind-man's buff. Of course there was. And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots. My opinion is, that it was a done thing between him and Scrooge's nephew; and that the Ghost of Christmas Present knew it. The way he went after that plump sister in the lace tucker, was an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Knocking down the fire-irons, tumbling over the chairs, bumping against the piano, smothering himself among the curtains, wherever she went, there went he! He always knew where the plump sister was. He wouldn't catch anybody else. If you had fallen up against him (as some of them did), on purpose, he would have made a feint of endeavouring to seize you, which would have been an affront to your understanding, and would instantly have sidled off in the direction of the plump sister. She often cried out that it wasn't fair; and it really was not. But when at last, he caught her; when, in spite of all her silken rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her into a corner whence there was no escape; then his conduct was the most execrable. For his pretending not to know her; his pretending that it was necessary to touch her head-dress, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain about her neck; was vile, monstrous! No doubt she told him her opinion of it, when, another blind-man being in office, they were so very confidential together, behind the curtains.

Scrooge's niece was not one of the blind-man's buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner, where the Ghost and Scrooge were close behind her. But she joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and to the secret joy of Scrooge's nephew, beat her sisters hollow: though they were sharp girls too, as Topper could have told you. There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did Scrooge; for wholly forgetting in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed quite right, too; for the sharpest needle, best Whitechapel, warranted not to cut in the eye, was not sharper than Scrooge; blunt as he took it in his head to be.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favour, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

"Here is a new game," said Scrooge. "One half hour. Spirit, only one!"

It was a Game called Yes and No, where Scrooge's nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of aii animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked

about the streets, and wasn't made a show of, and wasn't led by anybody, and didn't live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out:

"I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is I"

"What is it?" cried Fred.

"It's your Uncle Scro-o-o-o-oge!"

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the reply to "Is it a bear?" ought to have been "Yes"; inasmuch as an answer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted their thoughts from Mr. Scrooge, supposing they had ever had any tendency that way.

"He has given us plenty of merriment, lam sure," said Fred, "and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment; and I say, 'Uncle Scrooge!'"

"Well! Uncle Scrooge!" they cried.

"A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is!" said Scrooge's nephew. "He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!"

Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become so gay and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.

Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but always with a happy end. The Spirit stood beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery's every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority had not made fast the door, and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts.

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew older, clearly older. Scrooge had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children's Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey.

“Are spirits’ lives so short?” asked Scrooge.

“My life upon this globe, is very brief,” replied the Ghost. “It ends to-night.”

“To-night!” cried Scrooge.

“To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near.”

The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.

“Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask,” said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit’s robe, “but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?”

“It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it,” was the Spirit’s sorrowful reply. “Look here.”

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

“Oh, Man! look here. Look, look, down here!” exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked; and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

“Spirit! are they yours?” Scrooge could say no more.

“They are Man’s,” said the Spirit, looking down upon them. “And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!” cried the Spirit, stretching out his hand towards the city. “Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse. And abide the end!”

“Have they no refuge or resource?” cried Scrooge.

“Are there no prisons?” said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. “Are there no workhouses?”

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob. Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

STAVE IV

THE LAST OF THE SPIRITS

THE Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came near him, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

“I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?” said Scrooge.

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand. “You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us,” Scrooge pursued. “Is that so, Spirit?”

The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit paused a moment, as observing his condition, and giving him time to recover.

But Scrooge was all the worse for this. It thrilled him with a vague uncertain horror, to know that behind the dusky shroud, there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one great heap of black.

“Ghost of the Future!” he exclaimed, “I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?”

It gave him no reply. The hand was pointed straight before them. “Lead on!” said Scrooge. “Lead on! The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on,

Spirit!”

The Phantom moved away as it had come towards him. Scrooge followed in the shadow of its dress, which bore him up, he thought, and carried him along.

They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them, and encompass them of its own act. But there they were, in the heart of it; on ‘Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals; and so forth, as Scrooge had seen them often.

The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, Scrooge advanced to listen to their talk.

“No,” said a great fat man, with a monstrous chin, “I don’t know much about it, either way. I only know he’s dead.”. “When did he die?” inquired another. “Last night, I believe.”

“Why, what was the matter with him?” asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. “I thought he’d never die.”

“God knows,” said the first, with a yawn.

“What has he done with his money?” asked a red-faced gentleman, with a pendulous excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

“I haven’t heard,” said the man with the large chin, yawning again. “Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn’t left it to me. That’s all I know.”

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh. “It’s likely to be a very cheap funeral,” said the same speaker; “for upon my life I don’t know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?”

“I don’t mind going if a lunch is provided,” observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. “But I must be fed, if I make one.”

Another laugh.

“Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all,” said the first speaker, “for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I’ll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I’m not at all sure that I wasn’t his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye!”

Speakers and listeners strolled away, and mixed with other groups. Scrooge knew the men, and looked towards the Spirit for an explanation.

The Phantom glided on into a street. Its finger pointed to two persons meeting. Scrooge listened again, thinking that the explanation might lie here.

He knew these men, also, perfectly. They were men of business: very wealthy, and of

great importance. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in a business point of view, that is; strictly in a business point of view. "How are you?" said one. "How are you?" returned the other.

"Well!" said the first. "Old Scratch had got his own at last, hey?" "So I am told," returned the second. "Cold, isn't it?" "Seasonable for Christmas time. You're not a skater, I suppose?" "No. No. Something else to think of. Good morning!" Not another word. That was their meeting, their conversation, and their parting.

Scrooge was at first inclined to be surprised that the Spirit should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial; but feeling assured that they must have some hidden purpose, he set himself to consider what it was likely to be. They could scarcely be supposed to have any bearing on the death of Jacob, his old partner, for that was Past, and this Ghost's province was the Future. Nor could he think of any one immediately connected with himself, to whom he could apply them. But nothing doubting that to whomsoever they applied they had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the shadow of himself when it appeared. For he had an expectation that the conduct of his future self would give him the clue he missed, and would render the solution of these riddles easy.

He looked about in that very place for his own image; but another man stood in his accustomed corner, and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes that poured in through the Porch. It gave him little surprise, however; for he had been revolving in his mind a change of life, and thought and hoped he saw his new-born resolutions carried out in this.

Quiet and dark, beside him stood the Phantom, with its outstretched hand. When he roused himself from his thoughtful quest, he fancied from the turn of the hand, and its situation in reference to himself, that the Unseen Eyes were looking at him keenly. It made him shudder, and feel very cold.

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof, where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly

seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frousy curtain-
ing of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm
retirement.

Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a
heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, simi-
larly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no
less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other. After
a short period of blank astonishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they
all three burst into a laugh.

“Let the charwoman alone to be the first!” cried she who had entered first. “Let the
laundress alone to be the second; and let the undertaker’s man alone to be the third. Look
here, old Joe, here’s a chance! If we haven’t all three met here without meaning it.”

“You couldn’t have met in a better place,” said old Joe, removing his pipe from his
mouth. “Come into the parlour. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other
two an’t strangers. Stop till I shut the door of the shop. Ah! How it skreeks! There an’t such
a rusty bit of metal in the place as its own hinges, I believe; and I’m sure there’s no such old
bones here, as mine. Ha, ha! We’re all suitable to our calling, we’re well matched. Come into
the parlour. Come into the parlour.”

The parlour was the space behind the screen of rags. The old man raked the fire
together with an old stair-rod, and having trimmed his smoky lamp (for it was night), with the
stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again.

While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor,
and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking
with a bold defiance at the other two.

“What odds then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber?” said the woman.

“Every person has a right to take care of themselves. He always did.”

“That’s true, indeed!” said the laundress. “No man more so.”

“Why then, don’t stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who’s the wiser? We’re
not going to pick holes in each other’s coats, I suppose?”

“No, indeed!” said Mrs. Dilber and the man together. “We should hope not.”

“Very well, then!” cried the woman. “That’s enough. Who’s the worse for the loss of
a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?”

“No, indeed,” said Mrs. Dilber, laughing.

“If he wanted to keep ‘em after he was dead, a wicked old screw,” pursued the
woman, “why wasn’t he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he’d have had somebody to

look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself.”

“It’s the truest word that ever was spoke,” said Mrs. Dilber. “It’s a judgment on him.”

“I wish it was a little heavier judgment,” replied the woman; “and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I’m not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We knew pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It’s no sin. Open the bundle, Joe.”

But the gallantry of her friends would not allow of this; and the man in faded black, mounting the breach first, produced his plunder. It was not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch of no great value, were all. They were severally examined and appraised by old Joe, who chalked the sums he was disposed to give for each, upon the wall, and added them up into a total when he found there was nothing more to come.

“That’s your account,” said Joe, “and I wouldn’t give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who’s next?”

Mrs. Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wearing apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots. Her account was stated on the wall in the same manner.

“I always give too much to ladies. It’s a weakness of mine, and that’s the way I ruin myself,” said old Joe. “That’s your account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I’d repent of being so liberal and knock off half-a-crown.”

“And now undo my bundle, Joe,” said the first woman.

Joe went down on his knees for the greater convenience of opening it, and having unfastened a great many knots, dragged out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff.

“What do you call this?” said Joe. “Bed-curtains!”

“Ah!” returned the woman, laughing and leaning forward on her crossed arms. “Bed-curtains!”

“You don’t mean to say you took ‘em down, rings and all, with him lying there?” said Joe.

“Yes, I do,” replied the woman. “Why not?”

“You were born to make your fortune,” said Joe, “and you’ll certainly do it.”

“I certainly shan’t hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as He was, I promise you, Joe,” returned the woman coolly. “Don’t drop that oil upon the blankets, now.”

“His blankets?” asked Joe.

“Whose else’s do you think?” replied the woman. “He isn’t likely to take cold without ‘em, I dare say.”

“I hope he didn’t die of anything catching? Eh?” said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up.

“Don’t you be afraid of that,” returned the woman. “I an’t so fond of his company that I’d loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won’t find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It’s the best he had, and a fine one too. They’d have wasted it, if it hadn’t been for me.”

“What do you call wasting of it?” asked old Joe.

“Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure,” replied the woman with a laugh. “Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico an’t enough for such a purpose, it isn’t good enough for anything. It’s quite as becoming to the body. He can’t look uglier than he did in that one.”

Scrooge listened to this dialogue in horror. As they sat grouped about their spoil, in the scanty light afforded by the old man’s lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust, which could hardly have been greater, though they had been obscene demons, marketing the corpse itself.

“Ha, ha!” laughed the same woman, when old Joe, producing a flannel bag with money in it, told out their several gains upon the ground. ‘This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!”

“Spirit!” said Scrooge, shuddering from head to foot. “I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Merciful Heaven, what is this!”

He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed: on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language.

The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though Scrooge glanced round it in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.

Scrooge glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon Scrooge’s part, would have disclosed the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it; but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side.

Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand WAS open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal!

No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard-dealing, gripping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!

He lay, in the dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child, to say that he was kind to me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearthstone. What they wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think.

"Spirit!" he said, "this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!"

Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the head.

"I understand you," Scrooge returned, "and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power. Spirit. I have not the power."

Again it seemed to look upon him.

"If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death," said Scrooge quite agonised, "show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!"

The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for a moment, like a wing; and withdrawing it, revealed a room by daylight, where a mother and her children were.

She was expecting some one, and with anxious eagerness; for she walked up and down the room; started at every sound; looked out from the window; glanced at the clock; tried, but in vain, to work with her needle; and could hardly bear the voices of the children in their play.

At length the long-expected knock was heard. She hurried to the door, and met her husband; a man whose face was careworn and depressed, though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now; a kind of serious delight of which he felt ashamed, and which he struggled to repress.

He sat down to the dinner that had been hoarding for him by the fire, and when she asked him faintly what news (which was not until after a long silence), he appeared embar-

rassed how to answer.

“Is it good?” she said, “or bad?”—to help him.

“Bad,” he answered.

“We are quite ruined?”

“No. There is hope yet, Caroline.”

“If he relents,” she said, amazed, “there is! Nothing is past hope, if such a miracle has happened.”

“He is past relenting,” said her husband. “He is dead.”

She was a mild and patient creature if her face spoke truth; but she was thankful in her soul to hear it, and she said so, with clasped hands. She prayed forgiveness the next moment, and was sorry; but the first was the emotion of her heart.

“What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week’s delay; and what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then.”

“To whom will our debt be transferred?”

“I don’t know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be a bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline!”

Yes. Soften it as they would, their hearts were lighter. The children’s faces, hushed and clustered round to hear what they so little understood, were brighter; and it was a happier house for this man’s death! The only emotion that the Ghost could show him, caused by the event, was one of pleasure.

“Let me see some tenderness connected with a death,” said Scrooge; “or that dark chamber. Spirit, which we left just now, will be for ever present to me.”

The Ghost conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered Poor Bob Cratchit’s house; the dwelling he had visited before; and found the mother and the children seated round the fire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet!

“ ‘And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them.’ ”

Where had Scrooge heard those words? He had not dreamed them. The boy must have read them out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on?

The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face.

“The colour hurts my eyes,” she said.

The colour? Ah, poor tiny Tim!

“They’re better now again,” said Cratchit’s wife. “It makes them weak by candle-light; and I wouldn’t show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time.”

“Past it rather,” Peter answered, shutting up his book. “But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.”

They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once:

“I have known him walk with—I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.”

“And so have I,” cried Peter. “Often.”

“And so have I,” exclaimed another. So had all.

“But he was very light to carry,” she resumed, intent upon her work, “and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble: no trouble. And there is your father at the door!”

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter—he had need of it, poor fellow—came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, “Don’t mind it, father. Don’t be grieved!”

Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs. Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said.

“Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?” said his wife.

“Yes, my dear,” returned Bob. “I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you’ll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday.

My little, little child!” cried Bob. “My little child!”

He broke down all at once. He couldn’t help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up-stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had hap-

pened, and went down again quite happy.

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working still. Bob told them of the extraordinary kindness of Mr. Scrooge's nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little—"just a little down you know," said Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. "On which," said Bob, "for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit," he said, 'and heartily sorry for your good wife.' By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don't know."

"Knew what, my dear?"

"Why, that you were a good wife," replied Bob.

"Everybody knows that!" said Peter.

"Very well observed, my boy!" cried Bob. "I hope they do. 'Heartily sorry,' he said, 'for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,' he said, giving me his card, 'that's where I live. Pray come to me.' Now, it wasn't," cried Bob, "for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us."

"I'm sure he's a good soul!" said Mrs. Cratchit.

"You would never be surer of it, my dear," returned Bob, "if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn't be at all surprised—mark what I say!—if he got Peter a better situation."

"Only hear that, Peter," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"And then," cried one of the girls, "Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself."

"Get along with you!" retorted Peter, grinning.

"It's just as likely as not," said Bob, "one of these days; though there's plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim—shall we—or this first parting that there was among us?"

"Never, father!" cried they all.

"And I know," said Bob, "I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was; although he was a little little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it."

"No, never, father!" they all cried again.

"I am very happy," said little Bob, "I am very happy!"

Mrs. Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shook hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from

God!

“Spectre,” said Scrooge, “something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?”

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveyed him, as before— though at a different time, he thought: indeed, there seemed no order in these latter visions, save that they were in the Future—into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself. Indeed, the Spirit did not stay for anything, but went straight on, as to the end just now desired, until besought by Scrooge to tarry for a moment.

“This court,” said Scrooge, “through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come!”

The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere.

“The house is yonder.” Scrooge exclaimed. “Why do you point away?”

The inexorable finger underwent no change.

Scrooge hastened to the window of his office, and looked in. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Phantom pointed as before.

He joined it once again, and wondering why and whither he had gone, accompanied it until they reached an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering.

A churchyard. Here, then, the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation’s death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place!

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

“Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point,” said Scrooge, “answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?”

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood. “Men’s courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,” said Scrooge. “But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!”

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, EBENEZER SCROOGE.

“Am I that man who lay upon the bed?” he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

“No, Spirit! Oh, no, no!”

The finger still was there.

“Spirit!” he cried, tight clutching at its robe, “hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope!”

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

“Good Spirit,” he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: “Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered -life!”

The kind hand trembled.

“I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!”

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom’s hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

STAVE V

THE END OF IT

YES ! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

“I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!” Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. “The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh, Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this I I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees!”

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

“They are not torn down,” cried Scrooge, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms, “they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here—I am here—the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!”

His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of

extravagance.

“I don’t know what to do!” cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoon of himself with his stockings. “I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!”

He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly winded.

“There’s the saucepan that the gruel was in!” cried Scrooge, starting off again, and going round the fireplace. “There’s the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There’s the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present sat! There’s the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It’s all right, it’s all true, it all happened. Ha, ha, ha!”

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

“I don’t know what day of the month it is!” said Scrooge. “I don’t know how long I’ve been among the Spirits. I don’t know anything. I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care. I’d rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!”

He was checked in his transports by the churches ringing out the lustiest peals he had ever heard. Clash, clang, hammer; ding, dong, bell. Bell, dong, ding; hammer, clang, clash! Oh, glorious, glorious!

Running to the window, he opened it, and put out his head. No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, glorious! Glorious!

“What’s to-day?” cried Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes, who perhaps had loitered in to look about him.

“EH?” returned the boy, with all his might of wonder.

“What’s to-day, my fine fellow?” said Scrooge.

“To-day!” replied the boy. “Why, CHRISTMAS DAY.”

“It’s Christmas Day!” said Scrooge to himself. “I haven’t missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow!”

“Hallo!” returned the boy.

“Do you know the Poulterer’s, in the next street but one, at the corner?” Scrooge inquired.

“I should hope I did,” replied the lad.

“An intelligent boy!” said Scrooge. “A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they’ve

sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there?—Not the little prize Turkey: the big one?” “What, the one as big as me?” returned the boy. “What a delightful boy!” said Scrooge. “It’s a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!”

“It’s hanging there now,” replied the boy. “Is it?” said Scrooge. “Go and buy it.” “Walk-ER!” exclaimed the boy.

“No, no,” said Scrooge, “I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell ‘em to bring it here, that I may give them the direction where to take it.’ Come back with the man, and I’ll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I’ll give you half-a-crown!”

The boy was off like a shot. He must have had a steady hand at a trigger who could have got a shot off half so fast.

“I’ll send it to Bob Cratchit’s!” whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. “He shan’t know who sends it. It’s twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob’s will be!”

The hand in which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but write it he did, somehow, and went down-stairs to open the street door, ready for the coming of the poulterer’s man. As he stood there, waiting his arrival, the knocker caught his eye.

“I shall love it, as long as I live!” cried Scrooge, patting it with his hand. “I scarcely ever looked at it before. What an honest expression it has in its face! It’s a wonderful knocker!—Here’s the Turkey. Hallo! Whoop! How are you! Merry Christmas!”

It was a Turkey! He never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. He would have snapped ‘em short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.

“Why, it’s impossible to carry that to Camden Town,” said Scrooge. “You must have a cab.”

The chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried.

Shaving was not an easy task, for his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don’t dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking-plaster over it, and been quite satisfied.

He dressed himself “all in his best,” and at last got out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a word, that three or four good-humoured fellows said, “Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!” And Scrooge said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said, "Scrooge and Marley's, I believe?" It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

"My dear sir," said Scrooge, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands. "How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir!"

"Mr. Scrooge?"

"Yes," said Scrooge. "That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you! Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness"—here Scrooge whispered in his ear.

"Lord bless me!" cried the gentleman, as if his breath were taken away. "My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?"

"If you please," said Scrooge. "Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?"

"My dear sir," said the other, shaking hands with him. "I don't know what to say to such munifi—"

"Don't say anything, please," retorted Scrooge. "Come and see me. Will you come and see me?"

"I will!" cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

"Thank'ee," said Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!"

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew's house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it.

"Is your master at home, my dear?" said Scrooge to the girl. Nice girl! Very.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he, my love?" said Scrooge.

"He's in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I'll show you up-stairs, if you please."

"Thank'ee. He knows me," said Scrooge, with his hand already on the dining-room lock. "I'll go in here, my dear."

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door. They were looking at the table (which was spread out in great array); for these young housekeepers are always nervous on such points, and like to see that everything is right.

“Fred!” said Scrooge.

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started! Scrooge had forgotten, for the moment, about her sitting in the corner with the footstool, or he wouldn't have done it, on any account.

“Why bless my soul!” cried Fred, “who's that?”

“It's I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?”

Let him in! It is a mercy he didn't shake his arm off. He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper when he came. So did the plump sister when she came. So did every one when they came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, won-der-ful happiness!

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

“Hallo!” growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. “What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?”

“I am very sorry, sir,” said Bob. “I am behind my time.”

“You are?” repeated Scrooge. “Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.”

“It's only once a year, sir,” pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. “It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.”

“Now, I'll tell you what, my friend,” said Scrooge, “I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore,” he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again; “and therefore I am about to raise your salary!”

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it, holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat.

“A merry Christmas, Bob!” said Scrooge, with an earnestness that could not be mis-

taken, as he clapped him on the back. “ A merrier Christmas, Bob my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I’ll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!”

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them, for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed; and that was quite enough for him.

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!

11.3.1 Glossary

Abyss	: bottomless gulf.
Abstinence	: act or voluntarily doing without food, drink or other pleasures.
Bigotry	: behaviour of prejudice.
Borough	: a self governing town in certain countries.
Creditor	: person who lends something esp. money to others on interest.
Declension	: deterioration.
Deliberating	: carefully thought out and formed.
Demeanour	: outward behaviour.
Eked	: increased.
Elicited	: evoked.
Encompass	: to include.
Gallantry	: noble behaviour.
Grace	: a short prayer in which blessing is asked or thanks are given for a meal.

Heresy	: the rejection of a belief of church dogma.
Inexorable	: unrelenting.
Kith and kin	: friends and relatives.
Loitered	: lingered in an aimless way.
Nick of time	: exact time.
Ogre	: a hideous, coarse or cruel man; a demon.
Petrification	: being afraid.
Phantom	: apparition.
Plenty's Horn	: prosperity, material well-being. The reference is to the horn of a goat, filled with flowers, fruit and corn which is symbolic of prosperity.
Precepts	: a rule of moral conduct; maxim.
Predicament	: a condition or situation that is difficult.
Prodigiously	: of enormous size.
Prostrate	: lying with the face downward in great humility.
Raisins	: dried grapes used for eating.
Rampant	: flourishing.
Recompensed	: compensated.
Reef	: a line or ridge of rock, coral or sand near the surface of water.
Scabbard	: a sheath to hold the blade of a sword.
Scanty	: barely sufficient.
Sepulchers	: graves.
Spontaneous	: acting in accordance with a natural feeling.
Suburbs	: a residential area on the outskirts of a city, often a town.
Tarry	: to delay.
Threadbare	: worn off.
Twelfth Night	: a festival held on January 6; Epiphany; a play by Shakespeare.
Unanimity	: in complete agreement.

11.3.2 Summary of the Story (Stave III – V)

The first two staves have been discussed in the previous unit. Here we shall summarise the remaining three. After the first of the three Spirits departs Scrooge falls in deep sleep. However he awakes suddenly and listens to the stroke of clock, which declares it is One. He sits up and waits for the second Spirit. More than an hour has elapsed but no Spirit enters his room. After sometime he concentrates upon a blaze of ruddy light which shone upon his bed and wishes to search its origins. He rises from his bed and starts towards the door as he touches the lock, a strange voice asks him to enter the adjoining room. He enters and finds a Giant sitting on the couch holding a torch in his hand. The spirit announces to Scrooge that he was the Ghost of Christmas Present. The Spirit asks Scrooge if he had ever seen him before, and Scrooge replies in the negative.

Scrooge now implored the Spirit to take him wherever he felt appropriate. The Spirit carried Scrooge through the streets of the city into the Christmas Morning. There was heavy snowfall and people were removing shoes, and were joking and laughing at the same time. The markets were full of various dainties to be enjoyed with. The writer thus displays a world full of eatables and enjoyment. In fact, it is the true picture of a festive season. As both of them crossed the streets they found everybody cheerful. They also saw some stray incidents of quarrel, which too were soon patched up. The evening approached and the people moved from market to their houses to celebrate the most pious day of the year. Both Scrooge and the Spirit moved through the streets when Scrooge asked the Spirit to bless the poor with the sprinkling of his torch which has the power to provide a particular flavor to the Christmas food.

The first house chosen by the Spirit was that of Bob Cratchit. The four roomed house of Bob is shown from inside with the members of the family showering love and blessings upon each other. The intimacy among the inmates of the house added extra charm to the festival. Tiny Tim, the youngest child of the family was loved most owing to his innocence and his crippled frame of body. The parents displayed anxiousness at the pitiable form of their heart's desire. The dinner is set and enjoyed by everybody; the mashed potatoes, the goose, the pudding and everything else was delicious and the meal ended with custard and roasted chestnuts.

Scrooge was pained to see Bob who always held Tim close for the fear of losing him. Scrooge inquired if Tim will live or die, the spirit replied he cannot say for sure. At this Scrooge pleaded the Spirit to spare Tim and the Spirit echoed Scrooge's word as he said: "If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population." Scrooge at this point felt grief for his callousness towards his unprivileged fellow human beings. By now the time had arrived for the toast and Bob declared to drink it to Mr Scrooge. At this the whole family was angry at Bob, because nobody in the family liked Scrooge, not even Tiny Tim. The author described the family as a poor one yet happier. Scrooge was moved to hear and see all this.

Now they moved further looking at the preparations going on in some other families. They passed through the street of Miners. These people were also singing Christmas songs. The duo then crossed the sea and visited a ship. Here also everybody was colored with Christmas colors. The next destination of the spirit and Scrooge was the house of Fred, the nephew of Scrooge. Fred was seen by them both laughing heartily and he was joined in his laughter by his wife. Scrooge heard that both were talking about him. Scrooge found that Fred had sympathy for him even though he treated Fred badly. Scrooge was moved by this scene. Fred further says that Scrooge hates Christmas time, yet he (Fred) will go to wish him 'Merry Christmas' year after year so that he (Scrooge) may at least develop the wish to help his own clerk with some money. The family of Fred enjoyed some music and played some games to celebrate the Christmas night. Finally, the family drank toast to the health of Uncle Scrooge. Here Scrooge realises that there are people in this world who love him despite his evil nature. This journey was a lesson to him. Now the time arrived for the departure of the Spirit, but before going away he showed two children to Scrooge, which he told were 'Ignorance' the boy and 'Want' the girl. The Spirit warned Scrooge to be careful of these two and with these words of warning the Spirit disappeared.

The final apparition which appeared before Scrooge was the Ghost of Christmas Future. When this Spirit came near Scrooge it was hooded and except an outstretched hand nothing could be seen of it. The Spirit did not speak but only pointed with its hand to the query raised by Scrooge. The Spirit of Christmas Future led Scrooge to a place where some businessmen were talking about the death of a person and the conversation showed that the person in discussion was not held in esteem. One speaker commented "Old Scratch had got his own at last"

Now the two moved on to ugly shop where the owner was sitting surrounded by three customers. All the four were cutting jokes on a person now dead, who accumulated wealth in his life only to be plundered by these four people after his death. The three people had stolen things from the house of this dead man and were selling them to this shopkeeper who on his own part was getting profited by underpaying them. Scrooge was shocked to see the behavior of these people. This was the real picture of selfish human beings. Scrooge now pleaded the spirit to carry him to any such house in the town where the people were emotional at his death. The scene now shifted to one of Scrooge's debtors where the wife felt sorry and emotional at this death. However, the emotion was not of sorrow but pleasure and thus the Spirit could show Scrooge only the emotion of pleasure at the death of this man. Next, Scrooge wished to see some tenderness at the death of this man.

The spirit carried Scrooge to the house of Poor Bob Cratchit. The family was discussing the humane nature of Fred and trying to forget the sad demise of Tiny Tim. The tenderness moved Scrooge greatly and he persuaded the Spirit to tell him the name of the dead man. The Ghost carried Scrooge to a Churchyard with a grave having the name of EBENEZER SCROOGE. This was the most shocking experience for Scrooge and he promised the Ghost

to be a changed person from now onwards. With this promise from Scrooge, the Spirit vanished.

The author now changes the character of Scrooge completely and instead of a callous and miserly person he becomes a fairy godfather. After waking up in the morning Scrooge laughed as if for the first time in life. He called a boy and talked to him and asked him to call the Poulterer. When the Poulterer arrived Scrooge made payment for the prize turkey and sent it to Bob Cratchit as Christmas gift. Scrooge himself dressed in his best and went out. He visited his nephew's house to dine with him which was a pleasant surprise to the whole family. The next morning when Bob came to office Scrooge was present in advance. Bob was afraid to be late but was exhilarated to hear an increment in his salary from that very day.

The changed Scrooge was received well by everybody and the Christmas Spirit of Past, Present and Future transformed him from a demon into an angel. The writer at this change in the character of Scrooge, comments. "His own heart laughed; and that was quite enough for him."

11.3.3 Literary Devices

Charles Dickens is a writer of the masses and his style is replete with English idioms. In this story Dickens has made appropriate use of some figures of speech such as simile and personification. These figures impart pictursqueness to his style. The diction employed by Dickens in this story as well as his other works adds to the effectiveness of the themes chosen by him. The hallucinatory fancy of Dickens in the story enhances the charm of readers. Dickens has displayed his peculiar quality of mingling humor and pathos in this story in the best possible way. All these features make the story a masterpiece a art.

11.4 Self Assessment Questions

I. Answer the following questions in two or three lines each.

1. What was the special quality of the torch possessed by the Spirit of Christmas Present?

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2. Who is Martha and what is her profession ?

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3. What was the Spirit's reply about Tiny Tim's life ?
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4. Why is Scrooge's nephew sorry for his uncle ?
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.....
.....
5. Who are the two children brought from the folding of the second Spirit's robe ?
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.....
6. How did the third Spirit reply to the questions of Scrooge ?
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.....
.....
7. What was the reaction of the couple on hearing their creditor's death? Whose debtors were they ?
.....
.....
.....
8. Whose name was carved on the grave in the Churchyard?
.....
.....
9. What gift did Scrooge provide to the Cratchit family on Christmas ?
.....
.....
10. To whom did Scrooge go for the Christmas Dinner?

.....
.....
II Answer the following question in 300 words:

Give the Character Sketch of Ebenezer Scrooge.

11.5 Answers SAQs

- I.**
1. The torch had a peculiar flavour which could make the Christmas meal more delicious.
 2. Martha is the eldest daughter of Bob Cratchit and she was serving as an apprentice to a milliner.
 3. The spirit said that if the shadows of a vacant seat in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner remain unchanged by the Future, Tiny Tim will die.
 4. Scrooge's nephew is sorry for his uncle because a person who has ill whims himself suffers from them, and such was the case with his uncle.
 5. The two children are Ignorance the boy and Want the girl.
 6. It did not speak for replying to Scrooge's questions but waved its hands in different directions and suggested the answers.
 7. The couple felt relieved on hearing the news of death of their creditor. They were debtors to Scrooge.
 8. The name of EBENEZER SCROOGE was carved on the grave in the churchyard.
 9. Scrooge sent the prize Turkey as a gift to the Cratchit family on Christmas.
 10. Scrooge went to his nephew Fred for the Christmas dinner.
- II** Ebenezer Scrooge is the protagonist of the story. He is an old whimsical man of nearly seventy years of age. He owns a counting-house and lends money on interest to people. He is an isolated figure after the death of his business partner Jacob Marley. He is also the sole owner of all the property possessed by Marley.

Scrooge is a reticent fellow and does not mix socially. He is a great miser and hates people who waste money in the name of Christmas. He holds the policy of doing only those things which earn him profit and has no faith in charity. He is harsh towards his employee Bob Cratchit and quite reluctantly allows Christmas holiday to him. An air of melancholy surrounds his meals and his bed.

Scrooge, in spite of many drawbacks has a good quality too. He is a courageous person and rebukes the ghost of Marley calling it some disturbance of the stomach which is affecting his mind. Scrooge has only one relative his nephew Fred. However,

he never allows any proximity with Fred, fearing he might ask some money.

When the three Spirits of Christmas take him into his past, present and future he changes radically in his thoughts and deeds. He realizes his mistakes of past and learns a lesson from the various scenes shown by the Christmas Spirits. He donates handsome sums of money to the needy and develops cordial relations with his nephew Fred. He also raises the salary of his employee Bob and helps his ill son Tiny Tim.

The character of Scrooge undergoes a sea change in the story. He turns into a fairy godfather from a hard-hearted demon. This change brings happiness into the life of Scrooge and all those who are associated with him. Thus we seek a lesson from this change in the character of Scrooge that love and brotherhood are keys to happiness in this worldly life.

11.6 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit we have thrown light upon :

- Life and personality of Charles Dickens
- His art of story writing
- Analyzing and appreciating a story.
- Understanding the literary devices used by the author.
- The spirit of humanity associated with Christmas.

11.7 Review Questions

1. What all events attributed in Scrooge's life to undergo a sea change is his attitude towards life ?
2. Describe in detail what the last spirit did to make Scrooge realise his mistake.

11.7 Bibliography

1. G. K. Chesterton: Charles Dickens: A Critical Study
2. E. Johnson : Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph
3. J H Miller : The World of Dickens
4. George Orwell : Charles Dickens

UNIT-12

LEWIS CARROLL : HUMPTY DUMPTY

(An Extract from *Through the Looking Glass*)

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Study Guide
- 12.2 Lewis Carroll : Humpty Dumpty
 - 12.2.1 About the Author : Lewis Carroll
 - 12.2.2 The Background
 - 12.2.3 About the Story
 - 12.2.4 The Story : Humpty Dumpty (Text)
 - 12.2.5 Glossary
 - 12.2.6 Model Explanations
- 12.3 Self Assessment Questions
- 12.4 Answers to SAQs
- 12.5 Let Us Sum up
- 12.6 Review Questions
- 12.7 Bibliography

12.0 Objectives

By the end of this unit you will be able to know

- (a) about Lewis Carroll, a famous English writer who primarily wrote for children.
- (b) that even small persons can be full of great ego.
- (c) that one can draw wisdom even from paltry or non-sensical situations.
- (d) that there is not much difference between the world of phantasy and reality as far as absurdity is concerned.

12.1 Study Guide

In this unit you have been given the life history of Lewis Carroll. Before going directly

to the original text, you should study the background material of the extract. For your help a detailed summary along with glossary has been provided. Model explanations will help you understand the story better so that you may attempt the questions well in the examination. You may further attempt explanations on your own. In the same manner, you may try to coin your own questions related to the text and attempt to answer them in your own language. Some general questions have been given for a better understanding and can be used by you as a test of your comprehension of the text under consideration. You should attempt these questions for the purpose of enjoyment as well as composition practice for your examination.

12.2 Lewis Carroll : Humpty Dumpty

12.2.1 About the Author

Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) was the pen-name of Reverend Lutwidge Dodgson. (A pen-name is the name an author adopts to write his works.) Born in 1832, he was educated in a well-known public school, Rugby. Later, he was educated in Christ Church College, Oxford. After completing his education, he joined the same college as a lecturer in mathematics and spent all his life there.

In 1861, he became a clergyman. However, he never preached in the church because of a constant stammer, and also because he was a very shy person. Lewis Carroll did not marry but he was very fond of children - particularly little girls - and liked to spend much of his time with them.

In fact, *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* were originally written for the young daughters of Dr. Liddell, the Dean of the Christ Church College. Besides these stories, Lewis Carroll also wrote non-sensical poems and parodies.

Throughout his life Carroll enjoyed playing magic tricks, especially for children. He would entertain little children by forming a mouse with his handkerchief and then make it jump mysteriously out of his hand. He taught children how to fold paper boats and paper pistols that popped when swung through the air. Carroll also invented a great many mathematical and word puzzles, games, cypher methods. He also invented a system of memorizing numbers. However, his main hobby that gave him the greatest joy was entertaining little girls. This hobby gave the world two classics enjoyed not only by the little children but by the adults also.

12.2.2 The Background

Lewis Carroll called *Through the Looking Glass* a fairy tale. In the opening chapter we find Alice, the seven year old (7 years and 6 months, to be exact) girl talking to her kitten Kitty. The little girl is prone to day-dreaming and as such it is natural for her to slip effortlessly into a world of phantasy.

So while Alice is talking to her cat, she “passes” through the looking glass and enters

into a world through the looking glass where the unreality seems to impinge upon reality to the extent that the reader identifies with the little Alice and voluntarily suspends his disbelief in order to be a witness to her adventures.

As Alice looks at the looking glass it turns into a sort of mist and she with the help of her hyper-active imagination gets through it. Then begins a series of exciting adventure very much in the manner of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, whose sequel *Through the Looking Glass* is. Alice has a very interesting encounter with Red King, Red Queen and their little daughter Lily. The world in which Alice seems to be moving is unreal, imaginary, even fantastic. However, this unreal world is tinged with the real life petty, but inflatable egos, prejudices, insecurities, fears and all such emotions which human beings suffer from.

Alice speaks with lilies, roses and daisies and looking glass insects. It is a world of non-sense, yet on deeper reading, it seems to make sense as well. The world of Tweedledum and Tweedledee is full of high-sounding arguments which do not seem to mean much.

In the same way she becomes a witness to a futile war between the lion and the unicorn. The make-believe world of the "inventor" knight, the petty ego clashes of the two queens on the hand make us laugh on the non-sensical endeavours of these "fairy tale characters." On the other hand like Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, these adventures involving the little Alice, show up a looking glass to the paltry world of human beings. The adults seem to be engaged in activities which, in essence, are insignificant and only reflect the pettiness of human mind. In this sense *Through the Looking Glass* acquires a deeper significance. It is Lewis Carroll's veiled comment on human behaviour and vanity.

The book can be read at another level. There can be a cap Freudian interpretation of some of the adventures in which Alice is involved. It is important to remember that Carroll's greatest hobby, that give him the greatest joy, was entertaining little girls. As a loose definition Freudian psychology explores the sexual origins and characters of thought, motives, feelings, conduct and language used at the unconscious or sub-conscious level.

12.2.3 About the Story : Humpty Dumpty

Chapter 6 of Lewis Carrolls' *Through the Looking Glass* deals with Alice's adventures with a character who resembled a large egg. Of course, this egg-like creature had eyes, a nose and a mouth. Lucy found Humpty Dumpty sitting with his legs crossed on the top of a high wall. He was precariously balanced. In spite of his resemblance Humpty Dumpty felt enraged when Alice compared him to an egg.

The over-bearing attitude of Humpty Dumpty was duly reflected when he tried to make fun of Alice's name. They then are engaged in a verbal duel about his sitting all alone on top of the wall. Humpty Dumpty was fond of asking riddles and went on rebulking Alice for asking very simple riddles even when she knew she was not asking any. Alice wondered whether Humpty Dumpty took all normal conversation as a game. Even a simple question like

“How old are you?” could turn into a point of heavy debate with him. Even a simple compliment about a belt was turned into a hair-splitting controversy. Humpty Dumpty scolded Alice for not knowing the difference between a belt and a cravat. This observation in a way boils down to a generalisation that, in fact, all human dialogue or business is a game we play.

At this point Humpty Dumpty informed Alice that the cravat was a present from the White King and Queen as a “unbirth-day” present. Puzzled, Alice asked what an “unbirthday” present was. The logic given by Humpty Dumpty is rather strange but true. He informed that there was only one birthday in three sixty five days; the rest three sixty four days were “unbirthdays”.

Then Humpty Dumpty gave his definition of verbs, and adjectives etc and said that he gave them meaning only as he wanted them to be. He used a word “impenetrability” and then on being asked by Alice about its meaning he suggested that they had enough talking about that particular subject and must stop at that point.

At this point Alice too thought of tricking Humpty Dumpty by asking him the meaning of the poem ‘Jabberwocky’. But once again Humpty Dumpty invented new meanings to the rather difficult but silly words. In return Humpty Dumpty also recited a non-sensical poem.

The moody Humpty Dumpty suddenly brought the conversation to an end. Perplexed Alice got up and held out her hand to say goodbye till they met again. However Humpty Dumpty replied in a discontented tone that he would not know her if they did meet again. Humpty Dumpty’s parting remarks were that Alice was like anyone else and hence was not distinct in any manner and when Alice remarked that one is known by the face one has, Humpty Dumpty complained that she had a face like anyone else and thus was she no different. Of course if she had two eyes on the same side of the nose, then perhaps it would be different. Alice commented that it would not look nice. Humpty Dumpty only closed his eyes and said and asked her to try what he had suggested. Alice waited for Humpty Dumpty to open his eyes or say a few words more but he did not take notice of her and ultimately saying goodbye, she went away. However, she felt highly dissatisfied with this encounter with Humpty Dumpty and called him a very unsatisfactory character she had ever met.

On the face of it, Alice is involved in a frivolous, even non-sensical encounter with Humpty Dumpty. However, if we do not take it merely as a children’s story or a fairy tale, we realise that ordinary human beings that Humpty Dumpty represents are equally illogical, falsely argumentative and inordinately egotistical. This encounter reminds us of Jonathan Swift’s immortal character Gulliver who also in the course of his adventures comes across obnoxious character like Liliputians who talk big but have no essence. However it may also be pointed out that in all the apparently non-sensical and light-hearted conversation Lewis Carroll may be pointing out to some serious facts of human life and cautioning his readers to behave in a more logical and sensible manner.

12.2.4 Humpty Dumpty(Text)

However, the egg only got larger and larger, and more and more human: when she had come within a few yards of it, she saw that it had eyes and a nose and mouth: and, when she had come close to it, she saw clearly that it was Humpty Dumpty himself. "I'm as certain of it, as if his name were written all over his face!"

It might have been written a hundred times, easily, on that enormous face. Humpty Dumpty was sitting, with his legs crossed like a Turk, on the top of a high wall - such a narrow one that Alice quite wondered how he could keep his balance- and, as his eyes were steadily fixed in the opposite direction, and he didn't take the least notice of her, she thought he must be a stuffed figure, after all.

"And how exactly like an egg he is!" she said aloud, standing with her hands ready to catch him, for she was every moment expecting him to fall.

"It's very provoking," Humpty Dumpty said after a long silence, looking away from Alice as he spoke, "to be called an egg-very!"

"I said you looked like an egg, Sir," Alice gently explained. "And some eggs are very pretty, you know," she added, hoping to turn her remark into a sort of compliment.

"Some people," said Humpty Dumpty, looking away from her as usual, "have no more sense than a baby!"

Alice didn't know what to say to this: it wasn't at all like conversation, she thought, as he never said anything to her; in fact, his last remark was evidently addressed to a tree - so she stood and softly repeated to herself :-

"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall:

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the King's house and all the King's men

Couldn't put Humpty Dumpty in his place again.

"That last line is much too long for the poetry," she added, almost out loud, forgetting that Humpty Dumpty would hear her.

"Don't stand chattering to yourself like that," Humpty Dumpty said, looking at her for the first time, "but tell me your name and your business."

"My name is Alice, but -"

"It's a stupid name enough!" Humpty Dumpty interrupted impatiently. "What does it mean?"

"Must a name mean something?" Alice asked doubtfully.

“Of Course it must,” Humpty Dumpty said with a short laugh: “my name means the shape I am – and a good handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.”

“Why do you sit out her all alone?” said Alice, not wishing to begin an argument.

“Why, because there’s nobody with me!” cried Humpty Dumpty. “Did you think I didn’t know the answer to that?, Ask another.”

“Don’t you think you’d be safer down on the ground?” Alice went on, not with any idea of making another riddle, but simply in her good-natured anxiety for the queer creature. “That wall is so very narrow!”

“What tremendously easy riddles you ask!” Humpty Dumpty growled out. “Of course I don’t think so! Why, if ever I did fall off – which there’s no chance of – but if I did –” Here he pursed up his lips, and looked so solemn and grand that Alice could hardly help laughing. “If I did fall,” he went on, “the King has promised me – ah you may turn pale, if you like! You didn’t think I was going to say that, did you? The King has promised me – with his very own mouth – to–to–”

“To send all his horses and all his men,” Alice interrupted, rather unwisely.

“Now I declare that’s too bad!” Humpty Dumpty cried, breaking into a sudden passion. “You’ve been listening at doors – and behind trees – and down chimneys – or you couldn’t have known it!”

I haven’t, indeed!” Alice said very gently. “It’s in a book.”

“Ah, well! They may write such things in a book,” Humpty Dumpty said in a calmer tone. “That’s what you call a History of England, that is. Now, take a good look at me! I’m one that has spoken to a King, I am: mayhap you’ll never see such another: and, to show you I’m not proud, you may shake hands with me!” And he grinned almost from ear to ear, as he leaned forward (and as nearly as possible fell off the wall in doing so) and offered Alice his hand. She watched him a little anxiously as she took it. “If he smiled much more the ends of his mouth might meet behind,” she thought: “and then I don’t know what would happen to his head! I’m afraid it would come off!”

“Yes, all his horses and all his men,” Humpty Dumpty went on. “They’d pick me up again in a minute, they would! However, this conversation is going on a little too fast: let’s go back to the last remark but one.”

“I’m afraid I can’t quite remember it,” Alice said, very politely.

“In that case we start afresh,” said Humpty Dumpty, “and it’s my turn to choose a subject –” (“He talks about it just as if it was a game!” thought Alice.) “So here’s a question for you, How old did you say you were?”

Alice made a short calculation, and said “Seven years and six months.”

“Wrong!” Humpty Dumpty exclaimed triumphantly. “you never said a word like it.!”

“I thought you meant ‘How old are you?’” Alice explained.

“If I’d meant that, I’d have said it,” said Humpty Dumpty.

Alice didn’t want to begin another argument, so she said nothing.

“Seven years and six months!” Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully. “An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you’d asked my advice, I’d have said ‘Leave off at seven’ – but it’s too late now.”

“I never ask advice about growing,” Alice said indignantly.

“Too proud?” the other inquired.

Alice felt even more indignant at this suggestion. “I mean,” she said, “that one can’t help growing older.”

“One can’t, perhaps,” said Humpty Dumpty; “but two can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven.”

“What a beautiful belt you’ve got on!” Alice suddenly remarked. (They had had quite enough of the subject of age, she thought: and, if they really were to take turns in choosing subjects, it was her turn now.) “At least,” she corrected herself on second thoughts, “a beautiful cravat, I should have said—no, a belt, I mean— I beg your pardon!” she added in dismay, for Humpty Dumpty looked thoroughly offended, and she began to wish she hadn’t chosen that subject. “If only I knew,” she thought to herself, “which was neck and which was waist!”

Evidently Humpty Dumpty was very angry, though he said nothing for a minute or two. When he did speak again, it was in a deep growl.

“It is a ~~most~~ ~~provoking~~ ~~thing~~,” he said at last, “when a person doesn’t know a cravat from a belt!”

“I know it’s very ignorant of me,” Alice said, in so humble a tone that Humpty Dumpty relented.

“It’s a cravat, child, and a beautiful one, as you say. It’s a present from the White King and Queen. There now!”

“Is it really?” said Alice, quite pleased to find that she had chosen a good subject after all.

“They gave it to me,” Humpty Dumpty continued thoughtfully as he crossed one knee over the other and clasped his hands round it, “they gave it to me—for an un-birthday present.”

“I beg your pardon?” Alice said with a puzzled air.

"I'm not offended," said Humpty Dumpty.

"I mean, what is an un-birthday present?"

"A present given when it isn't your birthday, of course."

Alice considered a little. "I like birthday presents best," she said at last.

"You don't know what you're talking about!" cried Humpty Dumpty. "How many days are there in a year?"

"Three hundred and sixty-five," said Alice.

"And how many birthdays have you?"

"One."

"And if you take one from three hundred and sixty-five what remains?"

"Three hundred and sixty-four, of course."

Humpty Dumpty looked doubtful. "I'd rather see that done on paper," he said.

Alice couldn't help smiling as she took out her memorandum book, and worked the sum for him :

365

– 1

364

Humpty Dumpty took the book and looked at it carefully. "That seems to be done right—" he began.

"You're holding it upside down!" Alice interrupted.

"To be sure I was!" Humpty Dumpty said gaily as she turned it round for him. "I thought it looked a little queer. As I was saying, that seems to be done right—though I haven't time to look it over thoroughly just now—and that shows that there are three hundred and sixty-four days when you might get un-birthday presents—"

"Certainly," said Alice.

"And only one for birthday presents, you know. There's glory for you!"

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory,'" Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't—till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'"

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock down argument,'" Alice objected.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just

what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all.”

Alice was too much puzzled to say anything; so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again. “They’ve a temper, some of them—particularly verbs: they’re the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—however, I can manage the whole lot of them! impenetrability! That’s what I say!”

“Would you tell me please,” said Alice, “what that means?”

“Now you talk like a reasonable child,” said Humpty Dumpty, looking very much pleased. “I meant by ‘impenetrability’ that we’ve had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you’d mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don’t mean to stop here all the rest of your life.”

“That’s a great deal to make one word mean,” Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

“When I make a word do a lot of work like that,” said Humpty Dumpty, “I always pay it extra.”

“Oh!” said Alice. She was too much puzzled to make any other remark.

“Ah, you should see ‘em come round me of a Saturday night,” Humpty Dumpty went, wagging his head gravely from side to side, “for to get their wages, you know.”

(Alice didn’t venture to ask what he paid them with; and so you see I can’t tell you.)

“You seem very clever at explaining words, Sir,” said Alice. “Would you kindly tell me the meaning of the poem called ‘Jabberwocky’?”

“Let’s hear it,” said Humpty Dumpty. “I can explain all the poems that ever were invented—and a good many that haven’t been invented just yet.”

This sounded very hopeful, so Alice repeated the first verse:-

“Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,

And the mome raths outgrabe.”

“That’s enough to begin with,” Humpty Dumpty interrupted: “there are plenty of hard words there. ‘Brillig’ means four o’clock in the afternoon—the time when you begin broiling things for dinner.”

“That’ll do very well,” said Alice: “and ‘slithy’?”

“Well, ‘slithy’ means ‘lithe and slimy.’ ‘Lithe’ is the same as ‘active.’ You see it’s like a

portmanteau – there are two meanings packed up into one word”.

“I see it now,” Alice remarked thoughtfully: “and what are ‘toves’?”

“Well, ‘toves’ are something like badgers– they’re something like lizards–and they’re something like corkscrews.”

“They must be very curious-looking creatures.”

“They are that,” said Humpty Dumpty: “also they make their nests undersundials– also they live on cheese.”

“And what’s to ‘gyre’ and to ‘gimble’?”

“To ‘gyre’ is to go round and round like a gyroscope. To ‘gimble’ is to make holes like a gimlet.”

“And ‘the wabe’ is the grass plot round a sundial, I suppose?” said Alice, surprised at her own ingenuity.

“Of Course it is. It’s called ‘wabe’ you know because it goes a long way before it, and a long way behind it–”

“And a long way beyond it on each side,” Alice added.

“Exactly so, Well then, ‘mimsy’ is ‘flimsy and miserable (there’s another portmanteau for you). And a ‘borogove’ is a thin shabby-looking bird with its feathers sticking out all round– something like a live mop.”

“And then ‘mome raths’?” said Alice. “I’m afraid I’m giving you a great deal of trouble.”

“Well, a ‘rath’ is a sort of green pig: but ‘mome’ I’m not certain about. I think it’s short for ‘from home’–meaning that they’d lost their way, you know.”

“And what does ‘outgrabe mean?”

“Well, ‘outgrabing’ is something between bellowing and whistling, with the kind of sneeze in the middle: however, you’ll hear it done, maybe– down in the wood yonder–and, when you’ve once heard it, you’ll be quite content. Who’s been repeating all that hard stuff to you?”

“I read it in a book,” said Alice. “But I had some poetry repeated to me much easier than that, by – Tweedledee, I think it was.”

“As to poetry, you know,” said Humpty Dumpty, stretching out one of his great hands, “I can repeat poetry as well as other folk, if it comes to that–”

“Oh, it needn’t come to that!” Alice hastily said, hoping to keep him from beginning.

“The piece I’m going to repeat,” he went on without noticing her remark, “was written entirely for your amusement.”

Alice felt that in that case she really ought to listen to it; so she sat down, and said “Thank you” rather sadly.

“In winter, when the fields are white,

I sing this song for your delight—

only I don’t sing it,” he added as an explanation.

“I see you don’t,” said Alice.

“If you can see whether I’m singing or not, you’ve sharper eyes than most,” Humpty Dumpty remarked severely. Alice was silent.

“In spring, when the woods are getting green,

I’ll try and tell you what I mean:”

“Thank you very much,” said Alice.

“In summer, when the days are long,

Perhaps you’ll understand the song:

In autumn, when the leaves are brown,

Take pen and ink, and write it down.”

“I will, if I can remember it so long,” said Alice.

“You needn’t go on making remarks like that,” Humpty Dumpty said: “they’re not sensible, and they put me out.”

“I sent a message to the fish:

I told them ‘This is what I wish.’

The little fishes of the sea,

They sent an answer back to me.

The little fishes’ answer was

‘We cannot do it, Sir, because—’”

“I’m afraid I don’t quite understand,” said Alice.

“It gets easier further on,” Humpty Dumpty replied.

“I sent to them again to say

‘It will be better to obey.’

The fishes answered with a grin,

'why, what a temper you are in!'
I told them once, I told them twice:
They would not listen to advice.
I took a kettle large and new,
Fit for the deed I had to do.
My heart went hop, my heart went thump:
I filled the kettle at the pump
Then some one came to me and said
'The little fishes are in bed.'
I said to him, I said it plain,
'Then you must wake them up again.'
I said it very loud and clear:
I went and shouted in his ear."

Humpty Dumpty raised his voice almost to a scream as he repeated this verse, and Alice thought, with a shudder, "I wouldn't have been the messenger for anything!"

"But he was very stiff and proud:
He said, 'you needn't shout so loud!'
And he was very proud and stiff:
He said I'd go and wake them, if—'
I took a corkscrew from the shelf:
I went to wake them up myself.
And when I found the door was locked,
I pulled and pushed and kicked and knocked.
And when I found the door was shut,
I tried to turn the handle, but—"
There was a long pause.
"Is that all?" Alice timidly asked.
"That's all," said Humpty Dumpty. "Goodbye."

This was rather sudden, Alice thought: but, after such a very strong hint that she ought to be going, she felt that it would hardly be civil to stay. So she got up, and held out her hand. "Good-bye, till we meet again!" she said as cheerfully as she could.

"I shouldn't know you again if we did meet," Humpty Dumpty replied in a discontented tone, giving her one of his fingers to shake: "you're so exactly like other people."

"The face is what one goes by, generally," Alice remarked in a thoughtful tone.

"That's just what I complain of," said Humpty Dumpty. "Your face is the same as everybody has—the two eyes, so—" (making their places in the air with his thumb) "nose in the middle, mouth under. It's always the same, Now if you had the two eyes on the same side of the nose, for instance—or the mouth at the top—that would be some help."

"It wouldn't look nice," Alice objected. But Humpty Dumpty only shut his eyes, and said, "Wait till you've tried."

Alice waited a minute to see if he would speak again, but, as he never opened his eyes or took any further notice of her, she said, "Good-bye!" once more, and getting no answer to this, she quietly walked away: but she couldn't help saying to herself, as she went, "of all the unsatisfactory—" (she repeated this aloud, as it was a great comfort to have such a long word to say) "of all the unsatisfactory people I ever met—" She never finished the sentence, for at this moment a heavy crash shook the forest from end to end.

12.2.5 Glossary

Provoking	:	which causes a particular reaction or effect.
Compliment	:	A remark that expresses praise or admiration of somebody.
Evidently	:	Clearly, something which can be seen or understood easily.
Chattering	:	To talk quickly and continuously, especially about things that are unimportant.
Argument	:	Conversation or discussion in which two or more people disagree often angrily.
Riddle	:	A question that is difficult to understand and that has a surprising answer and that you ask as a game.
Queer	:	Strange or unusual.
Tremendously	:	Very greatly
Solemn	:	Looking serious.
Indignant	:	Feeling of anger caused by something that you think is unfair or unreasonable.

Cravat	:	A short wide strip of fabric worn by man around the neck inside the collar of a shirt.
		Impenetrability The quality of not allowing something to push into.
Gravely	:	Seriously.
Slimy	:	Polite and extremely friendly, something which is unpleasant, thick liquid substance.
Flimsy	:	Badly made and not strong enough for the purpose for which it is made, difficult to believe.
Shabby looking	:	Dirty looking
Bellowing	:	Shouting in a loud deep voice especially because you are angry.
Scream	:	To cry loudly.
Discontented	:	Unhappy, Dissatisfied.
Unsatisfactory	:	Inadequate, Unacceptable.
Amusement	:	Entertainment.
Lithe	:	Moving or bending in a graceful manner.
Badger	:	An animal with grey fur and black and white lines on its head.
Contemptuously	:	The manner which shows that one has no respect for someone or something.

12.2.6 Model Explanations

(a) “They’ve a temper That’s what I say.”

This extract has been taken from the chapter “Humpty Dumpty” of Lewis Carroll’s fairy tale *Through the Looking Glass*. Carroll is a celebrated writer and is particularly known for his *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. In these lines Humpty Dumpty pompously explains to Alice his theory of words. He suggests that he is their master and they will mean only what he wants them to mean.

Humpty Dumpty informs Alice in these lines that words have a temper of their own. So they try to behave as they please. He tells Alice that verbs are the proudest and do not like to be trifled with. The adjectives are docile and can be managed or manipulated but it is difficult to play with verbs. Then he proudly asserts that he can manage them all. He is their master. Here he uses a bombastic word impenetrability, perhaps, to impress Alice.

This passage shows the pompous and naughty character of Humpty Dumpty. He believes in having power not only over human beings but the parts of speech like verbs and

adjectives etc. It clearly shows his sense of arrogance and self-importance. In the next lines also Humpty Dumpty is seen giving his own meaning to different words.

(b) “Alice waited a minute I ever met.”

These lines form the concluding part of “*Humpty Dumpty*” a chapter in Lewis Carroll’s novel “*Through the Looking Glass*”. This chapter deals with Alice, the seven year old heroine of the novel having an encounter with the self-important Humpty Dumpty, an egg-shaped creature.

In these lines Carroll gives the reader Alice’s final assessment of the character of Humpty Dumpty. After having spoken loudly and pompously, Humpty has closed his eyes, or has decided to ignore Alice. She finally says “Goodbye” but she does not get any response from him. She now decides to leave but she is thinking about this strange person she came across after minutes. She compares and contrasts him with all other people she has come across. She passes a sort of judgement on him when she declares that he happens to be the most unsatisfactory of all the people she met.

This extract, on one hand gives us a negative impression about the character of Humpty Dumpty, on the other hand it gives us an insight into the sensitivity of Alice. She comes on to be a fine young child who values the qualities of politeness and affection as against those of arrogance and self-importance.

12.3 Self Assessment Questions

1. What impression do you form about Humpty Dumpty?
2. How does Alice cope with Humpty Dumpty during the various arguments?
3. Write a character sketch of Alice.

12.4 Answers to SAQs

Ans. Lewis Carroll has created an immortal character in Humpty Dumpty. This character is now taken to be a symbol of arrogance, snobbery, mean intellectuality and above all absurdity. When Alice looked at him for the first time she thought that she was looking at a large egg. But when she went near him she found that he had a human form with a large egg-like face. Humpty Dumpty was sitting with his legs like a Turk on top of a high wall. The wall was so narrow that this man was precariously placed making Alice wonder how he could keep his balance.

Lewis Carroll conditions the response of the reader by using the word “Turk” from him. A Turk is taken to be a barbaric, arrogant man with no trace of kindness or humaneness. This impression about Humpty Dumpty is confirmed when we find him trying to brow-beat Alice. He scolds her for calling him an egg. He is harsh and legal minded and tries to undermine her by asking absurd questions.

He is fond of creating riddles and quizzes and every word spoken turns into a sort of game for him. He distorts the meaning of traditional words, coins new words and with their help tries to corner Alice. He tells Alice that the cravat, he was wearing had been gifted to him by cap white King and Queen on his unbirthday. Then with a maze of logic he proves that a birthday comes only on a day in a year while there are 364 unbirthdays.

When Alice asks him the meaning of a very difficult poem ‘Jabberwocky’ he gives his own meaning and boasts that he masters verbs and adjectives. Then in a fit of self importance he also recites a non-sensical poem. Throughout this encounter he seems to be proving himself better to Alice and thus emerges as an obnoxious, rotund man who cares only for himself and no one else. Alice sums up her impression of Humpty Dumpty in the following words : “Of all the unsatisfactory people I ever met” which clearly indicates a strong tinge of distaste that she has developed for Humpty Dumpty.

Ans. Alice is a little girl of seven and half years. In a series of adventures “Through the Looking Glass” she comes across many strange people and stranger adventures. Her encounter with Humpty Dumpty is not only very interesting but it also reveals some basic traits of human behaviour.

Her remark that Humpty Dumpty looks exactly like an egg is said in all honesty and without any ill will. But Humpty Dumpty sitting like a Turk on the top of a narrow wall takes an offence and starts scolding her in a loud voice. Though Alice is a little girl she realises the offence made and tactfully suggests that some eggs are very pretty. This does not mollify Humpty Dumpty and he is still sullen. Then he asks her name and on being told the name he makes fun of her by suggesting that it is a stupid name. On the other hand, he tells Alice that his name has a meaning : that is the shape he is and brags about his beauty. Even a simple suggestion that he should climb down to avoid a fall meets with a jeer. For him every spoken word is a riddle or a puzzle and he ridicules the poor innocent Alice for asking such a simple riddle. When she recites the poem about Humpty Dumpty having a great fall and not all the King’s men being able to put him together again, he feels angry.

Humpty Dumpty boasts that the King had promised him that he would send men to put him together. Humpty Dumpty puts Alice in a fix by asking her about her age. When told he makes fun of her and says that it is an uncomfortable sort of age. Alice tries to manage the situation by praising his belt but once again she is rebuffed. Humpty Dumpty tells her that it was a cravat gifted to him by the King on his unbirthday.

Though Alice is just a little child, she is mature enough to understand the psychological and emotional pressures Humpty Dumpty might be experiencing. So she uses the technique of diverting his attention and thus getting over the difficult situation.

Ans. Alice is one of those immortal characters which every little child would like to read. Her adventures in the wonderland and “Through the Looking Glass” are simply amazing and yet Alice seems to be the seven and half year old little girl living next door.

Here in “Humpty Dumpty” Alice emerges as a charming girl who is so fond of talking. She talks to everyone who comes in contact with and she is also fond of talking to herself. In a way this habit of talking to herself provides to her an opportunity to comment upon character and situation. Sometimes when she is in a difficult situation, her habit of having a dialogue with herself gives her a clue with the help of which she is able to make an escape.

One thing that is so charming about Alice is that she has a keen sense of observation. This quality helps her to make a quick assessment of a situation or a person. In the same way she is quick witted and can save a situation with the help of a gesture or a dialogue. When Humpty Dumpty is annoyed on being called an egg, she placates him by suggesting that some eggs are very beautiful.

One thing that strikes us about Alice is her transparency and her positive attitude. She is courageous and also on many occasions we find her fighting in a bold manner for a just cause or for her survival.

In the final assessment we can say that Alice is a sunny character with so many sterling qualities. Her sympathetic attitude, positive thinking are burnished with her hyper-active imagination and she remains a favourite not only of the children but also the adults who are still children at heart.

12.5 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have seen a meeting between the little Alice who has wandered into a fairy tale world by passing through a looking glass with the arrogant Humpty Dumpty. Even when the world created by Carroll is improbable and magical, this encounter points to the fact that in the real world of human beings as well as in the fairy world also one comes across evil-minded and naughty people.

12.6 Review Questions

1. What qualities of human behaviour are represented by Humpty Dumpty?
2. What is the significance of riddles, puzzles, and quizzes in this chapter?
3. Would you say that the idea of having three sixty four unbirthdays is better than having one birthday a year? Justify your answer.
4. What do you mean by “non-sense” poetry? Does it have any meaning in reality? Give a reasoned answer.

12.7 Bibliography

1. Anna Chandlany : A Companion to the Fairy Tales.
 2. Maria M. Tatar : The Hand Facts of the Grimm's Fairly Tale.
 3. Graham Anderson : Fairy Tales in the Ancient World.
 4. Andrew Lance : The Violet Fairy Book.
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UNIT-13

ANTON P. CHEKHOV: *THE LAMENT*

Structure

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Life and Works of Chekhov
- 13.2 'Short Story' as a Literary Genre
- 13.3 Text of the Story: *The Lament*
 - 13.3.1 Theme of the story '*The Lament*'
 - 13.3.2 Character - sketch of Iona
 - 13.3.3 Significance of the horse in the story
 - 13.3.4 Glossary
- 13.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 13.5 Answers SAQs
- 13.6. Let Us Sum Up
- 13.7 Review Questions
- 13.8 Bibliography

13.0 Objectives

After having read this unit, you will be able to:

- (i) know about the life and works of Chekhov
- (ii) know the importance of Chekhov as a story - writer
- (iii) know the theme of the story '*The Lament*'
- (iv) understand about the significance of horse in the story

13.1 Life and works of Chekhov

Born on January 29, 1860, in Taganrog, Russia, on the Sea of Azov, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov eventually became one of Russia's most cherished storytellers. Especially fond of vaudevilles and French farces, he produced some hilarious one-acts, but it is his full-length tragedies that have secured him a place among the greatest dramatists of all time.

Chekhov began writing short stories during his days as a medical student at the Uni-

versity of Moscow. After graduating in 1884 with a degree in medicine, he began to freelance as a journalist and writer of comic sketches. Early in his career, he mastered the form of the one-act and produced several masterpieces of this genre including *The Bear* (1889)

Ivanov (1887), Chekhov's first full-length play, a fairly immature work compared to his later plays, examines the suicide of a young man very similar to Chekhov himself in many ways. His next play, the *Wood Demon* (1888) was also rather unsuccessful. In fact, it was not until the Moscow Art Theater production of *The Seagull* (1897) that Chekhov enjoyed his first overwhelming success. The same play had been performed two years earlier at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg and had been so badly received that Chekhov had actually left the auditorium during the second act and vowed never to write for the theatre again. But in the hands of the Moscow Art Theatre, the play was transformed into a critical success, and Chekhov soon realized that the earlier production had failed because the actors had not understood their roles.

In 1899, Chekhov gave the Moscow Art Theatre a revised version of the *Wood Demon*, now titled *Uncle Vanya* (1899). Along with *The Three Sisters* (1901) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), this play would go on to become one of the masterpieces of the modern theatre. However, although the Moscow Art Theatre productions brought Chekhov great fame, he was never quite happy with the style that director Constantin Stanislavsky imposed on the plays. While Chekhov insisted that his plays were comedies, Stanislavsky's productions tended to emphasize their tragic elements. Still, in spite of their stylistic disagreements, it was not an unhappy marriage, and these productions brought widespread acclaim to both Chekhov's work and the Moscow Art Theatre itself.

Chekhov considered his mature plays to be a kind of comic satire, pointing out the unhappy nature of existence in turn-of-the-century Russia.

During Chekhov's final years, he was forced to live in exile. In March of 1897, he had suffered a lung hemorrhage, and although he still made occasional trips to Moscow to participate in the productions of his plays, he was forced to spend most of his time in Crimea. He died of tuberculosis on July 14, 1904, at the age of forty-four, in a German health resort and was buried in Moscow. Since his death, Chekhov's plays have become famous worldwide and he has come to be considered the greatest Russian storyteller and dramatist of modern times.

13.2 'Short Story' as a Literary Genre

The short story is a product of the modern times. It is a deliberately fashioned work of art. It took its birth for the first time in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1894), an American is said to be the father of the short story. His book *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* arrested the attention of all as soon as it appeared. Some of his stories are matchless.

With the extension of education in different countries, the need of short stories came to be felt. All persons could not find interest in higher literature. They wanted some light literature for casual reading. At the same time people came to suffer from lack of time. They wanted best of entertainment in the least possible space of time. The short story with a modern artistic appearance catered to the needs of masses. It was almost a universal need. Hence, the short story became popular day by day.

The spread of journalism has given great encouragement to the spreading up of short stories. A number of magazines and periodicals have been helpful in the development of the short story. With a view to entertaining the readers within a limited space at their disposal, they have given preference to short stories and one act plays.

The short story has found a host of imitators in all countries and in all languages. Guy de Maupassant became a prominent story-writer in France. Anton Chekhov became popular in Russia. Conan Doyle, John Galsworthy, H.G. Wells and H.A. Munro (Saki) are some of the most famous story-writers of Britain. Rabindranath Tagore, Quazi Nazrul Islam, Premchand and Mulraj Anand are some of the brilliant Indian writers. The efforts of these persons have developed, improved and refined the mode of story-writing. They have given permanence to this technique in modern Literature.

13.3 Text of the Story

The Lament

It is twilight. A thick wet snow is slowly twirling around the newly lighted street lamps, and lying in soft thin layers on roofs, on horse' backs, on people's shoulders and hats. The cab driver Iona Potapov is quite white, and looks like a phantom; he is bent double as far as a human body can bend double; he is seated on his box; he never makes a move. If a whole snowdrift fell on him, it seems as if he would not find it necessary to shake it off. His little horse is also quite white, and remains motionless; even close by, give it the appearance of a gingerbread horse worth a kopek. It is, no doubt, plunged in deep thought. If you were snatched from the plough, from your usual grey surroundings, and were thrown into this slough full of monstrous lights, unceasing noise, and hurrying people, you too would find it difficult not to think.

Iona and his little horse have not moved from their place for a long while. They left their yard before dinner, and up to now, not a fare. The evening mist is descending over the town, the white lights of the lamps replacing brighter rays, and the hubbub of the street getting louder. 'Cabby for Vigorg way!' suddenly hear Iona 'Cabby!'

Iona jumps, and through his snow-covered eyelashes sees an officer in a greatcoat, with his hood over his head.

'Viborg way!' the officer repeats. 'Are you asleep, eh? Viborg way!'

With a nod of assent Iona picks up the reins, in consequence of which flakes of snow slip off the horse's back and neck. The officer seats himself in the sleight. The cab driver smacks his lips to encourage his horse, stretches out his neck like a swan, sits up, and, more from habit than necessity, brandishes his whip. The little horse also stretches its neck, bends its wooden-looking legs, and makes a move undecidedly.

'What are you doing, werewolf!' is the exclamation Iona hears from the dark mass moving to and fro, as soon as they have started.

'Where the devil are you going? To the r-r-right!'

'You do not know how to drive. Keep to the right!' calls the officer angrily.

A coachman from a private carriage swears at him; a passerby, who has run across the road and rubbed his shoulder against the horse's nose, looks at him furiously as he sweeps the snow from his sleeve. Iona shifts about on his seat as if he were on needles, moves his elbows as if he were trying to keep his equilibrium, and gapes about like someone suffocating, who does not understand why and wherefore he is there.

'What scoundrels they all are!' jokes the officer; 'one would think they had all entered into an agreement to jostle you or fall under your horse.'

Iona looks round at the officer, and moves his lips. He evidently wants to say something, but the only sound that issues is a snuffle.

'What?' asks the officer.

Iona twists his mouth into a smile, and with an effort says hoarsely:

'My son, Barin, died this week.'

'Hm! what did he die of?'

Iona turns with his whole body toward his fare, and says:

'And who knows! They say high fever. He was three days in the hospital and then died... God's will be done.'

'Turn round! The devil!' sounds from the darkness. 'Have you popped off, old doggie, eh? Use your eyes!'

'Go on, go on,' says the officer, 'otherwise we shall not get there by tomorrow. Hurry up a bit!'

The cabdriver again stretches his neck, sits up, and, with a bad grace, brandishes his whip. Several times again he turns to look at his fare, but the latter has closed his eyes, and apparently is not disposed to listen. Having deposited the officer in the Viborg, he stops by the tavern, doubles himself up on his seat, and again remains motionless, while the snow once more begins to cover him and his horse. An hour, and another .. Then, along the footpath, with

a squeak of galoshes, and quarrelling, come three young men, two of them tall and lanky, the third one short and humpbacked.

‘Cabby, to the Police Bridge!’ in a cracked voice calls the humpback. ‘The three of us for two griveniks.’

Iona picks up his reins, and smacks his lips. Two griveniks is not a fair price, but he does not mind whether it is a rouble or five kopeks - to him it is all the same now, so long as they are fares. The young men, jostling each other and using bad language, approach the sleigh, and all three at once try to get onto the seat; then begins a discussion as to which two shall sit and who shall be the one to stand. After wrangling, abusing each other, and much petulance, it is at last decided that the humpback shall stand, as he is the smallest.

‘Now then, hurry up!’ says the humpback in a twanging voice, as he takes his place and breathes in Iona’s neck. ‘Old furry! Here, mate, what a cap you have! There is not a worse one to be found in all Petersburg!....’

‘He-he-he-he’, giggles Iona. ‘Such a’

‘Now you, “such a”, hurry up, are you going the whole way at this pace? Are you.... Do you want it in the neck?’

‘My head feels like bursting,’ says one of the lanky ones. ‘Last night at the Donkmasovs, Vaska and I drank the whole of four bottles of cognac.’

‘I don’t understand what you lie for,’ says the oither lanky one angrily; ‘you lie like a brute.’

‘God strike me, it’s the truth!’

‘It’s as much the truth as that a louse coughs!’

‘He, he,’ grins Iona, ‘what gay young gentlemen!’

‘Pshaw, go to the devil!’, says the humpback indignantly.

‘Are you going to get on or not, you old pest? Is that the way to drive? Use the whip a bit! Go on, devil, go on, give it to him well!’

Iona feels at his back the little man wriggling, and the tremble in his voice. He listens to the insults hurled at him, sees the people, and little by little the feeling of loneliness leaves him. The humpback goes on swearing until he gets mixed up in some elaborate six-foot oath, or chokes with coughing. The lankies begin to talk about a certain Nadejda Petrovna. Iona looks round at them several times; he waits for a temporary silence, then, turning round again, he murmurs:

‘My son ... died this week.’

‘We must all die,’ sighs the humpback, wiping his lips after an attack of coughing.’

Now, hurry up, hurry up! Gentlemen, I really cannot go any farther like this! When will he get us there?’

‘Well, just you stimulate him a little in the neck!’

‘You old pest, do you hear, I’ll bone your neck for you! If one treated the like of you with ceremony one would have to go on foot! Do you hear, old serpent Gorinytch! Or do you not care a spit?’

Iona hears rather than feels the blow they deal him.

‘He, he,’ he laughs. ‘They are gay young gentlemen, God bless ‘em!’

‘Cabby, are you married?’ asks a lanky one.

I? He, he, gay young gentlement! Now I have only a wife and the moist ground ... He, ho, ho... that is to say, the grave. My son has died, and I am alive A wonderful thing, death mistook the door ... instead of coming to me, it went to my son....’

Iona turns round to tell them how his son died, but at this moment, the humpback, giving a little sigh, announces, ‘Thank God, we have at last reached our destination,’ and Iona watches them disappear through the dark entrance. Once more he is alone, and again surrounded by silence His grief, which has abated for a short while, returns and rends his heart with greater force. With an anxious and hurried look, he searches among the crowds passing on either side of the street to find whether there may be just one person who will listen to him. But the crowds hurry by without noticing him or his trouble. Yet it is such an immense, illimitable grief. Should his heart break and the grief pour out, it would flow over the whole earth, so it seems, and yet no one sees it. It has managed to conceal itself in such an insignificant shell that no one can see it even by day and with a light.

Iona sees a hall porter with some sacking, and decides to talk to him.

‘Friend, what sort of time is it?’ he asks.

‘Past nine. What are you standing here for? Move on.’

Iona moves on a few steps, doubles himself up, and abandons himself to his grief. He sees it is useless to turn to people for help. In less than five minutes he straightens himself, holds up his head as if he felt some sharp pain, and gives a tug at the reins; he can bear it no longer. ‘The stables,’ he thinks, and the little horse, as if it understood, starts off at a trot.

About an hour and a half later Iona is seated by a large dirty stove. Around the stove, on the floor, on the benches, people are snoring; the air is thick and suffocatingly hot. Iona looks at the sleepers, scratches himself, and regrets having returned so early.

‘I have not even earned my fodder,’ he thinks. ‘That’s what’s my trouble. A man who knows his job, who has had enough to eat and his horse too, can always sleep peacefully.’

A young cabdriver in one of the corners half gets up, grunts sleepily, and stretches towards a bucket of water.

‘Do you want a drink?’ Iona asks him.

‘Don’t I want a drink!’

‘That’s so? Your good health. But listen, mate, -you know, my son is dead..... Did you hear? This week, in the hospital It’s a long story.’

Iona looks to see what effect his words have, but sees none-the young man has hidden his face and is fast asleep again. The old man sighs, and scratches his head. Just as much as the young one wants to drink, the old man wants to talk. It will soon be a week since his son died, and he has not been able to speak about it properly to anyone. One must tell it slowly and carefully; how his son fell ill, how he suffered, what he said before he died, how he died. One must describe every detail of the funeral, and the journey to the hospital to fetch the dead son’s clothes. His daughter Anissia has remained in the village-one must talk about her too. Is it nothing he has to tell? Surely the listener would gasp and sigh, and sympathize with him? It is better, too, to talk to women; although they are stupid, two words are enough to make them sob.

‘I’ll go and look after my horse,’ thinks Iona; ‘there’s always time to sleep. No fear of that!’

He puts on his coat, and goes to the stable to his horse; he thinks of the corn, the hay, the weather. When he is alone, he dares not think of his son; he can speak about him to anyone, but to think of him, and picture him to himself, is unbearably painful.

‘Are you tucking in?’ Iona asks his horse, looking at its bright eyes; ‘go on, tuck in, though we’ve not earned our corn, we can eat hay. Yes I am too old to drive-my son could have, not I. He was a first-rate cabdriver. If only he had lived!’

Iona is silent for a moment, then continues:

‘That’s how it is, my old horse. There’s no more Kuzma Ionitch. He has left us to live, and he went off pop. Now let’s say, you had a foal, you were the foal’s mother, and suddenly, let’s say, that foal went and left you to live after him. It would be sad, wouldn’t it?’

The little horse munches, listens, and breathes over its master’s hand....

Iona’s feelings are too much for him, and he tells the little horse the whole story.

13.3.1 Theme of the Story: *The Lament*

The main idea of the story *The Lament* is that of loneliness coupled with the callousness of the society at large. The story tells us about the grief of an old cab-driver Iona who wants to share the burden of his grief with others but nobody is willing to listen to him. People

are so self-centered and apathetic that they are not able to feel the tribulations of their fellow human beings.

The Lament is a story full of grief. Iona, the old cab-driver is lamenting the death of his son. He is suffering from the pain of his son's death. He wishes to share his pain with others. He needs sympathy and kindness. He tries to tell the officer, the three gay young gentlemen and others about his grief. All turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to the painful sufferings of this old man.

At the end, we find that Iona tries to share his burden with his horse. He tells the horse the whole story of his son's death and tries to derive some satisfaction. Chekhov has very beautifully conveyed that people are no more sympathetic towards others. They are all self-centred brutes.

13.3.2 The Character sketch of Iona

In the story *The Lament* the protagonist Iona, the cab-driver is a very sensitive human being. He cannot bear the grief caused by his son's death. He is greatly agitated and troubled. His tribulations are boundless. He feels very lonely in his grief and wants to share the burden of his grief with others. He wants to tell others the story of his son's death but no one listens to him.

One of the marked characteristics of Iona is his patience. He does not care for the insults and abuses hurled at him. He represents the sensitive human beings who are moved very much by the trials and tribulations of life and want to share them with others. In the end, when human beings fail to sympathise with him, he finds an outlet of his feelings and sensations with the horse.

13.3.3 Significance of the horse in the story

The story *The Lament* depicts the feeling of loneliness coupled with the callousness of the society at large. The story tells us about the grief of an old cab-driver Iona who wants to share the burden of his grief with others but nobody is willing to listen to him. People are so self-centered and apathetic that they are not able to feel the tribulations of their fellow human beings.

The Lament is a story full of grief. Iona, the old cab-driver is grief stricken at the death of his son. He wishes to share his pain with others. He needs sympathy and kindness. He tries to tell the officer, the three rowdy men and others but to our dismay we find that nobody is interested in him; all turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to the painful sufferings of this old man.

In the end, we find that Iona tries to share his burden with his horse. He tells the horse the story of his son's death and tries to derive some consolation. Chakhov has pointed out that people are no more sympathetic towards others. They are all self-centered brutes. When Iona is not heeded by human beings, he tries to take recourse to the animal horse. Thus, in the

story the horse symbolises a friend and sympathiser.

13.3.4 Glossary

phantom: a ghost; an apparition; a being seemingly without material substance.

kopec: the smallest unit of Russian money; a hundred kopecks make one rouble.

slough: deep mud; mire; swamp.

cabby: cab-driver

were-wolf: a person capable of assuming a wolf's form.

galoshes: high overshoes with heavy soles, worn especially in snow and slush.

cognac: brandy distilled in west-central France.

grivenick: ten kopecks.

defunct: deceased; dead.

13.4 Self Assessment Questions

1. Name story writers from Russia, Britain and India.
2. How much time had passed since his son died ?
3. With whom does he shares his grief?

13.5 Answers to SAQs

1. Anton Chekhov became popular in Russia. Conan Doyle, John Galsworthy, H.G. Wells and H.A. Munro (Saki) are some of the most famous story-writers of Britain. Rabindranath Tagore, Quazi Nazrul Islam, Premchand and Mulkraj Anand are some of the brilliant Indian writers
2. A weak.
3. The little horse.

13.4 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you learnt:

- a. Emergence of short story in the modern times.
- b. Psychological relationship within the society.
- c. Chekhov art of story telling.
- d. Significance of human-animal relationship.

13.7 Review Questions

1. What is the theme of the story ‘*The Lament*’?
2. Discuss the life and works of Chekhov.
3. What devices does Chekhov employ in order to give the story a psychological touch?
4. Comment on the roles of the officer and the quarrelling young men.
5. Give the character sketch of Iona.
6. What is the significance of the horse in the story?

13.8 Bibliography

1. The Tales of Chekhov, Trans by C. Garnett (1816-1922).
2. Ronald Hingsley, Chekhov: A Biographical and Critical Study (1950).

UNIT-14

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE : *THE SPECKLED BAND*

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 About the Author
 - 14.2.1 Life and Literary background
 - 14.2.2 His Works
- 14.3 Reading the Text: *The Speckled Band*
 - 14.3.1 Detailed Explanations
 - 14.3.2 Glossary
- 14.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 14.5 Answers to SAQs
- 14.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.7 Review Questions
- 14.8 Bibliography

14.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to stimulate intelligent interest in the field of mystery and detective literature. Arthur Conan Doyle is one of the best writers of detective novels and short stories. The detective *Sherlock Holmes* has gained world wide acclaim. The present unit discusses one of the best known short stories *The Speckled Band* by Arthur Conan Doyle.

14.1 Introduction

Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christi are the best known mystery and detective writers. Their writings are generally considered a major innovation in the field of crime fiction and are the embodiment of scientific thinking. This short story by Conan Doyle is very interesting and will add to your understanding of the unique literature of crime fiction.

14.2 About the Author

14.2.1 Life and Literary Background

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was a Scottish writer and the creator of one of the most famous detectives of crime fiction *Sherlock Holmes*. Conan Doyle was born on 22 May, 1859 in Edinburgh, Scotland. His father Charles Actamont Doyle was an Englishman and his mother Mary Foley belonged to Ireland. The addition of “Conan” in his surname is unknown. He studied in Edinburgh University, qualified as a doctor in 1885 and then practised medicine as an eye specialist until 1891 when he became a full time writer.

14.2.2 His Works

Doyle’s first book about Sherlock Holmes *A Study in Scarlet* was published in 1887. This novel introduced the detective and also his friend and associate Dr. Watson who was his constant companion in all the novels and short stories written later. This book also introduced the famous address of Holmes’ house at Mrs. Hudson’s House 221 B Baker Street, London. After *The Sign of Four* he wrote the famous *The Hound of Baskervilles* (1902) which is supposed to be one of the reasons that Doyle was knighted (“Sir Arthur”) in 1902. He collected his short stories in five books in all. The short story discussed in this unit *The Speckled Band* was published in 1912.

Doyle was a versatile writer having written plays, verse, memoirs and also several historical novels and speculative and supernatural fiction. He died of a heart disease at his home in Sussex on July 7, 1930.

14.3 Reading the text: The Speckled Band

On glancing over my notes of the seventy odd cases in which I have during the last eight years studied the methods of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I find many tragic, some comic, a large number merely strange, but none commonplace; for, working as he did rather for the love of his art than for the acquirement of wealth, he refused to associate himself with any investigation which did not tend towards the unusual, and even the fantastic. Of all these varied cases, however, I cannot recall any which presented more singular features than that which was associated with the well-known Surrey family of the Roylotts of Stoke Moran. . . .

It was early in April in the year ’83 that I woke one morning to find Sherlock Holmes standing, fully dressed, by the side of my bed. He was a late riser, as a rule, and as the clock on the mantelpiece showed me that it was only a quarter-past seven, I blinked up at him in some surprise, and perhaps just a little resentment, for I was myself regular in my habits.

“Very sorry to knock you up, Watson,” said he, “but it’s the common lot this morning. Mrs. Hudson has been knocked up, she retorted upon me, and I on you.”

“What is it, then — a fire?”

“No; a client. It seems that a young lady has arrived in a considerable state of excitement, who insists upon seeing me. She is waiting now in the sitting-room. . . . I rapidly threw on my clothes and was ready in a few minutes to accompany my friend down to the sitting-room. A lady dressed in black and heavily veiled, who had been sitting in the window, rose as we entered.

“Good-morning, madam,” said Holmes cheerily. “My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my intimate friend and associate, Dr. Watson, before whom you can speak as freely as before myself. . . .” “It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror.” She raised her veil as she spoke, and we could see that she was indeed in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and gray, with restless frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal. Her features and figure were those of a woman of thirty, but her hair was shot with premature gray, and her expression was weary and haggard. Sherlock Holmes ran her over with one of his quick, all-comprehensive glances.

“You must not fear,” said he soothingly, bending forward and patting her forearm. “We shall soon set matters right, I have no doubt. My name is Helen Stoner, and I am living with my stepfather, who is the last survivor of one of the oldest Saxon families in England, the Royslotts of Stoke Moran, on the western border of Surrey.”

Holmes nodded his head. “The name is familiar to me,” said he.

“The family was at one time among the richest in England, and the estates extended over the borders into Berkshire in the north, and Hampshire in the west. In the last century, however, four successive heirs were of a dissolute and wasteful disposition, and the family ruin was eventually completed by a gambler in the days of the Regency. Nothing was left save a few acres of ground, and the two-hundred-year-old house, which is itself crushed under a heavy mortgage. The last squire dragged out his existence there, living the horrible life of an aristocratic pauper; but his only son, my stepfather, seeing that he must adapt himself to the new conditions, obtained an advance from a relative, which enabled him to take a medical degree and went out to Calcutta, where, by his professional skill and his force of character, he established a large practice. In a fit of anger, however, caused by some robberies which had been perpetrated in the house, he beat his native butler to death and narrowly escaped a capital sentence. As it was, he suffered a long term of imprisonment and afterwards returned to England a morose and disappointed man.

“When Dr. Royslott was in India he married my mother, Mrs. Stoner, the young widow of Major-General Stoner, of the Bengal Artillery. My sister Julia and I were twins, and we were only two years old at the time of my mother’s re-marriage. She had a considerable sum of money — not less than 1000 pounds a year — and this she bequeathed to Dr. Royslott entirely while we resided with him, with a provision that a certain annual sum should be allowed to each of us in the event of our marriage. Shortly after our return to England my mother died

— she was killed eight years ago in a railway accident near Crewe. Dr. Roylott then abandoned his attempts to establish himself in practice in London and took us to live with him in the old ancestral house at Stoke Moran. The money which my mother had left was enough for all our wants, and there seemed to be no obstacle to our happiness.

“But a terrible change came over our stepfather about this time. Instead of making friends and exchanging visits with our neighbours, who had at first been overjoyed to see a Roylott of Stoke Moran back in the old family seat, he shut himself up in his house and seldom came out save to indulge in ferocious quarrels with whoever might cross his path. Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather’s case it had, I believe, been intensified by his long residence in the tropics. A series of disgraceful brawls took place, two of which ended in the police- court, until at last he became the terror of the village, and the folks would fly at his approach, for he is a man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in his anger doubt. . . .” You can imagine from what I say that my poor sister Julia and I had no great pleasure in our lives. No servant would stay with us, and for a long time we did all the work of the house. She was but thirty at the time of her death, and yet her hair had already begun to whiten, even as mine has.”

“Your sister is dead, then?”

“She died just two years ago, and it is of her death that I wish to speak to you. You can understand that, living the life which I have described, we were little likely to see anyone of our own age and position. We had, however, an aunt, my mother’s maiden sister, Miss Honoria Westphail, who lives near Harrow, and we were occasionally allowed to pay short visits at this lady’s house. Julia went there at Christmas two years ago, and met there a half-pay major of marines, to whom she became engaged. My stepfather learned of the engagement when my sister returned and offered no objection to the marriage; but within a fortnight of the day which had been fixed for the wedding, the terrible event occurred which has deprived me of my only companion.”

Sherlock Holmes had been leaning back in his chair with his eyes closed and his head sunk in a cushion, but he half opened his lids now and glanced across at his visitor.

“Pray be precise as to details,” said he.

“It is easy for me to be so, for every event of that dreadful time is seared into my memory. The manor-house is, as I have already said, very old, and only one wing is now inhabited. The bedrooms in this wing are on the ground floor, the sitting-rooms being in the central block of the buildings. Of these bedrooms the first is Dr. Roylott’s, the second my sister’s, and the third my own. There is no communication between them, but they all open out into the same corridor. Do I make myself plain?”

“Perfectly so.”

“The windows of the three rooms open out upon the lawn. That fatal night Dr. Roylott

had gone to his room early, though we knew that he had not retired to rest, for my sister was troubled by the smell of the strong Indian cigars which it was his custom to smoke. She left her room, therefore, and came into mine, where she sat for some time, chatting about her approaching wedding. At eleven o'clock she rose to leave me, but she paused at the door and looked back.

“Tell me, Helen,” said she, “have you ever heard anyone whistle in the dead of the night?”

“Never,” said I.

“I suppose that you could not possibly whistle, yourself, in your sleep?”

“Certainly not. But why?”

“Because during the last few nights I have always, about three in the morning, heard a low, clear whistle. I am a light sleeper, and it has awakened me. I cannot tell where it came from perhaps from the next room, perhaps from the lawn. I thought that I would just ask you whether you had heard it.”

“No, I have not. It must be those wretched gypsies in the plantation.”

“Very likely. And yet if it were on the lawn, I wonder that you did not hear it also.”

“Ah, but I sleep more heavily than you.”

“Well, it is of no great consequence, at any rate.” She smiled back at me, closed my door, and a few moments later I heard her key turn in the lock.”

“Indeed,” said Holmes. “Was it your custom always to lock yourselves in at night?”

....”I could not sleep that night. A vague feeling of impending misfortune impressed me. My sister and I, you will recollect, were twins, and you know how subtle are the links which bind two souls which are so closely allied. It was a wild night. The wind was howling outside, and the rain was beating and splashing against the windows. Suddenly, amid all the hubbub of the gale, there burst forth the wild scream of a terrified woman. I knew that it was my sister's voice. I sprang from my bed, wrapped a shawl round me, and rushed into the corridor. As I opened my door I seemed to hear a low whistle, such as my sister described, and a few moments later a clanging sound, as if a mass of metal had fallen. As I ran down the passage, my sister's door was unlocked, and revolved slowly upon its hinges. I stared at it horror-stricken, not knowing what was about to issue from it. By the light of the corridor-lamp I saw my sister appear at the opening, her face blanched with terror, her hands groping for help, her whole figure swaying to and fro like that of a drunkard. I ran to her and threw my arms round her, but at that moment her knees seemed to give way and she fell to the ground. She writhed as one who is in terrible pain, and her limbs were dreadfully convulsed. At first I thought that she had not recognized me, but as I bent over her she suddenly shrieked out in a voice which I shall never forget, ‘Oh, my God! Helen! It was the band! The speckled band!’

There was something else which she would fain have said, and she stabbed with her finger into the air in the direction of the doctor's room, but a fresh convulsion seized her and choked her words. I rushed out, calling loudly for my stepfather, and I met him hastening from his room in his dressing-gown. When he reached my sister's side she was unconscious, and though he poured brandy down her throat and sent for medical aid from the village, all efforts were in vain, for she slowly sank and died without having recovered her consciousness. Such was the dreadful end of my beloved sister."

... Holmes shook his head like a man who is far from being satisfied.

"These are very deep waters," said he; "pray go on with your narrative."

"Two years have passed since then, and my life has been until lately lonelier than ever. A month ago, however, a dear friend, whom I have known for many years, has done me the honour to ask my hand in marriage. His name is Armitage — Percy Armitage — the second son of Mr. Armitage, of Crane Water, near Reading. My stepfather has offered no opposition to the match, and we are to be married in the course of the spring. Two days ago some repairs were started in the west wing of the building, and my bedroom wall has been pierced, so that I have had to move into the chamber in which my sister died, and to sleep in the very bed in which she slept. Imagine, then, my thrill of terror when last night, as I lay awake, thinking over her terrible fate, I suddenly heard in the silence of the night the low whistle which had been the herald of her own death. I sprang up and lit the lamp, but nothing was to be seen in the room. I was too shaken to go to bed again, however, so I dressed, and as soon as it was daylight I slipped down, got a dog-cart at the Crown Inn, which is opposite, and drove to Leatherhead, from whence I have come on this morning with the one object of seeing you and asking your advice."

"You have done wisely," said my friend.

..."This is a very deep business," he said at last. "There are a thousand details which I should desire to know before I decide upon our course of action. Yet we have not a moment to lose. If we were to come to Stoke Moran to-day, would it be possible for us to see over these rooms without the knowledge of your stepfather?"

"As it happens, he spoke of coming into town to-day upon some most important business. It is probable that he will be away all day, and that there would be nothing to disturb you. We have a housekeeper now, but she is old and foolish, and I could easily get her out of the way."

"Excellent. You are not averse to this trip, Watson?"

"By no means."

"Then we shall both come.

... It was nearly one o'clock when Sherlock Holmes returned from his excursion. He

held in his hand a sheet of blue paper, scrawled over with notes and figures.

“I have seen the will of the deceased wife,” said he. “To determine its exact meaning I have been obliged to work out the present prices of the investments with which it is concerned. The total income, which at the time of the wife’s death was little short of 1100 pounds, is now, through the fall in agricultural prices, not more than 750 pounds. Each daughter can claim an income of 250 pounds, in case of marriage. It is evident, therefore, that if both girls had married, this beauty would have had a mere pittance, while even one of them would cripple him to a very serious extent. My morning’s work has not been wasted, since it has proved that he has the very strongest motives for standing in the way of anything of the sort. And now, Watson, this is too serious for dawdling, especially as the old man is aware that we are interesting ourselves in his affairs; so if you are ready, we shall call a cab and drive to Waterloo.

.... At Waterloo we were fortunate in catching a train for Leatherhead, where we hired a trap at the station inn and drove for four or five miles through the lovely Surrey laries. It was a perfect day, with a bright sun and a few fleecy clouds in the heavens. The trees and wayside hedges were just throwing out their first green shoots, and the air was full of the pleasant smell of the moist earth. To me at least there was a strange contrast between the sweet promise of the spring and this sinister quest upon which we were engaged. My companion sat in the front of the trap, his arms folded, his hat pulled down over his eyes, and his chin sunk upon his breast, buried in the deepest thought. Suddenly, however, he started, tapped me on the shoulder, and pointed over the meadows

“Look there!” said he.

A heavily timbered park stretched up in a gentle slope, thickening into a grove at the highest point. From amid the branches there jutted out the gray gables and high roof-tree of a very old mansion.

“Stoke Moran?” said he.

“Yes, sir, that be the house of Dr. Grimesby Roylott,” remarked the driver.

“There is some building going on there,” said Holmes; “that is where we are going.”

.... Our client of the morning had hurried forward to meet us with a face which spoke her joy. “I have been waiting so eagerly for you,” she cried, shaking hands with us warmly. “All has turned out splendidly. Dr. Roylott has gone to town, and it is unlikely that he will be back before evening.”.... The building was of gray, lichen-blotched stone, with a high central portion and two curving wings, like the claws of a crab, thrown out on each side. In one of these wings the windows were broken and blocked with wooden boards, while the roof was partly caved in, a picture of ruin. The central portion was in little better repair, but the right-hand block was comparatively modern, and the blinds in the windows, with the blue smoke curling up from the chimneys, showed that this was where the family resided. Some scaffolding had been erected against the end wall, and the stone-work had been broken into, but there were no signs of any

workmen at the moment of our visit. Holmes walked slowly up and down the ill-trimmed lawn and examined with deep attention the outsides of the windows.

“This, I take it, belongs to the room in which you used to sleep, the centre one to your sister’s, and the one next to the main building to Dr. Roylott’s chamber?”

“Exactly so. But I am now sleeping in the middle one.”

“Pending the alterations, as I understand. By the way, there does not seem to be any very pressing need for repairs at that end wall.”

“There were none. I believe that it was an excuse to move me from my room.”

“Ah! that is suggestive. Now, on the other side of this narrow wing runs the corridor from which these three rooms open. There are windows in it, of course?” “Yes, but very small ones. Too narrow for anyone to pass through.”

.... A small side door led into the whitewashed corridor from which the three bedrooms opened. Holmes refused to examine the third chamber, so we passed at once to the second, that in which Miss Stoner was now sleeping, and in which her sister had met with her fate. It was a homely little room, with a low ceiling and a gaping fireplace, after the fashion of old country-houses. A brown chest of drawers stood in one corner, a narrow white counterpane bed in another, and a dressing-table on the left-hand side of the window. These articles, with two small wicker-work chairs, made up all the furniture in the room save for a square of Wilton carpet in the centre. The boards round and the panelling of the walls were of brown, worm-eaten oak, so old and discoloured that it may have dated from the original building of the house. Holmes drew one of the chairs into a corner and sat silent, while his eyes travelled round and round and up and down, taking in every detail of the apartment.

“Where does that bell communicate with?” he asked at last pointing to a thick belt-rope which hung down beside the bed, the tassel actually lying upon the pillow.

“It goes to the housekeeper’s room.”

“It looks newer than the other things?”

“Yes, it was only put there a couple of years ago.”

“Your sister asked for it, I suppose?”

“No, I never heard of her using it. We used always to get what we wanted for ourselves.”

“Indeed, it seemed unnecessary to put so nice a bell-pull there. You will excuse me for a few minutes while I satisfy myself as to this floor.” He threw himself down upon his face with his lens in his hand and crawled swiftly backward and forward, examining minutely the cracks between the boards. Then he did the same with the wood-work with which the chamber was paneled. Finally he walked over to the bed and spent some time in staring at it and in running his eye up and down the wall. Finally he took the bell-rope in his hand and gave it a brisk tug.

“Why, it’s a dummy,” said he.

“Won’t it ring?”

“No, it is not even attached to a wire. This is very interesting. You can see now that it is fastened to a hook just above where the little opening for the ventilator is.”

“How very absurd! I never noticed that before.”

“Very strange!” muttered Holmes, pulling at the rope. “There are one or two very singular points about this room. For example, what a fool a builder must be to open a ventilator into another room, when, with the same trouble, he might have communicated with the outside air!”

... Dr. Grimesby Roylott’s chamber was larger than that of his stepdaughter, but was as plainly furnished. A camp-bed, a small wooden shelf full of books, mostly of a technical character an armchair beside the bed, a plain wooden chair against the wall, a round table, and a large iron safe were the principal things which met the eye. Holmes walked slowly round and examined each and all of them with the keenest interest.

....”What’s in here?” he asked, tapping the safe.

“My stepfather’s business papers.”

“Oh! you have seen inside, then?”

“Only once, some years ago. I remember that it was full of papers.”

“There isn’t a cat in it, for example?”

“No. What a strange idea!”

“Well, look at this!” He took up a small saucer of milk which stood on the top of it.

“No; we don’t keep a cat. But there is a cheetah and a baboon.”

“Ah, yes, of course! Well, a cheetah is just a big cat, and yet a saucer of milk does not go very far in satisfying its wants, I daresay. There is one point which I should wish to determine.” He squatted down in front of the wooden chair and examined the seat of it with the greatest attention

....”In the first place, both my friend and I must spend the night in your room.”

Both Miss Stoner and I gazed at him in astonishment.

“Yes, it must be so. Let me explain. I believe that that is the village inn over there?”

“Yes, that is the Crown.”

“Very good. Your windows would be visible from there?”

“Certainly.”

“You must confine yourself to your room, on pretence of a headache, when your stepfather comes back. Then when you hear him retire for the night, you must open the shutters of your window, undo the hasp, put your lamp there as a signal to us, and then withdraw quietly with everything which you are likely to want into the room which you used to occupy. I have no doubt that, in spite of the repairs, you could manage there for one night.”

“Oh, yes, easily.”

“The rest you will leave in our hands.”

“But what will you do?”

“We shall spend the night in your room, and we shall investigate the cause of this noise which has disturbed you.”

....”Well, there is at least a curious coincidence of dates. A ventilator is made, a cord is hung, and a lady who sleeps in the bed dies. Does not that strike you?”

“I cannot as yet see any connection.”

“Did you observe anything very peculiar about that bed?”

“No.”

“It was clamped to the floor. Did you ever see a bed fastened like that before?”

“I cannot say that I have.”

“The lady could not move her bed. It must always be in the same relative position to the ventilator and to the rope — or so we may call it, since it was clearly never meant for a bell-pull.”

“Holmes,” I cried, “I seem to see dimly what you are hinting at. We are only just in time to prevent some subtle and horrible crime.”....

* * *

About nine o’clock the light among the trees was extinguished, and all was dark in the direction of the Manor House. Two hours passed slowly away, and then, suddenly, just at the stroke of eleven, a single bright light shone out right in front of us.

“That is our signal,” said Holmes, springing to his feet; “it comes from the middle window.”

.... I confess that I felt easier in my mind when, after following Holmes’s example and slipping off my shoes, I found myself inside the bedroom. My companion noiselessly closed the shutters, moved the lamp onto the table, and cast his eyes round the room. All was as we had seen it in the daytime. Then creeping up to me and making a trumpet of his hand, he whispered into my ear again so gently that it was all that I could do to distinguish the words:

“The least sound would be fatal to our plans.”

I nodded to show that I had heard.

“We must sit without light. He would see it through the ventilator.”

I nodded again.

“Do not go asleep; your very life may depend upon it. Have your pistol ready in case we should need it. I will sit on the side of the bed, and you in that chair.”

I took out my revolver and laid it on the corner of the table.

Holmes had brought up a long thin cane, and this he placed upon the bed beside him. By it he laid the box of matches and the stump of a candle. Then he turned down the lamp, and we were left in darkness.... Suddenly there was the momentary gleam of a light up in the direction of the ventilator, which vanished immediately, but was succeeded by a strong smell of burning oil and heated metal. Someone in the next room had lit a dark-lantern. I heard a gentle sound of movement, and then all was silent once more, though the smell grew stronger. For half an hour I sat with straining ears. Then suddenly another sound became audible — a very gentle, soothing sound, like that of a small jet of steam escaping continually from a kettle. The instant that we heard it, Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously with his cane at the bell-pull.

“You see it, Watson?” he yelled. “You see it?”

But I saw nothing. At the moment when Holmes struck the light I heard a low, clear whistle, but the sudden glare flashing into my weary eyes made it impossible for me to tell what it was at which my friend lashed so savagely. I could, however, see that his face was deadly pale and filled with horror and loathing. -

He had ceased to strike and was gazing up at the ventilator when suddenly there broke from the silence of the night the most horrible cry to which I have ever listened. It swelled up louder and louder, a hoarse yell of pain and fear and anger all mingled in the one dreadful shriek. They say that away down in the village, and even in the distant parsonage, that cry raised the sleepers from their beds. It struck cold to our hearts, and I stood gazing at Holmes, and he at me, until the last echoes of it had died away into the silence from which it rose.

“What can it mean?” I gasped.

“It means that it is all over,” Holmes answered. “And perhaps, after all, it is for the best. Take your pistol, and we will enter Dr. Roylott’s room.”

....”The band! the speckled band!” whispered Holmes.

I took a step forward. In an instant his strange headgear began to move, and there reared itself from among his hair the squat diamond-shaped head and puffed neck of a loathsome

serpent.

“It is a swamp adder!” cried Holmes; “the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten. Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another. Let us thrust this creature back into its den, and we can then remove Miss Stoner to some place of shelter and let the county police know what has happened.” As he spoke he drew the dog-whip swiftly from the dead man’s lap, and throwing the noose round the reptile’s neck he drew it from its horrid perch and, carrying it at arm’s length, threw it into the iron safe, which he closed upon it. Such are the true facts of the death of Dr. Grimesby Roylott, of Stoke Moran. It is not necessary that I should prolong a narrative which has already run to too great a length by telling how we broke the sad news to the terrified girl, how we conveyed her by the morning train to the care of her good aunt at Harrow, of how the slow process of official inquiry came to the conclusion that the doctor met his fate while indiscreetly playing with a dangerous pet. The little which I had yet to learn of the case was told me by Sherlock Holmes as we travelled back next day.

“I had,” said he, “come to an entirely erroneous conclusion which shows, my dear Watson, how dangerous it always is to reason from insufficient data. The presence of the gypsies, and the use of the word ‘band,’ which was used by the poor girl, no doubt to explain the appearance which she had caught a hurried glimpse of by the light of her match, were sufficient to put me upon an entirely wrong scent. I can only claim the merit that I instantly reconsidered my position when, however, it became clear to me that whatever danger threatened an occupant of the room could not come either from the window or the door. My attention was speedily drawn, as I have already remarked to you, to this ventilator, and to the bell-rope which hung down to the bed. The discovery that this was a dummy, and that the bed was clamped to the floor, instantly gave rise to the suspicion that the rope was there as a bridge for something passing through the hole and coming to the bed. The idea of a snake instantly occurred to me, and when I coupled it with my knowledge that the doctor was furnished with a supply of creatures from India, I felt that I was probably on the right track. The idea of using a form of poison which could not possibly be discovered by any chemical test was just such a one as would occur to a clever and ruthless man who had had an Eastern training. The rapidity with which such a poison would take effect would also, from his point of view, be an advantage. It would be a sharp-eyed coroner, indeed, who could distinguish the two little dark punctures which would show where the poison fangs had done their work. Then I thought of the whistle. Of course he must recall the snake before the morning light revealed it to the victim. He had trained it, probably by the use of the milk which we saw, to return to him when summoned. He would put it through this ventilator at the hour that he thought best, with the certainty that it would crawl down the rope and land on the bed. It might or might not bite the occupant, perhaps she might escape every night for a week, but sooner or later she must fall a victim.

“I had come to these conclusions before ever I had entered his room. An inspection of his chair showed me that he had been in the habit of standing on it, which of course would be

necessary in order that he should reach the ventilator. The sight of the safe, the saucer of milk, and the loop of whipcord were enough to finally dispel any doubts which may have remained. The metallic clang heard by Miss Stoner was obviously caused by her stepfather hastily closing the door of his safe upon its terrible occupant. Having once made up my mind, you know the steps which I took in order to put the matter to the proof. I heard the creature hiss as I have no doubt that you did also, and I instantly lit the light and attacked it.”

“With the result of driving it through the ventilator.”

“And also with the result of causing it to turn upon its master at the other side. Some of the blows of my cane came home and roused its snakish temper, so that it flew upon the first person it saw. In this way I am no doubt indirectly responsible for Dr. Grimesby Roylott’s death, and I cannot say that it is likely to weigh very heavily upon my conscience.”

14.3.1 Detailed Explanations

I On glancing over my notes the Roylotts of Stoke Moran.

The story *The Speckled Band* is narrated by Dr. Watson, the friend and associate of Sherlock Holmes. The story begins by these lines where Dr. Watson says that he goes through the notes which he has made all these eight years of the cases witnessed by him to study the methods of Holmes. All these cases are very strange. While some are tragic others are comic but all these cases are unique, uncommon and extraordinary. And out of these cases one case which generated lots of enthusiasm for Dr. Watson is the one associated with the family of the Roylott of Stoke Moran.

We come to know that the narrator Dr. Watson has kept a record of all the cases taken up by Holmes. The extraordinary feature of Holmes’ character also gets highlighted as we come to know that he always takes up a case which is unusual not for the sake of earning money but for the love of his art.

II. Each daughter can claim very serious extent.

After the visit and the extraordinary narration of the events by Helen, Holmes goes to find out the details of the will of Helen’s mother. He returns and informs Dr. Watson about the particulars of the will.

According to the will of Helen’s mother each of the daughter could claim an income of 250 pounds from the total income of 750 pounds left. This way it becomes clear that after the marriage of the two sisters Dr. Roylott would be left with very little wealth.

This discovery by Holmes suggests that Dr Roylatt had a very strong motive to kill her step-daughters. As soon as the first one declared her marriage she was murdered mysteriously and now Helen’s life was in danger. Holmes now knows the motive and goes ahead to unravel the means of murder also.

14.3.2 Glossary

Glancing	-	Taking a quick look
Mental piece	-	Shelf above a fireplace.
Resentment	-	Feeling of being insulted
Veil	-	Covering of net or other material to protect or hide a woman's face
Heir	-	Person who has the right of inheritance of wealth and title after the death of the owner
Morose	-	Unsocial, ill-tempered
Fatal	-	Causing death or disaster
Wretched	-	Contemptible, mean person.
Gypsies	-	Members of wandering group, moving about in caravans and making camps from time to time.
Shrieked	-	Uttered in a screamed voice.
Convulsion	-	Violent irregular movements of the body caused by contraction of muscles.
Speckled	-	Marked with speckles or marks and spots distinct in colour on the skin or feathers.
Deceased	-	Person who has recently died.
Dawdling	-	Wasting time.
Jutted out	-	To stand out or be out of line from what is around.
Timbered park	-	Part full of big trees.
Gables	-	Three cornered parts of an outside wall between sloping roofs.
Alteration	-	changes
Pittance	-	Low, insufficient payment or allowance for work etc.
Counterpane	-	Outer covering spread over bed clothes.
Ventilator	-	To sit on one's heels or on the ground with the legs drawn up close to the body.
Astonishment	-	Feeling of great surprise.
Pretence	-	To pretend or make -believe.

Coincidence	-	The condition of two events happening at the same time.
Extinguished	-	Put out the fire
Springing	-	Jumping.
Weary	-	Tired.
Loathsome	-	Causing one to feel shocked.
Serpent	-	Snake, a reptile.
Mingled	-	Mixed.
Dreadful	-	Fearful.
Swamp adder	-	A very poisonous snake, mostly found in India.
Indiscreetly	-	Not carefully or cautiously
Ruthless	-	Cruel, without pity.
Conscience	-	The awareness within oneself of the choice one ought to make between right and wrong.

14.4 Self Assessment Questions

(a) Answer the following in one or two lines each

1. Who is the narrator in the story?

2. Who woke up Watson up one morning?

3. How was the lady dressed?

4. What is the name of the lady?

5. To which family did her stepfather belong?

6. Who made a marriage proposal to Helen?

7. Describe the incident of Julia's death as narrated by Helen.

2. What minute details did Holmes make note of in Julia's room?

14.5 Answers

(a) Answers

1. Dr. Watson is the narrator of the story.
2. Sherlock Holmes woke up Watson one morning.
3. The lady was dressed in black and was heavily veiled.
4. The name of the lady is Helen Stoner.
5. Her Stepfather belonged to one of the oldest Saxon families of England, the Royslotts of Stoke Moran.
6. Percy Armitage made an offer of marriage to Helen.
7. Helen says that on the night of Julia's death the weather was very rough and she suddenly heard a terrified scream of Helen. She immediately left her bed and went towards her sister's room. She heard a low whistle and then a clanging sound of a mass of metal. On reaching Julia's room she saw her appear at the opening. Her face was white with terror and she wanted help. She walked like a drunkard and finally fell

down. She was in terrible pain and convulsed. She then shrieked and said, “Oh, my God! Helen! It was the Band! The Speckled Band !” She showed her finger towards the room of the doctor and then died.

8. Holmes took details of everything in Julia’s room. He saw a thick bell-rope which hung down to the bed. He examined the connections of the bell and observed that it was a dummy and was not even attached to a wire. Moreover it was fastened to a hook at the opening of the ventilator. He also observed that the ventilator opened in the next room instead of outside.

14.6 Let Us Sum up

The reading of *The Speckled Band* by Arthur Conan Doyle introduces you to the unique innovation of crime fiction. Detective Sherlock Holmes and his intelligent and scientific methods of solving cases justifies the fame and glory of this immortal character created by Doyle. The whole story grips its readers right till the end. They are completely awe-struck and amazed by the turn of events of this mysterious short story *The Speckled Band*.

14.7 Review Questions

1. Whom did Dr. Grimesby Roylott marry in India?
2. What did Julia hear at night?
3. What were the last words of Julia?
4. How did Dr. Roylott die?
5. How does Holmes conclude the whole case of the murder of Julia and the role of Dr. Roylott in it?

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1. Short stories of Holmes: A.C. Doyle
 2. Collection of Sherlock Holmes’ stories: A.C. Doyle
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UNIT – 15

SELMA LAGERLOF : *THE RATTRAP*

Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 About the Author
- 15.3 About the Story
- 15.4 Reading the Text
 - 15.4.1 The Story : *The Rattrap* (Text)
 - 15.4.2 Glossary
 - 15.4.3 Summary
- 15.5 Self Assessment Questions
- 15.6 Answers to SAQs
- 15.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.8 Bibliography

15.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to acquaint you with the universal theme of Selma Lagerlof's stories i.e. a belief that the essential goodness in a human being can be awakened through understanding and love – by presenting to you a detailed analysis of one of his most famous stories *The Rattrap*.

15.1 Introduction

This story is set amidst the mines of Sweden, rich in iron ore, which prominently figures in the history and legends of that country. The story relates to the period of Industrial Revolution. During this period many iron workers lost their jobs to machines and many others gained jobs working in factories. The story is told somewhat in the manner of a fairy tale. The main character of the story is one of these iron workers who lost his job to machines.

15.2 About the Author

Selma Lagerlof (1858-1940) was a Swedish writer whose stories have been translated into many languages.

15.3 About the Story

The story is about a traveling rattrap salesman, leading a pathetic life. One day he thinks that life is a big rattrap and if one takes the bait, one is caught. The same night he spends at an elderly man's house who gives him the shelter he needs.

This is where the plot of the story actually begins. The rattrap peddler decides that it would be a good idea to steel the old man's money. At this point he is forced to go into hiding and he gets lost doing it. When he is lost, he tries to stay during the night at a metal working factory where he meets the ironmaster (the owner) who mistakes him for his old friend. The man invites the rattrap peddler to his home for Christmas. The man finds out that he is not his old friend but on the insistence of this daughter, lets him stay. At the end of the story the peddler leaves a note stating that he made a mistake and got caught in his own rattrap. He thanks the daughter for giving him a second chance and helping him out. At this point he returns the money.

The story has philosophical merit. The first being the entire rattrap theory that states that life is one big rattrap. This often does seem to be the case, if you take something you want wrongfully you will usually get trapped in life by your consequences. However, the tales also states that everyone should get another chance. The Rattrap is a story that combines historical and philosophical view.

15.4 Reading the Text

Now read the story carefully.

15.4.1 The Story : *The Rattrap* (Text)

Once upon a time there was a man who went around selling small ratttraps of wire. He made them himself at odd moments. Form the material he got by begging in the stores or at the big farms. But even so, the business was not especially profitable. So he had to resort to both begging and petty thievery to keep body and soul together. Even so, his clothes were in rags, his cheeks were sunken and hunger gleamed in his eyes.

No one can imagine how sad and monotonous life can appear to such a vagabond, who plods along the road, left to his own meditations. But one day this man had fallen into a line of thought, which really seemed to him entertaining. He had naturally been thinking of his ratttraps when suddenly he was struck by the idea that the whole world about him - the whole world with its lands and seas, its cities and villages-was nothing but a big rattrap. It had never existed for any other purpose than to set baits for people. It offered riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing, exactly as the rattrap offered cheese and pork and as soon as anyone let himself be tempted to touch the bait, it closed in on him, and then everything came to an end.

The world had, of courses, never been very kind to him. So it gave him unwonted joy to think ill of it in this way. It became a cherished pastime of his, during many dreary ploddings, to think of people he knew who had let themselves be caught in the dangerous snare and of other who were still circling around the bait.

One dark evening as he was trudging along the road he caught sight of a little gray cottage by the roadside, and he knocked on the door to ask shelter for the night. Nor was he refused. Instead of the sour faces which ordinarily met him, the owner, who was an old man without wife or child, was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness. Immediately he put the porridge pot on the fire and gave him supper; then he carved off such a big slice from his tobacco roll that it was enough both for the stranger's pipe and his own. Finally he got out an old pack of cards and played mjolis with his guest until bedtime.

The old man was just as generous with his confidences as with his porridge and tobacco. The guest was informed at once that in his days of prosperity his host had been a crofter at Ramsjo Ironworks and had worked on the land. Now that he was no longer able to do day labour, it was his cow which supported him. Yes, that bossy was extraordinary. She could give milk for the creamery every day, and last month he had received all thirty kronor in payment.

The stranger must have seemed incredulous, for the old man got up and went to the window, took down a leather pouch which hung on a nail in the very window frame, and picked out three wrinkled ten-kronor bills. These he held up before the eyes of his guest, nodding knowingly, and then stuffed them back into the pouch.

The next day both men got up in good season. The crofter was in a hurry to milk his cow, and the other man probably thought he should not stay in bed when the head of the house had gotten up. They left the cottage at the same time. The crofter locked the door and put the key in his pocket. The man with the rattraps said good bye and thank you, and thereupon each went his own way.

But half an hour later the rattrap peddler stood again before the door. He did not try to get in, however. He only went up to the window, smashed a pane, stuck in his hand, and got hold of the pouch with the thirty kronor. He took the money and thrust it into his own pocket. Then he hung the leather pouch very carefully back in its place and went away.

As he walked along with the money in his pocket he felt quite pleased with his smartness. He realised, of course that at first he dared not continue on the public highway, but must turn off the road, into the woods. During the first hours this caused him no difficulty. Later in the day it became worse, for it was a big and confusing forest which he had gotten into. He tried, to be sure, to walk in a definite direction, but the paths twisted back and forth so strangely! He walked and walked without coming to the end of the wood, and finally he realized that he had only been walking around in the same part of the forest.. All at once he recalled his thoughts about the world and the rattrap. Now his own turn had come. He had let himself be fooled by

a bait and had been caught. The whole forest, with its trunks and branches, its thickets and fallen logs, closed in upon him like an impenetrable prison from which he could never escape.

It was late in December, Darkness was already descending over the forest. This increased the danger, and increased also his gloom and despair. Finally he saw no way out, and he sank down on the ground, tired to death, thinking that his last moments had come. But just as he laid his head on the ground, he heard a sound—a hard regular thumping. There was no doubt as to what that was. He raised himself. “There are the hammer strokes from an iron mill”, he thought. “There must be people nearby”. He summoned all his strength, got up, and staggered in the direction of the sound.

The Ramsjö Ironworks, which are now closed down were, not so long ago, a large plant, with smelter, rolling mill and forge. In the summertime long lines of heavily loaded barges and scows slid down the canal, which led to a large inland lake, and in the wintertime the roads near the mill were black from all the coal dust which sifted down from the big charcoal crates.

During one of the long dark evenings just before Christmas, the master Smith and his helper sat in the dark forge near the furnace waiting for the pig iron, which had been put in the fire, to be ready to put on the anvil. Every now and then one of them got up to stir the glowing mass with a long iron bar, returning in a few moments, dripping with perspiration, though, as was the custom, he wore nothing but a long shirt and a pair of the wooden shoes.

All the time there were many sounds to be heard in the forge. The big bellows groaned and the burning coal cracked. The fire boy shovelled charcoal into the maw of the furnace with a great deal of clatter. Outside roared the waterfall, and a sharp north wind whipped the rain against the brick-tiled roof.

It was probably on account of all this noise that the blacksmith did not notice that man had opened the gate and entered the forge, until he stood close up to the furnace.

Surely it was nothing unusual for poor vagabonds without any better shelter for the night to be attracted to the forge by the glow of light which escaped through the sooty panes, and to come in to warm themselves in front of the fire. The blacksmiths glanced only casually and indifferently at the intruder. He looked the way people of his type usually did, with a long beard, dirty, ragged, and with a bunch of rattraps dangling on his chest.

He asked permission to stay and the master blacksmith nodded a haughty consent without honoring him with a single word.

The tramp did not say anything, either. He had not come here to talk but only to warm himself and sleep.

In those days the Ramsjö iron mill was owned by a very prominent ironmaster, whose greatest ambition was to ship out good iron to the market. He watched both night and day to see that the work was done as well as possible and at this very moment he came into the forge on one of his nightly rounds of inspection.

Naturally the first thing he saw was the tall ragamuffin who had eased his way so close to the furnace that steam rose from his wet rags. The ironmaster did not follow the example of the blacksmiths, who had hardly deigned to look at the stranger. He walked close up to him, looked him over very carefully, then tore off his slouch hat to get a better view of his face.

“But of course it is you, Nils Olof!” he said “How you do look!”

The man with the rattraps has never before seen the ironmaster at Ramsjö and did not even know what his name was. But it occurred to him that if the fine gentleman though he was an old acquaintance, he might perhaps throw him a couple of kronor. Therefore he did not want to undeceive him all at once.

“Yes, God knows things have gone downhill with me” he said.

“You should not have resigned from the regiment” said the ironmaster. “That was the mistake. If only I had still been in the service at the time, it never would have happened well, now of course you will come home with me.”

To go along up to the manor house and be received by the owner like an old regimental comrade—that however did not please the tramp.

“No, I couldn’t think of it! He said, looking quite alarmed.

He thought of the thirty kronor. To go up to the manor house would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion’s den. He only wanted a chance to sleep here in the forge and then sneak away as inconspicuously as possible.

The ironmaster assumed that he felt embarrassed because of his miserable clothing.

“Please don’t think that I have such a fine home that you cannot show yourself there”, He said “Elizabeth is dead, as you may already have heard. My boys are abroad, and there is no one at home except my oldest daughter and myself. We were just saying that it was too bad we didn’t have any company for Christmas. Now come along with me and help us make the Christmas food disappear a little faster.”

But the stranger said no, and no, and again no, and the ironmaster saw that he must give in.

“It looks as though captain von Stahle preferred to stay with you tonight, Stjernstrom” he said to the master blacksmith, and turned on his heel.

But he laughed to himself as he went away, and the blacksmith who knew him, understood very well that he had not said his last word.

It was not more than half an hour before they heard the sound of carriage wheels outside the forge, and a new guest came in, but this time it was not the ironmaster. He had sent his daughter, apparently hoping that she would have better power of persuasion than he himself.

She entered followed by a valet, carrying on his arm a big fur coat. She was not all tall pretty, but seemed modest and quite shy. In the forge everything was just as it had been earlier in the evening. The master blacksmith and his apprentice still sat on their bench and iron and charcoal still glowed in the furnace. The stranger had stretched himself out on the floor and lay with a piece of pig iron under his head and his hat pulled down over his eyes. As soon as the young girl caught sight of him, she went up and lifted his hat. The man was evidently used to sleeping with one eye open. He jumped up abruptly and seemed to be quite frightened.

“My name is Edla Willmansson,” said the young girl “My father came home and said that you wanted to sleep here in the forge tonight and then I asked permission to come and bring you home to us. I am so sorry, captain that you are having such a hard time.”

She looked at him compassionately, with her heavy eyes, and then she noticed that the man was afraid. “Either he has stolen something or else he has escaped from jail” she thought, and added quickly, “You may be sure, captain, that you will be allowed to leave us just as freely as you came. Only please stay with us over Christmas Eve.”

She said this in such a friendly manner that the rattrap peddler must have felt confidence in her.

“It would never have occurred to me that you would bother with me yourself, miss. He said, “I will come at once.”

He accepted the fur coat, which the valet handed him with a deep bow, threw it over his rages, and followed the young lady but to the carriage, without granting the astonished blacksmiths so much as a glance.

But while he was riding up to the manor house he had evil forebodings.

“Why the devil did I take that fellow’s money?” he thought. “Now I am sitting in the trap and will never get out of it.”

The next day was Christmas Eve, and when the ironmaster came into the dining room for breakfast he probably thought with satisfaction of his old regimental comrade whom he had run across so unexpectedly.

“First of all we must see to it that he gets a little flesh on his bones,” he said to his daughter, who was busy at the table. “And then we must see that he gets something else to do than to run around the country selling rattraps.”

“It is queer that things have gone downhill with him as badly as that,” said the daughter, “Last night I did not think there was anything about him to show that he had once been an educated man.”

“You must have patience, my little girl,” said the father “As soon as he gets clean and dressed up, you will see something different. Last night he was naturally embarrassed. The tramp manners will fall away from him with the tramp clothes.

Just as he said this the door opened and the stranger entered. Yes, now he was truly clean and well dressed. The valet had bathed him, cut his hair, and shaved him. Moreover he was dressed in a good-looking suit of clothes which belonged to the ironmaster. He wore a white shirt and a starched collar and whole shoes.

But although his guest was not so well groomed, the ironmaster did not seem pleased. He looked at him with puckered brow, and it was easy to understand that when he had seen the strange fellow in the uncertain reflection from the furnace he might have made a mistake, but that now, when he stood there in broad daylight, it was impossible to mistake him for an old acquaintance.

“What does this mean?” he thundered.

The stranger made no attempt to dissimulate. He saw at once that the splendour had come to an end.

“It is not my fault, sir, he said, “I never pretended to be anything but a poor trader, and I pleased and begged to be allowed to stay in the forge. But no harm has been done. At worst I can put on my rags again and go away.”

“Well,” Said the ironmaster, hesitating a little, “It was not quite honest, either. You must admit that, and I should not be surprised if the sheriff would like to have something to say in the matter.

The tramp took a step forward and struck the table with his fist.

“Now I am going to tell you, Mr. Ironmaster, how things are,” he said. “This whole world is nothing but a big rattrap. All the good things that are offered to you are nothing but cheese rinds and bits of pork, set out to drag a poor fellow into trouble. And if the sheriff comes now and locks me up for this, then you, Mr. Ironmaster, must remember that a day may come when you yourself may want to get a big piece of pork, and then you will get caught in the trap.”

The ironmaster began to laugh.

“That was not so badly said, my good fellow. Perhaps we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve. But now get out of here as fast as you can.”

But just as the man was opening the door, the daughter said, “I think he ought to stay with us today. I don’t want him to go.” And with that she went and closed the door.

“What in the world are you doing?” said the father.

The daughter stood there quite embarrassed and hardly knew what to answer. That morning she had felt so happy when she thought how homelike and Christmassy she was going to make things for the poor hungry wretch. She could not get away from the idea all at once, and that was why she had interceded for the vagabond.

“I am thinking of this stranger here,” said the young girl.” He walks and walks the whole year long, and there is probably not a single place in the whole country where he is welcome and can feel at home. Wherever he turns he is chased away. Always he is afraid of being arrested and cross-examined. I should like to have him enjoy a day of peace with us here-just one in the whole year.”

The ironmaster mumbled something in his beard. He could not bring himself to oppose her.

“It was all a mistake, of course,” she continued. “But anyway I don’t think we ought to chase away a human being whom we have asked to come here, and to whom we have promised Christmas cheer.”

“You do preach worse than a parson,” said the ironmaster. “ I only hope you won’t have to regret this.”

The young girl took the stranger by the hand and led him up to the table.

“Now sit down and eat,” She said for she could see that her father had given in.

The man with the rattraps said not a word; he only sat down and helped himself to the food. Time after time he looked at the young girl who had interceded for him. Why had she done it? What could the crazy idea be?

After that, Christmas Eve at Ramsjo passed just as it always had. The stranger did not cause any trouble because he did nothing but sleep. The whole forenoon he lay on the sofa in one of the guest rooms and slept at one stretch. At noon they woke him up so that he could have his share of the good Christmas fare, but after that he slept again. It seemed as though for many years he had not been able to sleep as quietly and safely as here at Ramsjo”

In the evening, when the Christmas tree was lighted they woke him up again, and he stood for a while in the drawing room, blinking as though the candlelight hurt him but after that he disappeared again. Two hours later he was aroused once more. He then had to go down into the dining room and eat the Christmas fish and porridge.

As soon as they got up from the table he went around to each one present and said thank you and good night., but when he came to the young girl she gave him to understand that it was her father’s intention that the suit which he wore was to be a Christmas present-he did not have to return it; and if he wanted to spend next Christmas Eve in a place where he could rest in peace, and be sure that no evil would befall him, he would be welcomed back again.

The man with the rattraps did not answer anything to this . He only stared at the young girl in boundless amazement.

The next morning the ironmaster and his daughter got up in good season to go to the early Christmas service. Their guest was still asleep, and they did not disturb him.

When, at about ten o'clock, they drove back from the church, the young girl sat and hung her head even more dejectedly than usual. At church she had learned that one of the old crofters of the ironworks had been robbed by a man who went around selling ratttraps.

“Yes, that was a fine fellow you let into the house,” said her father. “I only wonder how many silver spoons are left in the cupboard by this time”.

The wagon had hardly stopped at the front steps when the ironmaster asked the valet whether the stranger was still there. He added that he had heard at church that the man was a thief. The valet answered that the fellow had gone and that he had not taken anything with him at all. On the contrary, he had left behind a little package which Miss Willmansson was to be kind enough to accept as a Christmas present.

The young girl opened the package, which was so badly done up that the contents came into view at once. She gave a little cry of joy. She found a small ratttrap, and in it lay three wrinkled ten kronor notes. But that was not all. In the ratttrap lay also a letter written in large, jagged characters.

“Honoured and noble Miss, “Since you have been so nice to me all day long, as if I was a captain, I want to be nice to you. In return, as if I was a real captain- for I do not want you to be embarrassed at this Christmas season by a thief; but you can give back the money to the old man on the roadside, who has the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers.

“The ratttrap is a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in this world's ratttrap if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself.

“Written with friendship

And high regard

Captain von Stahle.”

15.4.2 Glossary

Plods along the road : walks with slow and heavy footsteps.

Pork : flesh of a pig used as food.

bait : food; something that allures or tempts

trudging : walking wearily

bossy : in the habit of giving orders

crofter : a person who rents or owns a small farm

sifted : put; separated by putting through a sieve

barges	:	boats used for carrying goods and people
scows	:	boats used for carrying sand, rock, rubbish
bellows	:	(Here) apparatus for blowing air into fire
shovelled	:	lifted, moved
clatter	:	resounding noise
intruder	:	person who intrudes
ragamuffin	:	dirty, disreputable person
slouch	:	stand, sit or move in a lazy, tired way
tramp	:	(Here) the person who goes from place to place and does no regular work.
Manor house	:	Area of land with a principal residence
Inconspicuously	:	trying to avoid attention
valet	:	manservant
dissimulate	:	speak or behave so as to hide one's feelings
forebodings	:	bad omens
interceded	:	pleaded
mumbled	:	spoke one's words
blinking	:	shutting and opening the eyes quickly
wagon	:	four wheeled vehicle for carrying goods
keep body and soul together	:	to survive
impenetrable prison	:	prison that none can get into
eased his way	:	made himself comfortable
things have gone down hill	:	the situation has worsened
peddler	:	person who travels about selling small articles
unwonted	:	unusual happiness
nodded a haughty consent	:	indicated his permission arrogantly.

15.4.3 Summary

Once upon a time there was a man who earned his livelihood by selling rattraps of

wire. Being poor, he got the material by begging. He struggled but he had no choice but resort to begging and at times to petty stealing to survive. Despite this, he did not have the basic necessities of life-neither food nor clothes. It is difficult to fathom how terrible life can be for such a person.

One day he felt that the whole world was nothing but a big rattrap. It offered temptations to people such as riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing-just as the rattrap offered cheese and pork. The moment a person tried to reach out to the bait, it shut in on him, and then everything came to an end. Being a sad and a discontented man, it gave him pleasure to think ill of the world. He loved thinking of people he knew, some of them were caught in the dangerous trap, and of other who were likely to be trapped soon.

One dark evening as he was walking wearily along the road he saw a little cottage by the roadside. He knocked on the door to ask for shelter for the night. He was permitted. The owner, who was an old man without wife or child, was happy to have a visitor to share his loneliness. Without delay he gave him dinner and then a generous slice from his tobacco roll. He got out an old pack of cards and played with his guest until bedtime.

The old man was not only generous but also trusting. The guest talked about days of richness when he was a crofter at Ramsjo Ironworks. Now that he was old and unable to do any labour, it was his cow that supported him. He sold milk to the creamery. The previous month he had earned thirty kronor. The guest looked in disbelief, so the old man got up and went to the window, took down a leather pouch and showed him three ten-kronor bills (currency notes) and then put them back into the pouch.

The next morning, the crofter was in a hurry to milk his cow, and the guest thought he should not stay in bed when the owner of the house had arisen. They left the cottage at the same time. The crofter locked the door and put the key in his pocket. The man with the rattraps thanked him and said goodbye and both went their own ways. But, half an hour later, the rattrap peddler returned. He went up to the window, broke a pane, reached for the pouch and took away the thirty kronor. He then put back the leather pouch and walked away.

After having taken the money, the man felt quite happy with his smartness fearing that he might be caught, he turned into the woods. The first hours he walked ahead without difficulty but later in the day he was confused. He did not know which direction to take. He continued walking but after a long time realized that he had been walking around in the same part of the forest. Once again he thought about the world being the rattrap and this time he felt that he was trapped. His bait had been the thirty kronor. He felt that the forest was like a prison forest which he could never escape.

It was late in December and it had started becoming dark soon. This increased the danger as well as his gloom and hopelessness. He sat down on the ground and felt that his end was near. But, just as he put his head on the ground, he heard a thumping sound of the hammer from the iron mill. With all his strength, he got up and moved unsteadily in the direction of the

sound.

It was the Ramsjo Ironworks. It was once a large plant that had shut down. In the summertime, long lines of loaded boats were seen moving down the canal; and in the winter-time, the roads near the mill were black from all the coal dust which scattered around from the big charcoal vehicles.

On this dark evening, just before Christmas, the master iron worker and his helper sat near the furnace waiting for the pig iron which had been put into the fire to be ready to hammer it into shape. They were dripping with perspiration and they wore nothing but a long shirt and a pair of wooden shoes.

In the forge could be heard the sounds of the cracking of coal, the clatter of the shovel as the fire boy pushed charcoal into the furnace, the roaring of the waterfall outside and the sound of the sharp wind whipping the rain against the brick-tiled roof. Because of all this noise the blacksmith did not notice the peddler open the gate and enter. He was noticed only when he came and stood close to the furnace.

The blacksmiths glanced casually at the man and looked away because poor, shabby, homeless wanderers like him often strolled in looking for shelter. He looked like any one of them, with a long beard, dirty, ragged, and with a bunch of rattrops dangling on his chest. When he asked for permission to stay, the master blacksmith nodded his permission arrogantly, without a word. The peddler, too, did not say anything as he had not come there to talk but only to warm himself and sleep.

The Ramsjo iron mill was owned by a very well-known ironmaster, whose greatest desire was to ship out good iron to the market. It was at that moment that he entered the forge for inspection. The first thing he noticed was the peddler but unlike the blacksmiths, who had barely noticed him, he walked up to him, and observed him very carefully.

Suddenly, much to the rattrap peddler's surprise, the ironmaster addressed him as Nils Olof. Although the man with the rattrops had never seen him before, he thought that it was better to let him believe that he was an old acquaintance. This way he had a chance of the ironmaster giving him a couple of kronor. Therefore, hoping to get some dole, he said that he was not doing well in life.

This ironmaster looking at his pathetic condition said that he should not have resigned from the regiment. He also invited him home. The rattrap peddler was not comfortable with the idea of going to the manor house and being received by the owner like an old regimental friend. So he declined the invitation. He thought of the thirty kronor that he had stolen.

The ironmaster insisted on taking him home. He said that he didn't think that he had such a fine home that the peddler could not show himself there. His wife was dead and his sons were abroad. It was only his oldest daughter and he at home. It would be good to have company for Christmas. The peddler tried to refuse many times but the ironmaster was ada-

mant on taking him home. So the peddler had no choice. The ironmaster told the master blacksmith that it seemed that Captain Von Stahle preferred to stay with them. So saying, he laughed to himself as he went away.

Just about half an hour later the ironmaster's daughter came in a carriage. Her father, the ironmaster, had sent her to persuade the rattrap peddler to come home. She was followed by an attendant who was carrying, on his arm, a big fur coat. She was humble and shy. She introduced herself as Edla Willmansson. She said that when she got to know that he intended to sleep in the forge, she had taken permission from her father to take him home.

She noticed that the man was afraid. She thought he had either stolen something or else had escaped from jail. However, she once again requested that he stay with them over Christmas Eve. She was so friendly that the rattrap peddler agreed. He accepted the fur coat, that the attendant handed him, and wore it over his rags and followed the lady to the carriage. But on the way to the manor house he had a feeling that something bad was going to happen. He cursed himself for stealing the thirty kronor.

The next day was Christmas Eve. The ironmaster came into the dining room for breakfast and told his daughter that they ought to ensure that his old friend got a good meal.

The daughter expressed her surprise about his miserable plight. She felt that there was nothing about him to show that he had once been an educated man. But the father, the ironmaster, tried to put her apprehensions to rest saying that as soon as he bathed and changed into better clothes, he would look different. Just then the door opened and the peddler entered. He looked different now - clean and well dressed.

But although his guest then was well groomed, the ironmaster did not seem pleased. He realized that the peddler was not the friend he had mistaken him for. He was angry but the peddler said that it was not his fault; he had not pretended to be anything but a poor trader. He had insisted on staying in the forge. He was ready to put on his rags again and go away.

However, the ironmaster felt that he was not quite honest. He wanted to take the matter to the sheriff. But the tramp became agitated. He said that this whole world was nothing but a big rattrap. All the good things that were offered were a bait set to put one into trouble. He added that if the sheriff imprisoned him then the ironmaster must remember that one day he, too, would be caught in the trap. The ironmaster told him to leave the house. But just as the man opened the door, the daughter said that he ought to stay with them for a day.

She said that a tramp like him walked the whole year long without having a single place in the country where he was welcome. He was always chased away. He lived under the fear of being arrested and cross-examined. Hence she wanted that he enjoy a day of peace with them. The ironmaster could not oppose her. He consented but hoped that she would not have to regret her decision.

The young girl, then led him up to the table to eat. The rattrap peddler did not say a

word but ate quietly. He was very confused as to why the young girl had pleaded for him. After that, on Christmas Eve the peddler did not cause any trouble because he did nothing but sleep. He slept through the morning, got up to have his share of the good Christmas fare, and after that he slept again. He slept as if he had never slept as quietly and safely.

In the evening, when the Christmas tree was lighted, they woke him up again, and he stood for a while but after that he slept again. He was woken two hours later for the Christmas dinner. He then went around each one present and thanked them and wished them a good night. The young girl told him that the suit which he wore was to be a Christmas present from her father. And he was welcome to spend the next Christmas Eve with them again. The peddler did not answer but was very surprised.

The next morning ironmaster and his daughter got up early to go for Christmas service. They did not disturb the guest who was still asleep. On their way back, about ten O'clock, the young girl looked even more unhappy than usual. At church they had learned about the old crofter who had been robbed by a rattrap peddler. Her father wondered how many of their things would be stolen by the time they reached home.

Reaching home, the ironmaster asked the attendant whether the stranger was still there. He added that he had learnt at the church that the man was a thief. The attendant answered that the fellow had gone but he had not taken anything with him at all. On the contrary he had left behind a little package as a Christmas present for Miss Willmansson.

The young girl opened the package at once and became extremely happy. In it lay a small rattrap with three wrinkled ten kronor notes. In the rattrap lay also a letter addressed to her.

It read that "since she had been so nice to him all day long, he did not want her to be embarrassed this Christmas season by a thief. He wanted her to return the money to the old man on the roadside who hung a money pouch on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers.

The rattrap was a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in the world's rattrap if he had not been treated like a captain by the lady. She helped him get power to clear himself". The letter was signed "Captain von Stahle".

15.5 Self Assessment Questions

1. From where did the peddler get the idea of the world being a rattrap ?
2. Why was he amused by this idea ?
3. Did the peddler expect the kind of hospitality that he received from the crofter ?
4. Why was the crofter so talkative and friendly with the peddler ?
5. Why did he show the thirty kronor to the peddler ?

6. Did the peddler respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter ?
7. What made the peddler think that he had indeed fallen into a rattrap?
8. Why did the ironmaster speak kindly to the peddler and invite him home?
9. Why did the peddler decline the invitation ?
10. What made the peddler accept Edla Willmansson's invitation?

15.6 Answers to SAQs

1. The poor rattrap peddler struggled for his existence. He could not make both ends meet so he had to resort to both begging and petty thefts. Despite this, his condition was deplorable. Thinking of his miserable plight and his job, as he plodded on, he was struck by the idea that the whole world about him was nothing but a big rattrap. It set baits for people in the form of riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing, just as the rattrap offered cheese and pork. Similarly, the moment one was tempted it closed in on one, and then everything came to an end.
2. The world had never been kind to him, so it gave him great joy to think ill of it this way. Therefore it became a treasured pastime for him to think of people he knew who had let themselves be caught in the dangerous trap, and of others who were still moving around the bait, ready to be trapped.
3. When the peddler reached the little gray cottage by the roadside, he knocked at the door to ask for shelter for the night. He was surprised because, instead of the sour faces which ordinarily met him, this time the owner, an old man, was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness.
4. The crofter was an old man without wife or child. He was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness. So he welcomed the peddler. The old man was just as generous with his confidences as with his porridge and tobacco.
5. The old man was generous with his confidences. He told the peddler that because he was no longer able to do day labour, it was his cow that supported him. Since it was strange and the peddler must have looked in disbelief, the old man showed him the thirty kronor that he had received as payment to prove his point.
6. No, the peddler did not respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter because half an hour later, he went up to the window, smashed a pane and got hold of the pouch with the thirty kronor. He took the money and thrust it into his own pocket and went away.
7. At first, the peddler was pleased with the money in his pocket but when he turned into the woods and the path twisted back and forth so strangely that he walked without coming to the end of the wood, he realised that he had been walking around in the

same part of the forest. All at once, he recalled his thoughts about the world and the rattrap. He, then, felt that his own turn had come. He had been fooled by a bait of thirty kronor and had been caught.

8. The owner of Ramsjo iron mill came into the forge on one of his night rounds of inspection and saw the peddler. The ironmaster walked close up to him, looked him over very carefully and mistook him for his friend, Nils Olof, and invited him home.
9. The peddler did not give out his identity because he thought that the ironmaster might give him a couple of kronor. But, to go along up to the manor house and be received as his friend did not please the peddler. He was guilty of stealing the thirty kronor. He felt going up to the manor house would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion's den. He only wanted a chance to sleep in the forge and then sneak away quietly.
10. When Edla Willmanson invited him, she looked at him compassionately with her heavy eyes. She also assured him that he would be allowed to leave just as freely as he came. She requested him to stay with them over Christmas Eve. She said this in such a friendly manner that the rattrap peddler felt reassured.

15.7 Let Us Sum Up

The story 'Rattrap' is about the trap of material benefit that most human beings are prone to fall into. The story is also suggestive of the human tendency to redeem oneself from dishonest ways.

15.8 Review Questions

1. What doubts did Edla have about the peddler?
2. When did the ironmaster realize his mistake?
3. What did the peddler say in his defence when it was clear that he was not the person the ironmaster had thought he was ?
4. Why did Edla still entertain the peddler even after she knew the truth about him ?
5. Why was Edla happy to see the gift left by the peddler ?
6. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle ?

15.9 Bibliography

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UNIT – 16

MAXIM GORKY : *THE MOTHER OF A TRAITOR*

Structure

- 16.0 Objectives
- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 About the Author
- 16.3 Reading the Story
 - 16.3.1 The Story : *The Mother of a Traitor* (Text)
 - 16.3.2 Glossary
 - 16.3.3 Summary
- 16.4 Some General Observations
 - 16.4.1 Gorky's Didactic Aim
 - 16.4.2 Nature Images and Vain Human Glory
- 16.5 Activities
- 16.6 Self Assessment Questions
- 16.7 Answers to SAQs
- 16.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 16.9 Review Questions
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16.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to convey information and stimulate your interest in English Short story. Besides, we intend to discuss in detail a short story entitled '*The Mother of a Traitor*' written by Maxim Gorky, the great figure in modern Russian literature.

16.1 Introduction

The Short Story is a favourite form of present day writing. Many novelists, like Arnold Bennett and Hugh Walpole, have treated it as a sideline, and Elizabeth Bowen has described it as the obvious medium for the unsuccessful poet, but these are writers who are chiefly famous for their contributions to the short story. From the time of Stevenson, the influ-

ence of the short story has been international. Its popularity has grown and spread to and from England, France, Russia and America. As a youth Kipling achieved world-wide success with his tales from India. The French author, Guy de Maupassant, had a whole troop of followers in every country. The Russian Chekhov and Gorky came to have considerable influence upon short story writers between 1900 and 1920, while the Americans, Earnest Hemingway and William Saroyan have been widely imitated. H.G. Wells widened the field of shorty story by applying his imagination to scientific discovery. Arthur Conan Doyle also made a significant contribution to the field through his world famous Sherlock Holmes stories. Since 1900 John Galsworthy, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and James Joyce have all written memorable short stories in addition to their work in the realm of the Novel.

Therefore, to provide you a wide spectrum of the best that is available in the field of short story, we have chosen Maxim Gorky's '*The Mother of a Traitor*' for detailed analysis. The section that follows deals with the theme and literary aspects of the aforesaid story.

16.2 About the Author

Maxim Gorky was the pen-name of Alexei – Maximovich Peshkov, the great central figure in modern Russian literature. He was born in 1868 in an artisan family in Nizhny Novgorod, a city now renamed after him. After a miserable childhood in his grandfather's house – his father had died when he was very young – Gorky wandered about like a tramp for several years, enduring misery and poverty, but mixing with the downtrodden who later peopled his stories and novels.

Gorky began writing in 1892. His first works were mainly romantic stories; he later graduated to Chekovian-type stories of dreary lives and useless intellectuals. With his increasing involvement in Bolshevism and the Revolution, his novels became artistic exposures of the evils of capitalistic society. After the Revolution, Gorky had immense influence on the progress of literature and the arts in Soviet Russia. In the last years of his life he was appointed Head of the Soviet Writers' Union and founded the School of Soviet Realism.

Among the best-known of Gorky's works are : *The Mother*, the first comprehensive portrait of the Russian socialist movement, *Childhood*, *Among the People* and *My Unwrsities*, the autobiographical trilogy, and *The Lower Depths*, a play which was a great success in Russia and was produced all over Europe. He died in 1936.

16.3 Reading the Story

Now read the story.

16.3.1 The Story : *The Mother of a Traitor* (Text)

One can talk endlessly about Mothers. For several weeks enemy hosts had surrounded the city in tight ring of steel; by night fires were lit and the flames peered through the inky

blackness at the walls of the city like a myriad red eyes – they blazed malevolently, and their menacing glare evoked gloomy thoughts within the beleaguered city.

From the walls they saw the enemy noose draw tighter; saw the dark shadows hovering about the fires, and heard the neighing of well-fed horses, the clanging of weapons, the loud laughter and singing of man confident of victory – and what can be more jarring to the ear than the songs and laughter of the enemy?

The enemy had thrown corpses into all the streams that fed water to the city, they had burned down the vineyard around the walls, trampled the fields, cut down the orchards – the city was now exposed on all sides, and nearly every day the cannon and muskets of the enemy showered it with lead and iron.

Detachments of war-weary, half-starved soldiers trooped sullenly through the narrow streets of the city; from the windows of houses issued the groans of the wounded, the cries of the delirious, the prayers of women and the wailing of children. People spoke in whispers, breaking off in the middle of a sentence, tensely alert; was not that the enemy advancing ?

Worst of all were the nights; in the nocturnal stillness the groans and cries were more distinctly audible; black shadows crept stealthily from the gorges of the distant mountains towards the half-demolished walls, hiding the enemy camp from view, and over the black ridges of the mountains rose the moon like a lost shield dented by sword blows.

And the people in the city, despairing of succour, worn out by toil and hunger, their hope of salvation waning from day to day, the people in the city stared in horror at the moon, at the sharp-toothed ridges of the camp of the enemy. Everything spoke to them of death, and not a star was there in the sky to give them consolation.

They were afraid to light the lamps in the houses, and a heavy darkness enveloped the streets, and in this darkness, like a fish stirring in the depths of a river, a woman draped from head to foot in a black cloak moved soundlessly.

When they saw her, people whispered to one another :

‘Is it she ?’

‘It is she !’

And they withdrew into the niches under archways, or hurried past her with lowered heads. The patrol chiefs warned her sternly :

‘Abroad again, Monna Marianna? Take care, you may be killed and nobody will bother to search for the culprit...’

She drew herself up and stood waiting, but the patrols passed by, either not daring or else scorning to raise their hand against her; the armed men avoided her like a corpse and, left alone in the darkness, she continued her solitary wandering from street to street, soundless

and black like the incarnation of the city's misfortune, while all about her, as though pursuing her, melancholy sounds issued from the night; the groans, cries, prayers and the sullen murmur of soldiers who had lost all hope of victory.

A citizen and a mother, she thought of her son and her country : for at the head of the men who were destroying her town was her son, her gay, handsome, heartless son. Yet, not so long ago she had looked upon him with pride regarding him as her precious gift to her, country, a beneficent force she had brought forth to aid the people of the city where she herself had been born and reared. Her heart was bound by hundreds of invisible threads to these ancient stones with which her forefathers had built their homes and raised the walls of the city; to the soil wherein lay buried the bones of her kinsfolk, to the legends, the songs and the hopes of the people. And now this heart had lost a loved one and it wept. She weighed in her heart as on scales her love for her son and her love for her native city, and she could not tell which weighed the more.

And so she wandered thus by night through the streets, and many, failing to recognize her, drew back in fear, that was so near to all of them, and when they did recognize her, they turned silently away from the mother of a traitor.

But one day in a remote corner by the city walls she saw another woman, kneeling beside a corpse, so still that she seemed part of the earth. The woman was praying, her grief-stricken face upturned to the star. And on the wall overhead the sentries spoke in low tones, their weapons grating against the stone.

The traitor's mother asked :

'Your husband?'

'No.'

'Your brother?'

'My son, My husband was killed thirteen days ago. My son today'.

And rising from her knees, the mother of the slain man said humbly:

'The Madonna sees all and knows all, and I am grateful to her!'

'For what?' asked the first, and the other replied :

'Now that he has died honourably fighting for his country I can say that I feared for him : he was light-hearted, too fond of revelry and I feared that he might betray his city, as did the son of Marianna, the enemy of God and Man, the leader of our foes, may he be so cursed and the womb that bore him!'

Marianna covered her face and went on her way. The next morning she appeared before the city's defenders and said:

‘My son has come to be your enemy. Either kill me or open the gates that I may go to him. . . .’

They replied :

‘You are a human being, and your country must be precious to you; your son is as much an enemy to you as to each one of us’.

‘I am his mother. I love him and feel that I am to blame for what he has become!’

Then they took counsel with one another and decided :

‘It would not be honourable to kill you for the sins of your son. We know that you could not have led him to commit this terrible sin, and we can understand your distress. But the city does not need you even as a hostage; your son cares nought for you, we believe that he has forgotten you, fiend that he is, and there is your punishment if you think you have deserved it! We believe that is more terrible than death itself!’

‘Yes’, she said. ‘It is indeed more terrible’.

And so they opened the gates and suffered her to leave the city and watched long from the battlements as she departed from her native soil, now drenched with the blood her son had spilt. She walked slowly, for her feet were reluctant to tear themselves away from this soil and she bowed to the corpses of the city’s defenders, kicking aside a broken weapon in disgust, for all weapons are abhorrent to mother save those that protect life.

She walked as though she carried a precious phial of water beneath her cloak and feared to spill a drop and as her figure grew smaller and smaller to those who watched from the city wall, it seemed to them that with her went their dejection and hopelessness.

They saw her pause halfway and throwing back the hood of her cloak turn back and gaze long at the city. And over in the enemy’s camp they saw her alone in the field and figures dark as her own approached her cautiously. They approached and inquired who she was and whence she had come.

‘Your leader is my son’, she said, and not one of the soldiers doubted it. They fell in beside her, singing his praises, saying how clever and brave he was, and she listened to them with head proudly raised, showing no surprise, for her son could not be otherwise.

And now, at last, she stood before him whom she had known nine months before his birth, him whom she had never felt apart from her own heart. In silk and velvet he stood before her, his weapons studded with precious stones. All was as it should be, thus had she seen him so many times in her dreams – rich , famous and admired.

‘Mother!’ he said, kissing her hands. ‘Thou hast come to me, thou art with me, and tomorrow I shall capture that accursed city!’

‘The city where thou wert bon’, she reminded him.

Intoxicated with his prowess, crazed with the thirst for more glory, he answered her with the arrogant heat of youth :

‘I was born into the world and for the world, and I mean to make the world quake with wonder of me! I have spared this city for thy sake, it has been like a thorn in my flesh and has retarded my swift rise to fame. But now tomorrow I shall smash that nest of obstinate fools!’

‘Where every stone knows and remembers them as a child,’ she said.

‘Stones are dumb unless man makes them speak. Let the mountains speak of me, that is what I wish!’

‘And what of men?’ she asked.

‘Ah, yes, I have not forgotten them, mother. I need them too, for only in men’s memory are heroes immortal!’

She said : ‘A hero is he who creates life in defiance of death, who conquers death...’

‘No!’ he objected. ‘The destroyer is as glorious as the builder of a city. See, we do not know who it was that built Rome – Aeneas or Romulus – yet we know well the name of Alaric and the other heroes who destroyed the city...’

‘Which outlived all names,’ the mother reminded him –

Thus they conversed until the sun sank to rest; less and less frequently did she interrupt his wild speech, lower sank her proud head.

A Mother creates, she protects, and to speak to her of destruction means to speak against her; but he did not know this, he did not know that he was negating her reason for existence.

A Mother is always opposed to death; the hand that brings death into the house of men, is hateful and abhorrent to Mothers. But the son did not perceive this for he was blinded by the cold glitter of glory that deadens the heart.

Nor did he know that a Mother can be as clever and ruthless as she is fearless, when the life she creates and cherishes is in question.

She sat with bowed head, and through the opening in the leader’s richly appointed tent she saw the city where first she had felt the sweet tremor of life within her and the anguished convulsions of the birth of this child who now thirsted for destruction.

The crimson rays of the sun dyed the walls and towers of the city blood-red, cast a baleful glare on the windowpanes so that the whole city seemed to be a mass of wounds with the crimson sap of life flowing from each gash. Presently the city turned black as a corpse and the stars shone above it like funeral candles.

She saw the dark houses where people feared to light candles so as not to attract the attention of the enemy, saw the streets steeped in gloom and rank with the stench of corpses heard the muffled whispers of people awaiting death – she saw it all, all that was near and dear to her stood before her, dumbly awaiting her decision, and she felt herself the mother of all those people in her city.

Clouds descended from the black peaks into the valley and swooped down like winged steeds upon the doomed city.

‘We may attack tonight’, said her son, ‘if the night is dark enough ! It is hard to kill when the sun shines in your eyes and the glitter of the weapons blinds you, many a blow goes awry’, he remarked, examining his sword.

The mother said to him : ‘Come, my son, lay the head on my breast and rest, remember how gay and kind thou wert as a child, and how everyone loved thee...’

He obeyed her, laid his head in her lap and closed his eyes, saying :

‘I love only glory and I love thee for having made me as I am’.

‘And women?’ she asked bending over him.

‘They are many, one tires of them as of everything that is too sweet’.

‘And dost thou not desire children?’ she asked finally.

‘What for? That they might be killed? Someone like me will kill them; that will give me pain and I shall be too old and feeble to avenge them.’

‘Thou art handsome, but as barren as a streak of lightning,’ she said with a sigh.

‘Yes, like lightning...’ He replied, smiling.

And he dozed there on his mother’s breast like a child.

Then, covering him with her black cloak, she plunged a knife into his heart, and with a shudder he died, for who knew better than she where her son’s heart beat. And, throwing his corpse at the feet of the astonished sentries, she said addressing the city:

‘As a Citizen, I have done for my country all I could : as a Mother I remain with my son ! It is too late for me to bear another, my life is of no use to anyone’.

And the knife, still warm with his blood, her blood, she plunged with a firm hand into her own breast, and again she struck true, for an aching heart is not hard to find.

16.3.2 Glossary

host : a large number, (here) army

myriad : a very large number

malevolent :	spiteful, wishing to cause suffering to others
beleaguered :	besieged; surrounded with armed forces
nocturnal :	of the night
gorge :	narrow opening (between mountains)
succour :	help given in time of danger
Madonna :	Mary, mother of Jesus Christ
suffered her :	allowed her
abhorrent :	hateful, disgusting
richly appointed :	well-equipped and furnished
tremor :	shaking, movement
baleful :	evil, harmful
go awry :	go wrong

16.3.3 Summary

The story ‘*The Mother of a Traitor*’ as the name suggests deals with Monna Marianna, the mother of a traitor. Her son was the leader of the enemy who had surrounded the city. The enemy had surrounded the city in the tight ring of steel; they had also cut off all the supplies of water and food. The people in the city knew that there was little hope of help. Their hope of salvation was waning day by day. Everything spoke to them of death.

Marianna moved about in the streets all alone hated by most people. She wandered from place to place by night. One day she saw a woman kneeling beside a corpse. It was the dead body of her son. Her husband had died thirteen days ago. Her son died that day. She said to Marianna.

“Now that he has died honourably fighting for his country I can say that I feared for him : he was light – hearted, too fond of revelry and I feared that he might betray his city, as did the son of Marianna, the enemy of God and Man, the leader of our foes, may he be so cursed and the womb that bore him!”

The old lady did not know that she was talking to Marianna herself. Marianna covered her face and went on her way. The next morning she went to the city’s defenders and said “My son has come to be your enemy. Either kill me or open the gates that I may go to him.” The soldiers took counsel with one another and decided that it was no use killing the lady for the sins of her son. They were certain that she could not have led her son to commit this terrible sin. Therefore they opened the gate and let her go. In the enemy’s camp, the soldiers enquired from her who she was and why she had come. She replied :-

“Your leader is my son, she said”, Just then came her son. He kissed her hands and said” Mother ! you have come to me. You are with me. Tomorrow I shall capture the city. I have spared this city for your sake, it has been like a thorn in my flesh. It has retarded my swift rise to fame. But now tomorrow I shall capture the city”. They conversed for a long time. Soon it was dark. The mother said to him “come my son, lay thy head on my breast and rest, remember how gay and kind you were as a child, and how everyone loved you”. He obeyed her, laid his head in her lap and closed his eyes. He dozed there on mother’s breast – like a child. Then, covering him with her black cloak, she plunged a knife into his heart and he died.

Merianna threw his corpse at the feet of the bewildered sentries. Addressing the countrymen she said,” As a citizen I have done for my country all I could; as a Mother I remain with my soul.” With a firm hand she plunged the knife into her own breast. She was soon dead.

16.4 Some General Observations

16.4.1 Gorky’s Didactic Aim

In some of his short stories, Gorky’s primary objective was to reveal the existence of certain social evils. In *The Mother of a Traitor*, the story itself is uppermost and very aptly conveys that the motherland is above all, the near and dear ones are of secondary importance.

Through the behaviour of the Mother and the Son, the author has very aptly and skillfully communicated that love for motherland is supreme and every sacrifice made for its safety and security is certainly a praiseworthy heroic deed. The words and images employed in the story make the message more striking. The numerous passages about motherhood in the story intensify the seriousness of the message.

16.4.2 Nature Images and Vain Human Glory

There are a number of images drawn from nature throughout the story. Some of them are given below :-

(a)black shadows crept stealthily from the gorges of the distant mountains towards the half-demolished walls, hiding the enemy camp from view, and over the black ridges of the mountains rose the moon like a lost shield dented by sword blows.

(b) like a fish stirring in the depths of a river, a woman draped from head to foot in a black cloak moved soundlessly.

(c) She walked as though she carried a precious phial of water beneath her cloak....

These images are very aptly employed to heighten the impending war effect. These images also exhibit a corresponding link between nature and mankind. The cruel/evil Nature images speak of man’s evil nature and evil deeds and vice-versa. Find out more images in the story and discuss their artistic beauty.

16.5 Activities

Do the following activities now :-

1. “In silk and velvet he stood before her, his weapons, studded with precious stones.” This clearly shows man’s vanity. What other traits of the son’s character are brought out in the story? Enlist his views on glory, women, and children.
2. There are several passages in the story about motherhood. List a few them.
3. Paragraph 2 is a vivid description of the city surrounded by the enemy. There are several others of the type. Pick out a few and discuss how effective they are.

16.6 Self Assessment Questions

1. Who is the protagonist in the story ?
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2. What did Marianna say to the city defenders ?
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3. What did the Mother do to her son ? and why?
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4. Why did she commit suicide ?
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5. How did the enemy soldiers greet her ? Did she feel proud ? What was she proud of?
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.....

6. Why did the son decide to capture the city the same night ? Why has he spared it so long ? How did she try to dissuade him from his plan ?

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7. Bring out the salient features of the Son's character ?

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8. Bring out the salient features of the Mother's character ?

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16.7 Answers to SAQs

1. Monna Marianna, the mother of a traitor.
2. "My son has come to be your enemy. Either kill me or open the gates that I may go to him".
3. She killed her son by plunging a knife into his heart. Because he was a traitor.
4. She committed suicide because she had failed as a mother. Neither could she bear another.
5. The soldiers fell in beside her. She was proud that her son was clever and brave.
6. Because it is hard to kill when sun shines; the glitter of the weapons blind the soldiers. He had spared it so long because of her mother. She dissuaded him from this act by bringing to him the memories of his good olden days.
7. Cleverness, bravery, vanity, egoism.
8. Love for motherland, a brave woman.

16.8 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit we have discussed the development of short story as a genre and the life of Maxim Gorky, the author of the story in brief. Besides the text, we have also presented to you a glossary of the difficult words and the summary of the story. At the end is given a list of

questions, followed by their answers.

16.9 Review Questions

1. Summarises the whole story in your own words.
2. Why are nature images drawn throughout the story? Explain.

16.10 Bibliography

1. R.D. Trivedi : A Compendious History of English Literature, Vikas.
 2. B. Prasad : A Background to the Study of English Literature, Macmillan.
 3. Maxim Gorky : The Lower Depths.
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UNIT-17

D.H.LAWRENCE: *THE ROCKING-HORSE WINNER*

Structure

- 17.0 Objectives
- 17.1 Life of D.H. Lawrence
- 17.2 Works of D.H. Lawrence
- 17.3 Elements of a Modern Short Story
- 17.4 Text of the Story: '*The Rocking - Horse Winner*'
 - 17.4.1 Introduction to '*The Rocking - Horse Winner*'
 - 17.4.2 Theme of the story '*The Rocking-Horse Winner*'
 - 17.4.3 Glossary
- 17.5 Self Assessment Questions
- 17.6 Answers to SAQs
- 17.7 Review Questions
- 17.8 Bibliography

17.0 Objectives

After having read this unit, you will be able to:

- (i) know about the life of D.H. Lawrence
- (ii) know about the works of D.H. Lawrence
- (iii) know the theme of the story '*The Rocking-Horse Winner*'.

17.1 LIFE OF D.H. LAWRENCE

David Herbert Richards Lawrence (11 September 1885-2 March 1930) was an English writer of the 20th century, whose prolific and diverse output included novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, travel books, paintings, translations, literary criticism, and personal letters. His collected works represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialisation. In them, Lawrence confronts issues relating to emotional health and vitality, spontaneity, sexuality, and human instinct.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life,

much of which he spent in a voluntary exile he called his “savage pilgrimage.” At the time of his death, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. E.M. Forster, in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held view, describing him as “the greatest imaginative novelist of our generation.” Later, the influential Cambridge critic F.R. Leavis championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness, placing much of Lawrence’s fiction within the canonical “great tradition” of the English novel. He is now generally valued as a visionary thinker and a significant representative of modernism in English literature, although some feminists object to the attitudes towards women and sexuality found in his works.

17.2 Works of D.H. Lawrence

Lawrence is perhaps best known for his novels *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*. Within these Lawrence explores the possibilities for life and living within an Industrial setting. In particular Lawrence is concerned with the nature of relationships that can be had within such settings. Though often classed as a realist, Lawrence’s use of his characters can be better understood with reference to his philosophy. His use of sexual activity, though shocking at the time, has its roots in this highly personal way of thinking and being. It is worth noting that Lawrence was much interested in human touch behaviour and that his interest in physical intimacy has its roots in a desire to restore our emphasis on the body, and re-balance it with what he perceived to be western civilization’s slow process of over-emphasis on the mind.

Among the most praised, *The Prussian Officer* and *Other Stories* provides insight into Lawrence’s attitudes during World War I. His American volume *The Woman Who Rode Away* and *Other Stories* develops his themes of leadership as explored in the novels *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent* and *Fanny and Annie*.

Although best known for his novels, Lawrence wrote almost 800 poems, most of them relatively short. His first poems were written in 1904 and two of his poems, *Dreams Old* and *Dreams Nascent*, were among his earliest published works in *The English Review*. His early works clearly place him in the school of Georgian poets, a group not only named after the present monarch but also the romantic poets of the previous Georgian period whose work they were trying to emulate. What typified the entire movement, and Lawrence’s poems of the time, were well-worn poetic tropes and deliberately archaic language. Many of these poems display what John Ruskin called the “pathetic fallacy,” the tendency to ascribe human emotions to animals and even inanimate objects.

Just as World War I dramatically changed the work of many of the poets who saw service in the trenches, Lawrence’s own work saw a dramatic change, during his years in Cornwall. During this time, he wrote free verse influenced by Walt Whitman. He set forth his manifesto for much of his later verse in the introduction to *New Poems*. “We can get rid of the stereotyped movements and the old hackneyed associations of sound or sense. We can break

down those artificial conduits and canals through which we do so love to force our utterance. We can break the stiff neck of habit..... But we cannot positively prescribe any motion, any rhythm.” Many of his later works took the idea of free verse to the extremes of lacking all rhyme and metre so that they are little different from short ideas or memos, which could well have been written in prose.

Lawrence rewrote many of his novels several times to perfect them and similarly he returned to some of his early poems when they were collected in 1928. This was in part to fictionalise them, but also to remove some of the artifice of his first works. As he put in himself: “A young man is afraid of his demon and puts his hand over the demon’s mouth sometimes and speaks for him.” His best known poems are probably those dealing with nature such as those in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* and *Tortoises*. *Snake*, one of his most frequently anthologised, displays some of his most frequent concerns; those of man’s modern distance from nature and subtle hints at religious themes.

17.3 Elements of a Modern Short Story

Modern short story has developed some distinct characteristics. The following essential features shall help you understand it:

- (1) A short story is short in size and should be finished in one sitting. It is shorter than a novel. That is, it should be short not only in size or space, but it should be short so far as the length and the number of events is concerned. It may be of any number of pages. Only it must not be too long to divert the attention of readers.
- (2) A short story deals with only one episode of a man’s life. It throws a strong searchlight on the main incidents and it deals with a wide range of human experience, but it is only one episode and one experience.

A short story does not deal with the varied shades of a man’s experience. There is only one experience which is to be dealt with brevity and concentration.

- (3) A short story must have the unity of effect or impression. All the parts must be connected as a whole to leave one sound impression which should be a harmonious one.
- (4) The matter of a short story should be as simple as possible. The theme should be quite simple. It should not be complex and confusing. Hawthorne’s stories deal with some profound experiences in life, but they are not complex in any way.
- (5) A short story must have a definite purpose in view. The writer of the story must be clear in his mind about the effect he wishes to produce. The writers of the nineteenth century in England were quite successful so far as their aim was concerned. They had no other consideration before them.
- (6) There should not be a number of characters in a short story. Attention of concentration on some chosen characters is quite essential. These characters should be impres-

sive and charming.

- (7) A short story pays much attention to dialogue. Through dialogue the author develops the action and presents the main purpose. At the same time dialogue enable the readers to understand the motives of the characters.
- (8) A short story should pay proper attention to the atmosphere. It should be suited to the occasion and the times portrayed. There should be suggestive words to create an atmosphere suited to the occasion.
- (9) A reference to the customs, traditions and manners by way of local colours makes the story appear realistic and convincing. Hardy's novels and stories are rich in local colour.
- (10) A short story should have a lively and entertaining style. The interest of the reader should be kept alive by a graceful style.

If the story makes a strong appeal to our imagination, it can rightly be called a successful story. Flashes of humour and vivacity add to the grace and gusto of the style.

A skilful artist is sure to make his story charming only on the basis of style, even if the plot or the theme is quite simple or ordinary.

17.4 Text of the Story: *The Rocking-Horse Winner*

There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantage, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. They looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her. And hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what it was that she must cover up she never knew. Nevertheless, when her children were present she always felt the centre of her heart go hard. This troubled her, and in her manner she was all the more gentle and anxious for her children, as if she loved them very much. Only she herself knew that at the centre of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody. Everybody else said of her: 'She is such a good mother. She adores her children.' Only she herself, and her children themselves, knew it was not so. They read it in each other's eyes.

There were a boy and two little girls. They lived in a pleasant house, with a garden, and they had discreet servants, and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighbourhood.

Although they lived in style, they felt always an anxiety in the house. There was never enough money.

The mother had a small income, and the father had a small income, but not nearly enough for the social position which they had to keep up. The father went into town to some office. But though he had good prospects, these prospects never materialized. There was

always the grinding sense of the shortage of money, though the style was always kept up.

At last the mother said: 'I will see if I can't make something.' But she did not know where to begin. She racked her brains and tried this thing and the other, but could not find anything successful. The failure made deep lines come into her face. Her children were growing up, they would have to go to school. There must be more money, there must be more money. The father, who was always very handsome and expensive in his tastes, seemed as if he never would be able to do anything worth doing. And the mother, who had a great belief in herself, did not succeed any better, and her tastes were just as expensive.

And so the house came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: There must be more money! The children could hear it all the time, though nobody said it aloud. They heard it at Christmas, when expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking-horse, behind the smart doll's house, a voice would start whispering: There must be more money! There must be more money!' And the children would stop playing, to listen for a moment. They would look into each other's eyes to see if they had all heard. And each one saw in the eyes of the other two that they too had heard. 'There must be more money! There must be more money!'

It came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking-horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden, champing head, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and smirking in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly and seemed to be smirking at this more self-consciously because of it. The foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reasons but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: 'There must be more money!'

Yet nobody ever said it aloud. The whisper was everywhere and therefore no one spoke it. Just as no one ever says: 'We are breathing' in spite of the fact that breath is coming and going all the time.

'Mother,' said the boy Paul one day, 'why don't we keep a car of our own? Why do we always use uncle's, or else a taxi?'

'Because we're the poor members of the family,' said the mother. 'But why are we, mother?'

'Well - I suppose,' she said slowly and bitterly. 'Your father has no luck.'

The boy was silent for some time.

'Is luck money, mother?' he asked, rather timidly.

'No, Paul vaguely. 'I thought when Uncle Oscar said filthy lucre, it meant money.'

'Filthy lucre does mean money,' said the mother, 'But it's lucre, not luck.'

'It's what causes you to have money. If you're lucky you have money. That's why it's

better to be born lucky than rich. If you're rich, you may lose your money. But if you're lucky, you will always get more money.'

'Oh! Will you? And is father not lucky?'

'Very unlucky, I should say,' she said bitterly.

The boy watched her with unsure eyes.

'Why?' he asked.

'I don't know. Nobody ever knows why one is lucky and another unlucky.'

'Don't they? Nobody at all? Does nobody know?'

'Perhaps God. But he never tells.'

'He ought to, then. And aren't you lucky, mother?'

'I can't be, if I married an unlucky husband.'

'But by yourself, aren't you?'

'I used to think I was, before I married. Now I think I am very unlucky indeed.'

'Why?'

'Well-never mind! Perhaps I'm not really,' she said.

The child looked at her to see if she meant it. But he saw, by the lines of her mouth, that she was only trying to hide something from him.

'Well, anyhow,' he said stoutly, 'I am a lucky person.'

'Why?' said his mother, with a sudden laugh.

He stared at her. He didn't even know why he had said it.

'God told me,' he asserted, brazening it out.

'I hope He did, dear,' she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.

'He did, mother!'

'Excellent!' said the mother, using one of her husband's exclamations.

The boy saw she did not believe him; or rather, that she paid no attention to his assertion. This angered him somewhat, and made him want to compel her attention.

He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way, seeking for the clue to 'Luck.' Absorbed, taking no heed of other people, he went about with a sort of stealth, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. When the two girls were playing dolls in the nursery, he would sit on his big rocking-horse, charging madly into space,

with a frenzy that made the little girls peer at him uneasily. Wildly the horse careered, the waving dark hair of the boy tossed, his eyes had a strange glare in them. The little girls dared not speak to him.

When he had ridden to the end of his mad little journey he climbed down and stood in front of his rocking-horse, staring fixedly into its lowered face. Its red mouth was slightly open, its big eye was wide and glassy-bright.

‘Now!’ he would silently command the snorting steed. ‘Now, take me to where there is luck. Now take me!’

And he would slash the horse on the neck with the little whip he had asked Uncle Oscar for. He knew the horse could take him to where there was luck, if only he forced it. So he would mount again and start on his furious ride, hoping at last to get there. He knew he could get there.

‘You’ll break your horse, Paul!’ said aide nurse.

‘He’s always riding like that. I wish he’d leave off,’ said his sister Joan.

But he only glared down on them in silence. Nurse gave him up. She could make nothing of him. Anyhow, he was growing beyond her.

One day his mother and his Uncle Oscar came in when he was on one of his furious rides. He did not speak to them.

‘Hallow, you young jockey! Riding a winner?’ said his uncle.

‘Aren’t you growing too big for a rocking-horse? You’re not a very little boy any longer, you know,’ said his mother.

But Paul only gave a blue glare from his big, rather close-set eyes. He would speak to nobody when he was full of tilt. His mother watched him with an anxious look on her face.

At last he suddenly stopped forcing his horse into the mechanical gallop and slid down.

‘Well, I got there,’ he announced fiercely, his blue eyes still flaring, and his sturdy long legs straddling apart.

‘Where did you get to?’ asked his mother.

‘Where I wanted to go,’ he flared back at her.

‘That’s right, son!’ said Uncle Oscar. ‘Don’t stop till you get there. What’s the horse’s name?’

‘He doesn’t have a name,’ said the boy.

‘Gets on without all right?’ asked the uncle.

‘Well, he has different names. He was called Sansovino last week.

‘Sansovino, eh? Won the Ascot. How did you know his name?’

‘He always talks about horse-races with Bassett,’ said Joan.

The uncle was delighted to find that his nephew was posted with all the racing news. Bassett, the young gardener, who had been wounded in the left foot in the war and had got his present job through Oscar Cresswell, whose batman he had been, was a perfect blade of the ‘turf’. He lived in the racing events, and the small boy lived with him.

Oscar Cresswell got it all from Bassett.

‘Master Paul comes and asks me, so I can’t do more than tell him, sir,’ said Bassett, his face terribly serious, as if he were speaking of religious matters.

‘And does he ever put anything on a horse he fancies?’

‘Well-I don’t want to give him away-he’s a young sport, a fine sport, sir, Would you mind asking himself? He sort of takes a pleasure in it, and perhaps he’d feel I was giving him away, sir, if you don’t mind.’

Bassett was serious as a church.

The uncle went back to his nephew and took him off for a ride in the car.

‘Say, Paul, old man, do you ever put anything on a horse?’ the uncle asked.

The boy watched the handsome man closely.

‘Why, do you think I oughtn’t to?’ he parried.

‘Not a bit of it! I thought perhaps you might give me a tip for the Lincoln.’

The car sped on into the country, going down to Uncle Oscar’s place in Hampshire.

‘Honour bright?’ said the nephew.

‘Honour bright, son!’ said the uncle.

‘Well, then, Daffodil.’

‘Daffodil! I doubt it, sonny. What about Mirza?’

‘I only know the winner,’ said the boy. ‘That’s Daffodil.’

‘Daffodil, eh?’

There was a pause. Daffodil was an obscure horse comparatively.

‘Uncle!’

‘Yes, son?’

‘You won’t let it go any further, will you? I promised Bassett.’

‘Bassett be damned, old man! What’s he got to do with it?’

‘We’re partners. We’ve been partners from the first. Uncle, he lent me my first five shillings, which I lost. I promised him, honour bright, it was only between me and him; only you gave me that ten-shilling note I started winning with, so I thought you were lucky. You won’t let it go any further, will you?’

The boy gazed at his uncle from those big, hot, blue eyes, set rather close together. The uncle stirred and laughed uneasily.

‘Right you are, son! I’ll keep your tip private, eh? How much are you putting on him?’

‘All except twenty pounds,’ said the boy. ‘I keep that in reserve.’

The uncle thought it a good joke.

‘You keep twenty pounds in reserve, do you, you young romancer? What are you betting, then?’

‘I’m betting three hundred,’ said the boy gravely. ‘But it’s between you and me Uncle Oscar! Honour bright.’

The uncle burst into a roar of laughter.

‘It’s between you and me all right, you young Nat Gould,’ he said, laughing. ‘But where’s your three hundred?’

‘Bassett keeps it for me. We’re partners.’

‘You are, are you? And what is Bassett putting on Daffodil?’

‘He won’t go quite as high as I do, I expect. Perhaps he’ll go a hundred and fifty.

‘What, pennies?’ laughed the uncle.

‘Pounds,’ said the child, with a surprised look at his uncle. ‘Bassett keeps a bigger reserve than I do.’

Between wonder and amusement Uncle Oscar was silent. He pursued that matter no further, but he determined to take his nephew with him to the Lincoln races.

‘Now, son,’ he said, ‘I’m putting twenty on Mirza, and I’ll put five on for you on any horse you fancy. What’s your pick?’

‘Daffodil, uncle.’

‘No, not the fiver on Daffodil.’

‘I should if it was my own fiver,’ said the child.

‘Good! Good! Right you are! A fiver for me and a fiver for you on Daffodil.’

The child had never been to a race-meeting before, and his eyes were blue fire. He pursed his mouth tight and watched. A Frenchman just in front had put his money on Lancelot. Wild with excitement, he flayed his arms up and down, yelling ‘Lancelot! Lancelot!’ in his French accent.

Daffodil came in first, Lancelot second, Mirza third. The child, flushed and with eyes blazing, was curiously serene. His uncle brought him four five-pound notes, four to one.

‘What am I to do with these?’ he cried, waving them before the boy’s eyes.

‘I suppose we’ll talk to Bassett,’ said the boy. ‘I expect I have fifteen hundred now; and twenty in reserve; and this twenty.’

His uncle studied him for some moments.

‘Look here, son!’ he said, ‘You’re not serious about Bassett and that fifteen hundred, are you?’

‘Yes, I am. But it’s between you and me, uncle. Honour bright?’

‘Honour bright all right, son! But I must talk to Bassett.’

‘If you’d like to be a partner, uncle, with Bassett and me, we could all be partners. Only, you’d have to promise, honour bright, uncle, not to let it go beyond us three. Bassett and I are lucky, and you must be lucky, because it was your ten shillings I started winning with-’

Uncle Oscar took both Bassett and Paul into Richmond Park for an afternoon, and there they talked.

‘It’s like this, you see, sir,’ Bassett said. ‘Master Paul would get me talking about racing events, spinning yarns, you know, sir. And he was always keen on knowing if I’d made or if I’d lost. It’s about a year since, now, that I put five shillings on Blush of Dawn for him; and we lost. Then the luck turned, with that ten shillings he had from you: that we put on Singhalese. And since that time, it’s been pretty steady, all things considering. What do you say, Master Paul?’

‘We’re all right, when we’re sure,’ said Paul. ‘It’s when we are not quite sure that we go down.’

‘Oh, but we’re careful then,’ said Bassett.

‘But when are you sure?’ smiled Uncle Oscar.

‘It’s Master Paul, sir,’ said Bassett in a secret, religious voice. ‘It’s as if he had it from heaven. Like Daffodil, now, for the Lincoln. That was as sure as eggs.’

‘Did you put anything on Daffodil?’ asked Oscar Cresswell.

‘Yes, sir. I made my bit.’

‘And my nephew?’

Bassett was obstinately silent, looking at Paul.

‘I made twelve hundred, didn’t I, Bassett? I told uncle I was putting three hundred on Daffodil.’

‘That’s right,’ said Bassett, nodding.

‘But where’s the money?’ asked the uncle.

‘I keep it safe locked up, sir. Master Paul, he can have it any minute he likes to ask for it.’

‘What, fifteen hundred pounds?’

‘And twenty. And forty, that is, with the twenty he made on the course.’

‘It’s amazing,’ said the uncle.

‘If Master Paul offers you to be partners, sir, I would, if I were you: if you’ll excuse me,’ said Bassett.

Oscar Cresswell thought about it.

‘I’ll see the money,’ he said.

They drove home again, and sure enough, Bassett came round to the garden-house with fifteen hundred pounds in notes. The twenty pounds reserve was left with Joe Glee, in the Turf Comission deposit.

‘You see, it’s all right, uncle, when I’m sure. Then we go strong, for all we’re worth. Don’t we, Bassett?’

‘We do that, Master Paul.’

‘And when are you sure?’ said the uncle, laughing.

‘Oh, well, sometimes I’m absolutely sure, like about Daffodil,’ said the boy; ‘and sometimes I have an idea; and sometimes I haven’t even an idea, have I, Bassett? Then we’re careful, because we mostly go down.’

‘You do, do you? And when you’re sure, like about Daffodil, what makes you sure, sonny?’

‘Oh, well, I don’t know,’ said the boy uneasily. ‘I’m sure, you know, uncle; that’s all.’

‘It’s as if he had it from heaven, sir,’ Bassett reiterated.

‘I should say so!’ said the uncle.

But he became a partner. And when the Leger was coming on Paul was sure about Lively Spark, which was a quite inconsiderable horse. The boy insisted on putting a thousand on the horse, Bassett went for five hundred, and Oscar Cresswell two hundred. Lively Spark came in first, and the betting had been ten to one against him. Paul had made ten thousand.

‘You see,’ he said, ‘I was absolutely sure of him.’

Even Oscar Cresswell had cleared two thousand.

‘Look here, son,’ he said, ‘this sort of thing makes me nervous.’

‘It needn’t, uncle! Perhaps I shan’t be sure again for a long time.’

‘But what are you going to do with your money?’ asked the uncle.

‘Of course,’ said the boy, ‘I started it for mother. She said she had no luck, because father is unlucky, so I thought if I was lucky, it might stop whispering?’

‘What might stop whispering?’

‘Our house. I hate our house for whispering.’

‘What does it whisper?’

‘Why-why’-the boy fidgeted- ‘why, I don’t know. But it’s always short of money, you know, uncle.’

‘I know it, son, I know it.’

‘You know people send mother writs, don’t you, uncle?’

‘I’m afraid I do,’ said the uncle.

‘And then the house whispers, like people laughing at you behind your back. It’s awful, that is why I thought if I was lucky-’

‘You might stop it,’ added the uncle.

The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an uncanny cold fire in them, and he said never a word.

‘Well, then,’ said the uncle. ‘What are we doing?’

‘I shouldn’t like mother to know I was lucky,’ said the boy.

‘Why not, son?’

‘She’d stop me.’

‘I don’t think she would.’

‘Oh!’-and the boy writhed in an odd way- ‘I don’t want her to know, uncle.’

‘All right, son! son! We’ll manage it without her knowing.’

They managed it very easily. Paul, at the other’s suggestion, handed over five thousand pounds to his uncle, who deposited it with the family lawyer, who was then to inform Paul’s mother that a relative had put five thousand pounds into his hands, which sum was to be paid out a thousand pounds at a time, on the mother’s birthday, for the next five years.

‘So she’ll have a birthday present of a thousand pounds for five successive years,’ said Uncle Oscar. ‘I hope it won’t make it all the harder for her later.’

Paul’s mother had her birthday in November. The house had been ‘whispering’ worse than ever lately, and, even in spite of his luck, Paul could not bear up against it. He was very anxious to see the effect of the birthday letter, telling his mother about the thousand pounds.

When there were no visitors, Paul now took his meals with his parents, as he was beyond the nursery control. His mother went into town nearly every day. She had discovered that she had an odd knack of sketching furs and dress materials, so she worked secretly in the studio of a friend who was the chief ‘artist’ for the leading drapers. She drew the figures of ladies in furs and ladies in silk and sequins for the newspaper advertisements. This young woman artist earned several thousand pounds a year, but Paul’s mother only made several hundreds, and she was again dissatisfied. She so wanted to be first in something, and she did not succeed, even in making sketches for drapery advertisements.

She was down to breakfast on the morning of her birthday. Paul watched her face as she read her letters. He knew the lawyer’s letter. As his mother read it, her face hardened and became more expressionless. Then a cold, determined look came on her mouth. She hid the letter under the pile of others, and said not a word about it.

‘Didn’t you have anything nice in the post for your birthday, mother?’ said Paul.

‘Quite moderately nice,’ she said, her voice cold and absent.

She went away to town without saying more.

But in the afternoon Uncle Oscar appeared. He said Paul’s mother had had a long interview with the lawyer, asking if the whole five thousand could not be advanced at once, as she was in debt.

‘What do you think, uncle?’ said the boy.

‘Oh, let her have it, then! We can get some more with the other,’ said the boy.

‘A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, laddie!’ said Uncle Oscar.

‘But I’m sure to know for the Grand National; or the Lincolnshire, or else the Derby. I’m sure to know for one of them,’ said Paul.

So Uncle Oscar signed the agreement, and Paul's mother touched the whole five thousand. Then something very curious happened. The voices in the house suddenly went mad, like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. There were certain new furnishings, and Paul had a tutor. He was really going to Eton, his father's school, in the following autumn. There were flowers in the winter, and a blossoming of the luxury Paul's mother had been used to. And yet the voices in the house, behind the sprays of mimosa and almond-blossom, and from under the piles of iridescent cushions, simply trilled and screamed in a sort of ecstasy: 'There must be more money! Oh-h-h! There must be more money! Oh, now-w! Now-w-w there must be more money-more than ever! More than ever!'

It frightened Paul terribly. He studied away his Latin and Greek with his tutor. But his intense hours were spent with Bassett. The Grand National had gone by; he had not 'known,' and had lost a hundred pounds. Summer was at hand. He was in agony for the Lincoln. But even for the Lincoln he didn't 'know,' and he lost fifty pounds. He became wild-eyed and strange, as if something were going to explode in him.

'Let it alone, son! Don't you bother about it,' urged Uncle Oscar. But it was as if the boy couldn't really hear what his uncle was saying.

'I've got to know for the Derby! I've got to know for the Derby!' the child reiterated, his big blue eyes blazing with a sort of madness.

His mother noticed how overwrought he was.

'You'd better go to the seaside. Wouldn't you like to go now to the seaside, instead of waiting? I think you'd better,' she said, looking down at him anxiously, her heart curiously heavy because of him.

But the child lifted his uncanny blue eyes.

'I couldn't possibly go before the Derby, mother!' he said. 'I couldn't possibly!'

'Why not?' she said, her voice becoming heavy when she was opposed. 'Why not? You can still go from the seaside to see the Derby with your Uncle Oscar, if that's what you wish. No need for you to wait here. Besides, I think you care too much about these races. It's a bad sign. My family had been gambling family, and you won't know till you grow up how much damage it has done. But it has done damage. I shall have to send Bassett away, and ask Uncle Oscar not to talk racing to you, unless you promise to be reasonable about it: go away to the seaside and forget it. You're all nerves!'

'I'll do what you like, mother, so long as you don't send me away till after the Derby,' the boy said.

'Send you away from where? Just from this house?'

'Yes,' he said, gazing at her.

‘Why, you curious child, what makes you care about this house so much, suddenly? I never knew you loved it.’

He gazed at her without speaking. He had a secret within a secret, something he had not divulged, even to Bassett or to his Uncle Oscar.

But his mother, after standing undecided and a little bit sullen for some moments, said:

‘Very well, then! Don’t go to the seaside till after the Derby, if you don’t wish it. But promise me you won’t let your nerves go to pieces. Promise you won’t think so much about horse-racing and events, as you call them.’

‘Oh no,’ said the boy casually. ‘I won’t think much about them, mother. You needn’t worry. I wouldn’t worry, mother, if I were you.’

‘If you were me and I were you,’ said his mother, ‘I wonder what we should do!’

‘But you know you needn’t worry, mother, don’t you?’ the boy repeated.

‘I should be awfully glad to know it,’ she said wearily.

‘Oh, well, you can, you know, I mean, you ought to know you needn’t worry,’ he insisted.

‘Ought I? Then I’ll see about it,’ she said.

Paul’s secret of secrets was his wooden horse, that which had no name. Since he was emancipated from a nurse and a nursery governess, he has had his rocking-horse removed to his own bedroom at the top of the house.

‘Surely you’re too big for a rocking-horse,’ his mother had remonstrated.

‘Well, you see, mother, till I can have a real horse, I like to have some sort of animal about,’ had been his quaint answer.

‘Do you feel he keeps you company?’ she laughed.

‘Oh yes! He’s very good, he always keeps me company, when I’m there,’ said Paul.

So the horse, rather shabby, stood in an arrested prance in the boy’s bedroom.

The Derby was drawing near, and the boy grew more and more tense. He hardly heard what was spoken to him, he was very frail, and his eyes were really uncanny. His mother had sudden strange seizures of uneasiness about him. Sometimes, for half an hour, she would feel a sudden anxiety about him that was almost anguish. She wanted to rush to him at once, and know he was safe.

Two nights before the Derby, she was at a big party in town, when one of her rushes of anxiety about her boy, her firstborn, gripped her heart till she could hardly speak. She fought with the feeling, might and main, for she believed in common sense. But it was too strong. She had to

leave the dance and go downstairs to telephone to the country. The children's nursery-governess was terribly surprised and startled at being rung up in the night.

'Are the children all right, Miss Wilmot?'

'Oh yes, they are quite all right.'

'Master Paul? Is he all right?'

'He went to bed as right as a trivet. Shall I run up and look at him?'

'No,' said Paul's mother reluctantly. 'No. Don't trouble. It's all right. Don't sit up. We shall be home fairly soon.' She did not want her son's privacy intruded upon.

'Very good,' said the governess.

It was about one o'clock when Paul's mother and father drove up to their house. All was still. Paul's mother went to her room and slipped off her white fur cloak. She had told her maid not to wait up for her. She heard her husband downstairs, mixing a whisky and soda.

And then, because of the strange anxiety at her heart, she stole upstairs to her son's room. Noiselessly she went along the upper corridor. Was there a faint noise? What was it?

She stood, with arrested muscles, outside his door, listening. There was a strange, heavy, and yet not loud noise. Her heart stood still. It was a soundless noise, yet rushing and powerful. Something huge, in violent, hushed motion. What was it? What in God's name was it? She ought to know. She felt that she knew the noise. She knew what it was.

Yet she could not place it. She couldn't say what it was. And on and on it went, like a madness.

Softly, frozen with anxiety and fear, she turned the doorhandle.

The room was dark. Yet in the space near the window, she heard and saw something move to and fro. She gazed in fear and amazement.

Then suddenly she switched on the light, and saw her son, in his green pyjamas, madly surging on the rocking-horse. The blaze of light suddenly lit her up, as she stood, blonde, in her dress of pale green and crystal, in the doorway.

'Paul,' she cried. 'Whatever are you doing?'

'It's Malabar!' he screamed in a powerful, strange voice. 'It's Malabar!'

His eyes blazed at her for one strange and senseless second, as he ceased urging his wooden horse. Then he fell with a crash to the ground, and she, all her tormented motherhood flooding upon her, rushed to gather him up.

But he was unconscious, and unconscious he remained, with some brain-fever. He talked and tossed, and his mother sat stonily by his side.

‘Malabar! It’s Malabar! Bassett, Bassett, I know! It’s Malabar!’ that gave him his inspiration.

‘What does he mean by Malabar?’ asked the heart-frozen mother.

‘I don’t know,’ said the father stonily.

‘What does he mean by Malabar?’ she asked her brother Oscar. ‘It’s one of the horses running for the Derby,’ was the answer.

And, in spite of himself, Oscar Cresswell spoke to Bassett, and himself put a thousand on Malabar: at fourteen to one.

The third day of the illness was critical: they were waiting for a change. The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow. He neither slept nor regained consciousness, and his eyes were like blue stones. His mother sat, feeling her heart had gone, turned actually into a stone.

In the evening, Oscar Cresswell did not come, but Bassett sent a message, saying could he come up for one moment, just one moment? Paul’s mother was very angry at the intrusion, but on second thought she agreed. The boy was the same. Perhaps Bassett might bring him to consciousness.

The gardener, a shortish fellow with a little brown moustache and sharp little brown eyes, tiptoed into the room, touched his imaginary cap to Paul’s mother, and stole to the bedside, staring with glittering, smallish eyes at the tossing, dying child.

‘Master Paul’, he whispered, ‘Master Paul! Malabar came in first all right, a clean win. I did as you told me. You’ve made over seventy thousand pounds, you have; you’ve got over eighty thousand. Malabar came in all right, Master Paul.’

‘Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I’m lucky, mother? I knew Malabar, didn’t I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don’t you, mother? Over eighty thousand pounds! I knew, didn’t I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I’m sure, then I tell you, Bassett, you can go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Bassett?’

‘I went a thousand on it, Master Paul.’

‘I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and get there, then I’m absolutely sure-oh, absolutely mother, did I ever tell you? I am lucky!’

‘No, you never did,’ said his mother.

But the boy died in the night.

And even as he lay dead, his mother heard her brother’s voice saying to her: ‘My God, Hester, you’re eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad.’

But, poor devil, poor devil, he's best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking-horse to find a winner.'

17.4.1 Introduction To 'The Rocking Horse Winner'

D.H. Lawrence's "*The Rocking-Horse Winner*" was first published in 1926 in *Harper's Bazaar* magazine. It was published again that same year in a collection that was put together by Lady Cynthia Asquith, a friend of Lawrence's. Some critics have argued that the characters in the story are modeled after Asquith and her autistic son. Lawrence's works are known for their explorations of human nature through frank discussions of sex, psychology and religion.

Lawrence's later short stories, such as "*The Rocking-Horse Winner*," display a movement toward tabulation and satire as opposed to his earlier short fiction, which reflected more the traditional nineteenth century English short story - anecdotal, or tales of adventure. "*The Rocking-Horse Winner*" is a sardonic tale employing devices of the fairy tale and a mockingly detached tone to moralize on the value of love and the dangers of money. In "*The Rocking-Horse Winner*" and other later stories, Lawrence moved beyond the strictures of realism and encompassed a broader range of styles and subjects than in his earlier work. Critics view "*The Rocking-Horse Winner*" as an example of Lawrence's most accomplished writing. Lawrence is considered a modernist, a member of a literary school opposed to the literary conventions of nineteenth century morality, taste, and tradition. Evident in "*The Rocking-Horse Winner*" is Lawrence's disdain for conspicuous consumption, crass materialism, and an emotionally distant style of parenting popularly thought to exist in England during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

17.4.2 Theme Of The Story 'The Rocking Horse Winner'

The theme of the story is materialism which has engulfed the whole human society. In the story we see that both the husband and the wife, though living in style, always feel the need for more money. They always feel weak, miserable, lost and consider themselves to be unlucky. They so blindly pursue money that the other blessings of life are not visible to them. They are always a dissatisfied and complaining lot. They give so much importance to the material aspects of life that they have turned blind to the relationship between both of them and their relationship with their children. From the beginning we observe that their relationship is cold and tasteless. As the parents always complain of shortage of money, the little children are also psychologically affected by the whispers of 'There must be more money.'

The young boy in the family starts dreaming of earning money. He starts taking part in horse-races and gains some success in his pursuit of getting money. But as this kind of gambling does not go a long way, the boy meets destruction towards the end of the story and ultimately dies.

Thus D.H. Lawrence tries to put forward the ugly face of this gross and blind materialism which leads to destruction of human peace and contentment.

17.4.3 Glossary

<i>adore</i>	love and care
<i>style</i>	in a dignified manner
<i>grinding</i>	troublesome
<i>expensive</i>	requiring a lot of money
<i>haunted</i>	troubled
<i>whisper</i>	to say something in very low pitch
<i>pram</i>	a small cart for children
<i>timidly</i>	as if afraid of something
<i>vague</i>	not exact
<i>filthy</i>	dirty, bad
<i>heed</i>	attention
<i>frenzy</i>	anger
<i>delighted</i>	happy
<i>gravely</i>	seriously
<i>reiterate</i>	to repeat assertively
<i>anxious</i>	worried
<i>beyond</i>	ahead of
<i>overwrought</i>	agitated, troubled
<i>madness</i>	unreasonableness
<i>sullen</i>	serious
<i>awfully</i>	very
<i>remonstrate</i>	to show opposition
<i>reluctantly</i>	with hesitation
<i>gaze</i>	to watch carefully
<i>intrusion</i>	disturbance

17.5 Self Assessment Questions

1. What different aspects of human nature are explored in the story ?
2. Why is earning money given so much importance in modern times?
3. What does materialism leads to ?

17.6 Answers to SAQs

1. Their explorations of human nature through frank discussions of sex, psychology and religion.
2. As human society always feel weak, miserable, lost and consider themselves to be unlucky, so humans blindly pursue money and that the other blessings of life are not visible to them even the little children are also psychologically affected by the whispers of ‘There must be more money.’
3. Materialism leads to destruction of human peace and contentment.

17.7 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you learnt-

- a. Distinct characteristics of short story.
- b. The role of ‘the rocking horse’ in the story.
- c. Insatiable hunger for money and status.

17.8 Review Questions

1. Describe the atmosphere at Paul’s home. How does it affect the children?
2. What is it that leads Paul to the idea of trying his luck on races? How does he succeed every time?
3. What role does ‘the rocking-horse’ play in the story?
4. How far is Paul’s mother responsible for his death?
5. What characteristics of Lawrence as a writer are revealed in this story?

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Unit-18

W.S. MAUGHAM: THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

Structure

- 18.0 Objectives
- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 About the Author
 - 18.2.1 Life and Personality
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 - 18.2.3 His Works
- 18.3 About the Text
 - 18.3.1 Aesop's Version
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 - 18.3.3 Summary
 - 18.3.4 Narrative Devices
- 18.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 18.5 Answers to SAQs
- 18.6 Let Us Sum up
- 18.7 Review Questions
- 18.8 Bibliography

18.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to acquaint you with W.S. Maugham, a British novelist, playwright and short story writer by presenting to you a detailed discussion of his famous story 'The Ant and the Grasshopper.'

18.1 Introduction

Aesop (620-560 B.C.) was an ancient Greek writer of fables. His name is associated with the beast fables, long transmitted through oral tradition. The beast fables are part of the common culture of the Indo-European people and constitute perhaps the most widely read collection of fables in world literature.

Fable, short literary composition in prose or verse, conveys a universal message on moral truth. The moral is usually summed up at the end of the story, which generally tells of conflict among animals, which are given the attributes of human beings. Aesop circulated his fables orally and they were transmitted in this manner for a considerable time. Greek and Roman writers subsequently wrote versions of Aesop's fables either in prose or in verse. A Latin edition by the Byzantine monk Maximus Planudes is the source from which the best known fables of modern Europe have come. Another famous collection of beast fables is the Sanskrit collection Panchtantra, compiled before the 5th century A.D.

In a sophisticated society fables may be conscious and symbolic creations designed to embody an abstract idea. A story, after all, is far more memorable than a sermon or a treatise. It can present a complicated concept and make it shimmer with implications. Aesop's fables are quite remarkable in this regard.

'The Ant and the Grooshoper' is one of his well known fables. The modern sensibility and outlook of Maugham does not allow him to accept the moral of the story blindly as he believes that poetic justice is not to be found in the world of reality. He makes the story do a somersault. His characters are not beast but men of flesh and blood.

18.2 About the Author

18.2.1 His Life and Personality

The British novelist William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965), one of the most popular writers in English in the 20th century, is noted for his clarity of style and skill in storytelling. Born in Paris, he was the sixth and youngest son of the solicitor to the British Embassy. At the age of 10, Maugham lost his parents and was reared by a paternal uncle, the Reverend Henry MacDonald Maugham, the Vicar of Whitslabe, in Kent. His orphan hood was catastrophic. His uncle was cold and emotionally cruel and the school, King's school, Canterbury proved merely another version of purgatory. He was teased and bullied which resulted in developing the stammer which stayed with him all his life. Thus Maugham was miserable both at the Vicarage and at school. At sixteen, Maugham refused to continue at the King's school and his Uncle allowed him to travel to Germany, where he studied literature, Philosophy and German at Heidelberg University. He then chose the profession of Medicine and spent six years in training at a London hospital but abandoned medicine after the success of his novels and plays.

Some critics feel that the years Maugham spent studying medicine were a creative dead end, but Maugham himself felt quite the contrary. Maugham lived in the lively city of London, met different sections of society and was able to see them in a time of heightened anxiety.

In 1897, W.S. Maugham's life took a new turn as his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth*, which drew on his experiences of attending women in childbirth was a huge success. His first play, *A Man of Honour*, was produced in 1903. By 1914 Maugham was famous, with 10

novels published. During World War-I Maugham served in France as an espionage agent. He also worked for a short period of time in 1917 in Russia but his stuttering and poor health hindered his career in this field. He then set off with a friend on a series of travels to eastern Asia, The Pacific Islands and Mexico.

Maugham's breakthrough novel was the semi-auto-biographical '*Of Human Bondage*' (1915), fictional recounting of his unhappy attendance at The King's School in Canterbury, his liberating year of study abroad in Heidelberg and his return to London. These events served in part to shape the character of a man who was sensitive and perceptive yet also timorous and withdrawn, an outside observer of life's experiences rather than one totally and passionately immersed in them.

In the early 1928, Maugham bought Villa Mauresque in the south of France, though he continued to travel widely. He was forced to flee after the collapse of France in 1940 but returned after the war. In 1954, on his eightieth birthday, he was made a Companion of Honour and an Honorary senator of Heidelberg University. He was one of the most famous and wealthiest writers in the English-speaking world.

Maugham died in Nice on December 16, 1965 at the age of 91. In his last years Maugham adopted Alan Searle as his son to ensure that he would inherit his estate, a move which exposed Maugham to the public ridicule. There is no grave for Maugham. His ashes were scattered near the Maugham Library, The King's School, Canterbury.

18.2.2 Literary Background

Maugham wrote in a time when experimental modernist literature such as that of William Faulkner, Thomas Mann, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf was gaining increasing popularity and winning critical acclaim. In this context, his plain prose style was criticized as "such a tissue of clichés that one's wonder is finally aroused at the writer's ability to assemble so many and at his unfailing inability to put anything in an individual way."

'Liza of Lambeth, Cakes and Ale and the Razor's Edge' all featured women as inferior class, determined to serve men. Readers and critics often complained that Maugham did not clearly expose the treacherous attitude of villains of his fiction and plays. Maugham replied in 1938, "It must be a fault in me that I am not gravely shocked at the sins of others unless they personally affect me."

In the satirical short story *The Ant and The Grasshopper*, Maugham juxtaposes two brothers, the unscrupulous and carefree Tom and the hardworking, respectable George, who expects that Tom would end in the gutter. However Tom marries a rich old woman, she dies and leaves him a fortune. "I burst into a shout of laughter as I looked at George's wrathful face. I rolled in my chair, I very nearly fell on the floor. George never forgave me. But Tom asks me to excellent dinners in his charming house in Mayfair, and he occasionally borrows a trifle from me, that is merely from force of habit."

Among his short stories, some of the most memorable are those dealing with the lives of Western, mostly British, Colonists in the far-east and are typically concerned with the emotional toll exacted on the colonists by their isolation. Some of his more outstanding work in this genre includes *Footprints in The Jungle*, and *The Outstation*. Maugham was one of the most significant travel writers of the inter-war years, and can be compared with contemporaries such as Evelyn Waugh and Freya Stark. His best efforts in this line include *The Gentleman in The Parlour*, dealing with a journey through Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Vietnam, and *On a Chinese Screen*, a series of very brief vignettes which might almost be notes for short stories.

18.2.3 His Works

Maugham's masterpiece is generally agreed to be 'Of Human Bondage', a semi-autobiographical novel that deals with the life of the main character Philip Carey, who like Maugham, was orphaned and brought up by his pious uncle. Philip's clubfoot causes him endless self-consciousness and embarrassment echoing Maugham's struggles with his slutter. Later successful novels were also based on real-life characters: *The Moon and Sixpence* fictionalized the life of Paul Gogin; and *Cakes and Ale* contains thinly veiled characterizations of authors Thomas Hardy and Hugh Walpole. Maugham's last major novel, *The Razor's Edge*, was published in 1944. "This book consists of my recollections of a man with whom I was thrown into close contacts only at long intervals, and I have little knowledge of what happened to him in between", Maugham said in the beginning of the story "I have invented nothing".

Among his plays, *Lady Frederick* was his first play and perhaps best known and much produced was *Rain* (1922). His other plays, including *The Circle* (1921), a satire of social life, *Our Betters* (1923), about Americans in Europe, and *The Constant Wife* (1927), about a wife who took revenge on her unfaithful husband, were performed in Europe and in the United States.

It is generally referred that modern spy story began with Maugham's *Ashenden: OR the British Agent* (1928), a collection of six short stories set in Switzerland, France, Russia and Italy. It was partly based on the author's own experiences. An early autobiography is *The Summing Up* (1938) wherein his beliefs and principles were contradictory to human mankind. In the satirical short story *The Ant and The Grasshopper*, Maugham juxtaposed two brothers, the unscrupulous and carefree Tom and the hardworking, respectable George, who expects that Tom would end in the gutter. However Tom marries a rich old woman, she dies and leaves him a fortune. "I burst into a shout of laughter as I looked at George's wrathful face. I rolled in my chair, I very nearly fell on the floor. George never forgave me. But Tom asks me to excellent dinners in his charming house in Mayfair, and he occasionally borrows a trifle from me, that is merely from force of habit."

Among his short stories, some of the most memorable are those dealing with the lives

of Western, mostly British, Colonists in the far-east and are typically concerned with the emotional toll exacted on the colonists by their isolation. Some of his more outstanding work in this genre includes *Footprints in The Jungle*, and *The Outstation*. Maugham was one of the most significant travel writer of the inter-war years, and can be compared with contemporaries such as Evelyn Waugh and Freya Stark. His best efforts in this line include *The Gentleman in The Parlour*, dealing with a journey through Burma, Siam, Combodia and Vietnam, and *On a Chinese Screen*, a series of very brief vignettes which might almost be notes for short stories.

Influenced by the published journals of the French writer Jules Ranard, which M. had often enjoyed for their conscientiousness, wisdom and wit, N published in 1949 selections from his journals under the title “A Writer’s Notebook”. Although these journals selections are, by nature, episode and of varying quality, they range over more than 50 years of the writers life and contain that Maugham scholars and admirers find of interest.

18.3 About the Text

18.3.1 Aesop’s Version

The Ant and the Grasshopper, is a fable attributed to Aesop, providing a moral lesson about hard work and preparation. In its Greek original, as well its Latin and Roman translations, *The Ant and the Grasshopper* is in fact a cicada. Aesop’s fable concerns a grasshopper who spent the warm months singing away while the ant worked up to store up food for winter. After the winter sets in, the grasshopper finds itself dying of hunger, and when it asks the ant for food, it is only rebuked for its idleness. The story is used to teach the virtues of hard work and saving, and the perils of improvidence.

W.S. Maugham wrote a short story published in 1960, titled ‘The Ant and The Grasshopper’. It concerns two brothers, one of whom is a hard worker and the other is a dissolute moocher. At the end of the story the ‘grasshopper’ brother marries a rich widow, who dies shortly and leaves him a fortune.

18.3.2 The Ant And The Grasshopper (Text) by Maugham

When I was a very small boy I was made to learn by heart certain of the fables of La Fontaine, and the moral of each was carefully explained to me. Among those I learnt was *The Ant and The Grasshopper*, which is devised to bring home to the young the useful lesson that in an imperfect world industry is rewarded and giddiness punished. In this admirable fable (I apologize for telling something which everyone is politely, but inexactly, supposed to know) the ant spends a laborious summer gathering its winter store, while the grasshopper sits on a blade of grass singing to the sun. Winter comes and the ant is comfortably provided for, but the grasshopper has an empty larder: he goes to the ant and begs for a little food. Then the ant gives him her classic answer:

‘What were you doing in the summer time?’
‘Saving your presence, I sang, I sang all day, all night.’
‘You sang. Why, then go and dance.’

I do not ascribe it to perversity on my part, but rather to the inconsequence of childhood, which is deficient in moral sense, that I could never quite reconcile myself to the lesson. My sympathies were with the grasshopper and for some time I never saw an ant without putting my foot on it. In this summary (and as I have discovered since, entirely human) fashion I sought to express my disapproval of prudence and common sense.

I could not help thinking of this fable when the other day I saw George Ramsay lunching by himself in a restaurant. I never saw anyone wear an expression of such deep gloom. He was staring into space. He looked as though the burden of the whole world sat on his shoulders. I was sorry for him: I suspected at once that his unfortunate brother had been causing trouble again. I went up to him and held out my hand.

‘How are you?’ I asked.
‘I’m not in hilarious spirits,’ he answered.

‘Is it Tom again?’

He sighed.

‘Yes, it’s Tom again.’

‘Why don’t you chuck him? You’ve done everything in the world for him. You must know by now that he’s quite hopeless.’

I suppose every family has a black sheep. Tom had been a sore trial to his for twenty years. He had begun life decently enough: he went into business, married, and had two children. The Ramsays were perfectly respectable people and there was every reason to suppose that Tom Ramsay would have a useful and honourable career. But one day, without warning, he announced that he didn’t like work and that he wasn’t suited for marriage. He wanted to enjoy himself. He would listen to no expostulations. He left his wife and his office. He had a little money and he spent two happy years in the various capitals of Europe. Rumours of his doings reached his relations from time to time and they were profoundly shocked. He certainly had a very good time. They shook their heads and asked what would happen when his money was spent. They soon found out: he borrowed. He was charming and unscrupulous. I have never met anyone to whom it was more difficult to refuse a loan. He made a steady income from his friends and he made friends easily. But he always said that the money you spent on necessities was boring; the money that was amusing to spend was the money you spent on luxuries. For this he depended on his brother George. He did not waste his charm on him. George was a serious man and insensible to such enticements. George was respectable. Once or twice he fell to Tom’s promises of amendment and gave him considerable sums in order that he might make a fresh start. On these Tom bought a motor-car and some very nice jewellery.

But when circumstances forced George to realize that his brother would never settle down and he washed his hands of him, Tom, without a qualm, began to blackmail him. It was not very nice for a respectable lawyer to find his brother shaking cocktails behind the bar of his favourite restaurant or to see him waiting on the box-seat of a taxi outside his club. Tom said that to serve in a bar or to drive a taxi was a perfectly decent occupation, but if George could oblige him with a couple of hundred pounds he didn't mind for the honour of the family giving it up. George paid.

Once Tom nearly went to prison. George was terribly upset. He went into the whole discreditable affair. Really Tom had gone too far. He had been wild, thoughtless, and selfish, but he had never before done anything dishonest, by which George meant illegal; and if he were prosecuted he would assuredly be convicted. But you cannot allow your only brother to go to gaol. The man Tom had cheated, a man called Cronshaw, was vindictive. He was determined to take the matter into court; he said Tom was a scoundrel and should be punished. It cost George an infinite deal of trouble and five hundred pounds to settle the affair. I have never seen him in such a rage as when he heard that Tom and Cronshaw had gone off together to Monte Carlo the moment they cashed the cheque. They spent a happy month there.

For twenty years Tom raced and gambled, philandered with the prettiest girls, danced, ate in the most expensive restaurants, and dressed beautifully. He always looked as if he had just stepped out of a bandbox. Though he was forty-six you would never have taken him for more than thirty-five. He was a most amusing companion and though you knew he was perfectly worthless you could not but enjoy his society. He had high spirits, an unfailing gaiety, and incredible charm. I never grudged the contributions he regularly levied on me for the necessities of his existence. I never lent him fifty pounds without feeling that I was in his debt. Tom Ramsay knew everyone and everyone knew Tom Ramsay. You could not approve of him, but you could not help liking him.

Poor George, only a year older than his scapegrace brother, looked sixty. He had never taken more than a fortnight's holiday in the year for a quarter of a century. He was in his office every morning at nine-thirty and never left it till six. He was honest, industrious, and worthy. He had a good wife, to whom he had never been unfaithful even in thought, and four daughters to whom he was the best of fathers. He made a point of saving a third of his income and his plan was to retire at fifty-five to a little house in the country where he proposed to cultivate his garden and play golf. His life was blameless. He was glad that he was growing old because Tom was growing old too. He rubbed his hands and said:

'It was all very well when Tom was young and good-looking, but he's only a year younger than I am. In four years he'll be fifty. He won't find life so easy then. I shall have thirty thousand pounds by the time I'm fifty. For twenty-five years I've said that Tom would end in the gutter. And we shall see how he likes that. We shall see if it really pays best to work or be idle.'

Poor George! I sympathized with him. I wondered now as I sat down beside him what infamous thing Tom had done. George was evidently very much upset.

‘Do you know what’s happened now?’ he asked me.

I was prepared for the worst. I wondered if Tom had got into the hands of the police at last. George could hardly bring himself to speak.

‘You’re not going to deny that all my life I’ve been hardworking, decent, respectable, and straightforward. After a life of industry and thrift I can look forward to retiring on a small income in gilt-edged securities. I’ve always done my duty in that state of life in which it has pleased Providence to place me.’

‘True.’

‘And you can’t deny that Tom has been an idle, worthless, dissolute, and dishonourable rogue. If there were any justice he’d be in the workhouse.’

‘True.’

George grew red in the face.

‘A few weeks ago he became engaged to a woman old enough to be his mother. And now she’s died and left him everything she had. Half a million pounds, a yacht, a house in London, and a house in the country.’

George Ramsay beat his clenched fist on the table.

‘It’s not fair, I tell you, it’s not fair. Damn it, it’s not fair.’

I could not help it. I burst into a shout of laughter as I looked at George’s wrathful face, I rolled in my chair, I very nearly fell on the floor. George never forgave me. But Tom often asks me to excellent dinners in his charming house in Mayfair, and if he occasionally borrows a trifle from me, that is merely from force of habit. It is never more than a sovereign.

18.3.3 Summary

The Ramsays were perfectly respectable people. George was the elder brother and his younger brother was named Tom. There was every reason that Tom would come to have a useful and respectable career. But he was like the grasshopper who wasted his life in idle, worthless, dissolute pursuits. His elder brother George on the contrary was like the ant, prudent, industrious. He was looking forward to retiring on a small income and leading a peaceful retired life. But Tom did not let his elder brother’s dream be realised. One day, without warning, Tom announced that he had no interest in work and he would not marry. He wanted to enjoy life. He refused to listen to anybody who gave him good counsel. He left his wife and office. With the little money he had he spent two happy years in various capitals of Europe. When he ran out of pocket, Tom borrowed money from others. He was very good at making friends and his friends found it difficult to refuse money when he asked for it.

Tom would often borrow money from his elder brother George for his luxuries. Once or twice when Tom promised to mend his ways, George gave him considerable money so that he might make a fresh start. Instead of mending his ways, Tom bought a motor car and some jewellery with that money. When George felt his brother to be incorrigible, Tom started blackmailing him. He took up a job in a bar or started driving a taxi. George had to oblige his brother with a couple of hundred pounds merely to save the honour of the family.

Once Tom nearly went to prison. He showed himself having cheated a man called Cronshaw, other scoundrel, with whom Tom was in league. Cronshaw threatened to take the matter to the court if his money was not returned by Tom. But George could not allow his only brother to go to jail. So he paid Tom the money. To his surprise, George heard both Tom and Cronshaw went off together to Monte Carlo soon after encashing the cheque. For twenty years Tom raced and gambled and made love, danced, ate in costly restaurants and dressed himself in spotless garments. Though he was forty six, he looked to be less than thirty six. And George who was only a year older than Tom looked sixty. The poor George worked hard in his office and never left his office before six. His only consolation was that Tom too was getting old and then he would not find life so easy then. George was dumbfounded to learn that Tom become engaged to a woman old enough to be his mother. After her death, Tom inherited her property and a house in London and another in the country. This provoked the elder brother to bitter resentment.

18.3.4 Narrative Devices

Maugham's story, generally speaking, focuses on the narrator – his problem with the fable and his satisfaction on discovering that it is not necessarily true to life. George/Tom is merely the vehicle through which the narrator makes his point. He conveys that the idlers do not necessarily 'end in the gutter', and grasshoppers also have their uses – as purveyors of pleasures. Maugham as a writer whose function is to entertain, very naturally identifies with grasshopper, Tom.

Maugham's story creates suspense. The narrator expresses doubt concerning the value of the fable, which teaches that "in an imperfect world industry is rewarded and giddiness is punished". He also tells us that as a child his sympathies were with the grasshopper and he loved stepping on ants. The narrator projects a friendly attitude to George and is disapproving of Tom. "Why don't you chuck him", he asks George, adding, "he's quite hopeless". However in his narration, the narrator confesses a certain partiality for Tom and reveals George's less attractive aspects. But also reverts to his sympathetic attitude to George and again disapproves of Tom "I wondered what infamous thing Tom had done .. whether ..."

The fable's simplistic presentation of the facts of life is, it would appear, essential to its didactic purpose. George's anger at Tom, and the narrator's remarks "I wondered now..... what infamous thing Tom had done" and "I was prepared for the worst" Hardly lead the reader to expect - as it turns out - that Tom has inherited a fortune. The characters of the fable

are presented from a single point of view only, namely, their ability to provide for the future. Maugham's human counterparts are more rounded and other aspects of their nature are also considered. The simplistic world picture of the fable is, I have already pointed out, essential to its didactic purpose. The 'joyful sinner' theme is also treated in Ring Lardner's 'Haircut.' But whereas in the Chassidic legend the 'sins' are not specified (they may even be technical rather than moral sins), and in "The Ant and the Grasshopper" Tom's sins are treated lightly- so that, in the sinner's joy has an innocent, infectious quality.

18.4 Self Assessment Questions

1. Write an essay on George and Tom are- a study in contrast. Discuss.
2. Write an essay on the humour in the story with special reference to its contrast with the fable, Tom's philosophy of spending his tricks to get money from George, his final stroke of luck and George's reaction to it.
3. Write a short note on the life of George Ramsay.
4. How does Tom blackmail George ? Why does George help Tom first ?

18.5 Answers to SAQs

1. W. Somerset Maugham's story "The Ant and the Grasshopper" presents a study in contrast of the two brothers George and Tom. George was honest, industrious and worthy. He attended his office every morning at nine thirty and never left before six in the evening. He has been hard working, decent, respectable and straight forward. George continued to save one third of his income and his plan was to retire at fifty five to a little house in the country where he proposed to cultivate his garden and play golf. George was proud of having done his duty in life. He was like the ant in the famous fable of the ant and the grasshopper.

The contrary was George's younger brother Tom. He had been idle, worthless, dissolute and dishonourable rogue. He was like the grasshopper in the fable who wasted not only his own time but depended on others for his living. He had no interest in the job and marriage. He left his job and deserted his wife. He had a good time in the capital of Europe with the little money he had. Thereafter he started borrowing from his friends. When his brother George refused to do anything for him, Tom started blackmailing him by picking up low odd jobs not in keeping with the dignity of their family. The elder brother who was conscious of the family honour gave him the money which was later on spent by Tom on buying a motor car and jewellery. While the elder brother would eat a modest meal, the younger brother would spend lavishly on his meals and dressed himself beautifully. Though Tom was forty six, he looked much less than his actual age. On the other hand George, who was only a year older than Tom, looked to be sixty. He had never taken more than a fortnight's holiday in the year.

Looking at the pitiable condition of the elder brother George, one is forced to revise one's opinion about the age-old fable of "The Ant and The Grasshopper" which tell us that in an imperfect world, industry is rewarded and idleness punished.

2. The famous fable of 'The Ant and The Grasshopper' brings home to us the lesson that in an imperfect world, industry is rewarded and idleness punished. In this fable the ant spends a laborious summer gathering its winter store, while the grasshopper has an empty store. He goes to the ant and begs for a little food. Then the ant gives him her classic answer: "What were you doing in the summer time?" The grasshopper replied that he sang all day and all night. The ant humorously replied then that he should go and dance.

But the narrator in this story has no faith in the truth of this fable. He thinks just the contrary to the lesson conveyed by this fable. In order to demonstrate the truth of his argument, the narrator tells the story of two brothers namely George and his younger brother Tom. George had been throughout his life dutiful, industrious, respectful and blameless. He is compared to the ant in the fable. But his younger brother Tom was a wastrel, dissolute and dishonourable rogue. Like the grasshopper in the fable, Tom has been an idler and a worthless fellow. He left his job and deserted his wife and went in for life of extravagance. He not only extorted money from his innocent brother George but he also duped his other friends. George thinks that Tom would come to grief when he becomes old. He tries his level best to bring Tom to the right path but Tom proves incorrigible and refuses to mend his ways. The elder brother is filled with bitter resentment when at the end Tom inherits half a million pounds, a yacht, a house in London and a house in the country of an old woman Tom had married not long before her death. The narrator comments at the end that though we sympathise with the elder brother George yet life's little ironies thus falsify the truth contained in the famous fable of 'The Ant and The Grasshopper'.

3. George Ramsay was the elder brother of Tom. He was forty seven year. But poor George looked much older than his actual age. He had never taken more than a fortnight's holiday in a year. He was regular in attending his office every morning at nine thirty. He never left the office before six in the evening. He was honest, industrious and worthy. He had a good wife to whom he was always faithful. He had four daughters to whom he was the best of the fathers. He made a plan of saving one third of his income and to retire at fifty- five. He hoped to own a little house in the country where he proposed to cultivate his garden and play golf. All through his life, George has been hard working, decent, respectable and straight forward. After a life of industry and thirft he looked forward to retiring on a small income. He always did his duty even when he was not favourably placed in circumstances. He tried his level best to bring his idle, extravagant brother Tom to the right path but he proved incorrigible. Not only did he put the family honour to shame but he tried to blackmail his elder brother George. Thus we find

George to be blameless, prudent and industrious.

4. The Ramsays were perfectly respectable people. It was hoped that Tom, the younger brother would have a respectable profession. But he turned out to be a wastrel extravagant. He left his job and deserted his wife and ran away from home without telling anybody. With the little money he had he spent a good time in the capitals of Europe. George and other relatives of Tom expected Tom to come to the right path after he exhausted his money. But it did not happen. Tom wanted to enjoy himself and spend money on luxuries. For this he depended on his brother George. George was a serious man and never wanted to be enticed by Tom. Once or twice George helped Tom on promise to mend his ways. With the money he got from his brother George, Tom bought a motor car and some nice jewellery. When George found his brother incorrigible, he decided to forget about him. But Tom had other ways of extorting money from his brother Tom. He began to blackmail him. Tom started doing low job of working in a bar or driving a taxi - the professions not very decent for a respectable family like Ramsays. In order to save the family honour, George again gave his brother a couple of hundred pounds. Once Tom nearly went to prison. He was in league with one called Cronshaw. Cronshaw threatened to drag Tom to the court if his money was not returned. How could George allow his brother to go to jail. George became furious when he found Tom and Cronshaw going to Monte Carlo together when the cheque was encashed. They spent a month there. This is how Tom blackmailed his brother George.

18.6 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit we have presented to you:

- (i) an introduction to fable.
- (ii) a brief introduction to W.S. Maugham and his literary works.
- (iii) a critical summary of the story followed by a description of narrative devices used in it.
- (iv) critical and textual questions and their answers.

18.7 Review Questions

1. Write the critical summary of the story.
2. 'The Ant and the Grasshopper' is a narrative story. Explain.

18.8 Bibliography

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UNIT-19

E.M. FORSTER: MOSQUE

(An Extract from ‘*A PASSAGE TO INDIA*’)

Structure

- 19.0 Objectives
- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 About the Author and the Novel
 - 19.2.1 Life and Personality
 - 19.2.2 About the Novel.
- 19.3 The Text: Chapter-II--Part I Mosque,
 - 19.3.1 Model Explanations
 - 19.3.2 Glossary
- 19.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 19.5 Answers to SAQs
- 19.6 Let Us sum up
- 19.7 Review Questions
- 19.8 Bibliography

19.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to convey information, cover as much ground as possible and to stimulate intelligent interest in novels. The reading of E.M. Forster’s novel *A Passage To India* helps the students to understand the complex relationship of the Indians and British at the times of the Colonial rule. In this unit we intend to present an elaborate discussion of the first chapter of the modernist novel *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster.

19.1 Introduction

Long before Forster visited India, he gained a vivid picture of its people and places. Later, he visited India during the time when Britain’s official control over India was complete and English governors were heading every province. Forster began writing *A Passage To India* just after his first visit to India. He was deeply disturbed by the racial oppression and deep cultural misunderstandings that prevailed amongst the Indians and the British : the colonised

and the coloniser. In the novel he is primarily concerned with representing the chaos of modern human experience through patterns of imagery and form.

The story of *A Passage to India* is about two British women Mrs Moore and Miss Adela Quested who visit India to understand the true spirit of the country. A young Muslim doctor Aziz becomes a good acquaintance of the two women. But an unfortunate episode during their visit to the Marabar Caves proves to be a nightmare for all the three. Fielding, an Englishman is the next most important character and plays a vital role in the novel. The story is set in the town of Chandrapore.

19.2 About the Author and Novel

19.2.1 Life and Personality

Edward Morgan Forster was born in a comfortable London family in 1879. His father, an architect, died when Forster was very young, leaving the boy to be raised by his mother and great-aunt. Forster proved to be a bright student, and he went on to attend Cambridge University, graduating in 1901. He spent much of the next decade traveling and living abroad, dividing his time between working as a journalist and writing short stories and novels. Long before Forster first visited India, he had already gained a vivid picture of its people and places from a young Indian Muslim named Syed Ross Masood. At the time of Forster's visit, the British government had been officially ruling India since 1858.

19.2.2 About the Novel

Forster spent time both with the Englishmen and the Indians during his visit, and he quickly found that he preferred the company of the latter. He was troubled by the racial oppression and deep cultural misunderstandings that divided the Indian people and the British colonists, or, as they are called in *A Passage to India*, Anglo-Indians. Forster felt sympathetic towards the Indian side of the colonial argument.

Forster began writing *A Passage to India* in 1913, just after his first visit to India. The novel was not revised and completed, however, until well after his second stay in India, in 1921. *A Passage to India* examines the racial misunderstandings and cultural hypocrisies that characterized the complex interactions between the Indians and the English towards the end of the British occupation of India.

Forster's style is marked by his sympathy for his characters, his ability to see more than one side of an argument or story, and his fondness for simple, symbolic tales that neatly encapsulate large-scale problems and conditions. These tendencies are all evident in *A Passage to India*, which was immediately acclaimed as Forster's masterpiece after its publication. It is a traditional, social and political novel, unconcerned with the technical innovations of some of Forster's modernist contemporaries such as Gertrude Stein or T.S. Eliot. *A Passage to India*

is concerned, however, with representing the chaos of modernist works of the same time period, such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925).

19.3 The Text : Part – 1 Mosque Chapter - II

Abandoning his bicycle which fell before a servant could catch it, the young man sprang up onto the veranda. He was all animation, 'Hamiduallah! Am I late?' he cried.

Do not apologize,' said his host, 'You are always late.'

'Kindly answer my question. Am I late? Has Mahmoud Ali eaten all the food? If so I go elsewhere. Mr. Mahmoud Ali, how are you?'

'Thank you, Dr. Aziz, I am dying.'

'Dying before your dinner. Oh, poor Mahmoud Ali!'

'Hamidullah here is actually dead. He passed away just as you rode up on your bike.'

'Yes, that is so,' said the other. Imagine us both as addressing you from another and a happier world.'

'Does there happen to be such a thing as a hookah in that happier world of yours?'

Aziz don't chatter. We are having a very sad talk.'

...they were discussing as to whether or no it is possible to be friends with an Englishman. Mahmoud Ali argued that it was not, Hamiduallah disagreed, but with so many reservations that there was no friction between them. 'Well, look at my own experience this morning.'

'I only contend that it is possible in England,' replied Hamidullah, who had been to that country long ago, before the big rush, and had received a cordial welcome at Cambridge.

'It is impossible here. Aziz! The red-nosed boy has again insulted me in court. I do not blame him. He was told that he ought to insult me. Until lately, he was quite a nice boy, but the others have got held of him.'

'Yes, they have no chance here, that is my point. They come out intending to be gentleman and are told it will not do.....'

Aziz joined in. 'Why talk about the English/ Brrrr...! Why be either friends with the fellows or not friends?queen Victoria and Mrs Bannister were the only exceptions, and they're dead.'

'No, no, I do not admit that, I have met others.'

'So have I,' said Mahmoud Ali, unexpectedly veering. 'All ladies are far from alike.' Their mood was changed, and they recalled little kindnesses and courtesies. 'She said "Thank

you so much” in the most natural way.’ She had offered me a lozenge when the dust irritated my throat.’ Hamiduallah could remember more important examples of angelic ministrations, but the other, who only knew Anglo-India had to ransack his memory for scrapes, and it was not surprising that he should return to ‘But of course all this is exceptional. The exception does not prove the rule. The average woman is like Mrs. Turton, and Aziz, you know what she is?’ Aziz did not know but said he did. He too generalized from his disappointments-it is difficult for members of a subject race to do otherwise. Granted the exceptions, he agreed that all Englishwomen are haughty and venal. . . .

A servant announced dinner. They ignored him. . . .

During their absence, Mahmoud Ali had gone off in his carriage, leaving a message that he should be back in five minutes, but they were on no account to wait. . . . A servant in scarlet interrupted him’ he was the chuprassy of the civil Surgeon, and he handed Aziz a note.

‘Old Callendar wants to see me at his bungalow,’ he said, not rising.’ He might have the politeness to say why.’

‘Some case, I dare say.’

‘I dare say not, I dare say nothing. He has found out our dinner-hour, that’s all, and chooses to interrupt us every time, in order to show his power.’

‘On the one hand he always does this, on the other it may be a serious case, and you cannot know,’ said Hamiduallah, considerably paving the way towards obedience. ‘Had you not better clean your teeth after pan?’

‘If my teeth are to be cleaned, I don’t go at all. I am an Indian, it is an Indian habit to take pan. The Civil Surgeon must put up with it. Mohammed Latif, my bike, please.’

The poor relation got up. Slightly immersed in the realms of matter, he laid his hand on the bicycle’s saddle, while a servant did the actual wheeling. Between them they took it over a tin-tack. Aziz held his hands under the ewer, dried them, fitted on his green felt hat, and then with unexpected energy whizzed out of Hamiduallah’s compound.

‘Aziz, Aziz, imprudent boy ...’ But he was far down the bazaar, riding furiously. He had neither light nor bell nor had he a brake, but what use are such adjuncts in a land where the cyclist’s only hope is to coast from face to face, and just before he collides with each it vanishes? And the city was fairly empty at his hour. When his tyre went flat, he leapt off and shouted for a tonga.

He did not at first find one, and he had also to dispose of his bicycle at a friend’s house. He dallied furthermore to clean his teeth. But at last he was rattling towards the Civil Lines, with a vivid sense of speed. As he entered their arid tidiness, depression suddenly seized him. The roads, named after victorious generals and interesting at right angles, were symbolic of the net Great Britain had thrown over India. He felt caught in their meshes. When

he turned into Major Callendar's compound he could with difficulty restrain himself from getting down from the tonga and approaching the bungalow on foot, and this not because his soul was servile but because his feelings - the sensitive edges of him - feared a gross snub. There had been a 'case' last year - an Indian gentleman had driven up to an official's house and been turned back by the servants and told to approach more suitably - only one case among thousands of visits to hundreds of officials, but its fame spread wide. The young man shrank from a repetition of it. He compromised, and stopped the driver just outside the flood of light that fell across the veranda.

The Civil Surgeon was out.

'But the Sahib has left me some message?'

The servant returned an indifferent 'No'. Aziz was in despair. It was a servant whom he had forgotten to tip, and he could do nothing now because there were people in the hall. He was convinced that there was a message, and that the man was withholding it out of revenge. While they argued, the people came out. Both were ladies. Aziz lifted his hat. The first, who was in evening dress, glanced at the Indian and turned instinctively away.

'Mrs Lesley, it is a tonga, ' she cried.

'Ours?' Inquired the second, also seeing Aziz, and doing likewise.

'Take the gifts the Gods provide, anyhow, she screeched, and both jumped in. 'O tonga-wallah, Club, Club. Why doesn't the fool go?'

'Go, I will pay you tomorrow, said Aziz to the driver, and as they went off he called courteously, " You are most welcomed, ladies.' They did not reply, being full of their own affairs.

So it had come, the usual thing-just as Mahmoud Ali said. The inevitable snub-his bow ignored, his carriage taken. It might have been worse, for it comforted him somehow that Mesdames Callendar and Lesley should be fat and weigh the tonga behind. Beautiful women would have pained him. He turned to the servant, gave him a couple rupees and asked again whether there was a message. The man, now very civil, returned the same answer. Major Callendar had driven away half an hour before.

'Saying nothing?'

He had as a matter of fact said, 'Damn Aziz' -words that the servant understood, but was too polite to repeat. One can tip too much as well as too little, indeed the coin that buys the exact truth has not yet been minted.

'Then I will write him a letter.'

He was offered the use of the house, but was too dignified to enter it. Paper and ink was brought onto the veranda. He began: 'Dear Sir,-At your express command I have hastened

as a subordinate should-' and then stopped. 'Tell him I have called, that is sufficient,' he said, tearing the protest up. 'Hear is my card. Call me a tonga.'

Huzoor, all are at the club.'

'Then telephone for one down to the railway station.' And since the man hastened to do this he said, 'Enough, enough, I prefer to walk.' He commandeered a match and lit a cigarette. These attentions, though purchased, soothed him. They would last as long as he had rupees, which is something. But to shake the dust of Anglo-India off his feet! To escape from the net and be back among manners and gestures that he knew! He began to walk, an unwonted exercise.

He was an athletic little man, daintily put together, but really very strong. Nevertheless walking fatigued him as it fatigues every one in India except the newcomer. There is something hostile in that soil. It either yields, and the foot sinks into a depression, or else it is unexpectedly rigid and sharp, pressing stones or crystals against the tread. A series of these little surprises exhausts; and he was wearing pumps, a poor preparation for any country. At the edge of the Civil Station he turned into a mosque to rest.

He had always liked this mosque. It was gracious, and the arrangement pleased him. The courtyard-entered through a ruined gate-contained an ablution-tank of fresh clear water, which was always in motion being indeed part of a conduit that supplied the city....Here was Islam, his own country more than a Faith, more than a battle-cry, more, much more...Islam an attitude towards life both exquisite and durable, where his body and his thoughts found their home....The secret understanding of the heart! He repeated the phrase with tears in his eyes, and as he did so one of the pillars of the mosque seemed to quiver. It swayed in the gloom and detached itself. Belief in ghosts ran in his blood, but he sat firm. Another pillar moved, a third and then an Englishwoman stepped out into the moonlight. Suddenly he was furiously angry and shouted: 'Madam! Madam! Madam!'

'Oh! Oh!' the woman gasped.

'Madam, this is a mosque, you have no right here at all; you should have taken off your shoes; this is a holy place for Moslems.'

'I have taken them off.'

'You have?'

'I left them at the entrance.'

'Then I ask your pardon.'

Still startled the woman moved out, keeping the ablution tank between them. He called after her, 'I am truly sorry for speaking.'

'Yes, I was right, was I not? If I remove my shoes I am allowed?'

‘Of course, but so few ladies take the trouble, if thinking no one is there to see.’

‘That makes no difference. God is here.’

‘Madam!’

‘Please let me go.’

‘Oh, can I do you some service now or at any other time?’

‘No, thank you really none-good night.’

‘May I know your name?’

She was now in the shadow of the gateway, so that he could not see her face, but she saw his, and said with a change of voice, ‘Mrs Moore.’

‘Mrs -.’ Advancing, he found that she was old. A fabric bigger than the Mosque fell to pieces, and he did not know whether he was glad or sorry. She was older than Hamidullah Begum, with a red face and white hair. Her voice had deceived him.

‘Mrs Moore, I am afraid I startled you. I shall tell my community -my friends- about you. That God is here - very good, very fine indeed. I think you are newly arrived in India.

‘Yes-how did you know?’

‘By the way you address me. No, can I call you a carriage?’

I have only come from the club. They are doing a play that I have seen in London, and it was so hot.’

‘What was the name of the play?’

‘*Cousin Kate.*’

‘I think you ought not to walk at night alone, Mrs Moore. There are bad charters about and leopards may come across from the Marabar Hills. Snakes also.’

She exclaimed; she had forgotten the snakes.

‘For example, a six-spot beetle,’ he continued. ‘You pick it up, it bites, you die.’

‘But you walk alone yourself.’

‘Oh, I am used to it.’

‘Used to snakes?’

They both laughed. ‘I am a doctor. He said. ‘Snakes don’t dare bite me.’ They sat down side by side in the entrance, and slipped on their evening shoes. ‘Please may I ask you a question now? Why do you come to India at this time of year, just as the cold weather is ending?’

‘I intended to start earlier but there was an unavoidable delay.’

‘It will soon be so unhealthy for you! And why ever do come to Chandrapore?’

‘To visit my son. He is the City Magistrate here.’

‘Oh no, excuse me, that is quite impossible. Our City Magistrate’s name is Mr Heaslop. I know him intimately.

He is my son all the same,’ she said, smiling.

‘But Mrs Moore, how can that be?’

‘I was married twice.’

‘Yes, now I see, and your first husband died.’

‘He did, and so did my second husband.’

‘Then we are in the same box,’ he said cryptically. ‘Then is the City Magistrate the entire of your family now?’

‘No, there are the younger ones - Ralph and Stella in England.’

‘And the gentleman here, is he Ralph and Stella’s halfbrother?’

‘Quite right.’

‘Mrs Moore, this is all extremely strange, because like yourself I have also two sons and a daughter. Is not this the same box with a vengeance?’

‘What are their names?’ not also Ronny, Ralph and Stella, surely?’

The suggestion delighted him. ‘No, indeed. How funny it sounds! Their names are quite different and will surprise you. Listen, please. I am about to tell you my children’s names. The first is called Ahmed, the second is called Karim, the third -she is the eldest - Jamila. Three children are enough. Do not you agree with me?’

‘I do.’

They were both silent for a little, thinking of their respective families. She sighed and rose to go.

‘Would you care to see over the Minto Hospital one morning?’ he inquired. ‘I have nothing to offer at Chandrapore.’

‘Thank you I have seen it already, or I should have liked to come with you very much.’

‘I suppose the Civil Surgeon took you.’

‘Yes, and Mrs Callendar.’

His voice altered. 'Ah! A charming lady.'

'Possibly, when one knows her better.'

'What? What? You did`nt like her?'

'She was certainly intending to be kind, but I did not find her exactly charming.'

He burst out with: 'She has just taken my camera without my permission – do you call that being charming? – and Major Callendar interrupts me night after night from where I am dining with my friends and I go at once, breaking up a most pleasant entertainment, and he is not there and not even a message. Is this charming, pray? But what does it matter? I can do nothing and he knows it. I am just a subordinate, my time is of no value, the veranda is good enough for an Indian, yes, yes let him stand, Mrs Callendar takes my carriage and cuts me dead...'

She listened.

He was excited partly by his wrongs, but much more by the knowledge that someone sympathized with them. It was this that led him to repeat, exaggerate, contradict. She had proved her sympathy by criticising her fellow country woman to him, but even earlier he had known. The flame that not even beauty can nourish was springing up, though his words were querulous his heart began to glow secretly. Presently it burst into speech.

'You understand me, you know what I feel. Oh, if others resembled you!

Rather surprised she replied: 'I don`t think I understand people very well. I only know whether I like them or dislike them.'

'Then you an Oriental.'

She accepted his escort back to the Club, and said at the gate that she wished she was a member, so that she could have asked him in.

'Indians are not allowed into the Chandrapore Club even as guests,' he said simply. He did not expatiate on his wrongs now, being happy. As he strolled downhill beneath the lovely moon, and again saw the lovely mosque, he seemed to own the land as much as any one owned it. What did it matter if a few flabby Hindus had preceded him there, and a few chilly English succeeded?

19.3.1 Model Explanations

I. When he turned into a gross snub.

These lines give an insight into the confused train of thoughts of Dr. Aziz as he enters the compound of Major Callendar's residence. He had been informed by a peon that Callendar wished to see him at his bungalow. Aziz rides on his bicycle towards the place but its tyre goes flat on the way. He quickly takes a tonga and reaches the bungalow.

But as he enters the compound he gets down from the tonga and walks on foot. He tries hard not to behave in this manner as it seems quite servile to him to be walking on foot instead of the tonga. As he analyses the reason of this behaviour, he realizes that it is not because he has imbibed a servant like feeling for himself and considers the white Callendar as his master. He rather does this as somewhere in his heart he fears being snubbed and insulted by the English officials. He shrinks from a thought of a repetition of such an insult of himself.

These lines give a vivid picture of the impact of colonization on the minds of the Indian people. Even a reputed and educated man like Dr. Aziz was forced to be careful of his actions as he too feared being insulted by the English officials. These lines are also suggestive of the attitude of the British towards the Indians whom they considered inferior and thus inflicted physical as well as mental torture on them.

II He burst out with charming, pray?

These lines are spoken by Dr. Aziz to Mrs Moore on his chance meeting with her in the Mosque. Mrs Moore is one of the important characters in the novel, who along with Miss Adela Quested is on her visit to India.

While talking to Mrs Moore Aziz realizes that she is quite different in her outlook towards Indians. Aziz speaks out his thoughts to her regarding the way the two English women had behaved with him at Callendar's bungalow. All the anger that he had suppressed within himself bursts out at the mention of Callendar's wife.

Mrs Moore who along with Adela Quested is on her visit to India in search of the 'real' India is introduced here. Forster straight away makes an attempt to let his reader know that all British do not have snobbery. Mrs Moore is very sympathetic towards Aziz and displays a sense of respect for India and Indians. Her character as well as her attitude towards Indians is understood quite well in this passage. It is also through her that Forster wishes to bridge the gap between the East and the West.

19.3.2 Glossary

Chuprassy	-	peon
Interrupt	-	Act so as to break the continuous progress of action.
Paving the way	-	make preparations.
Considerate	-	thoughtful for others.
Immersed	-	plunge or put in liquid.
Realms	-	Kingdom, sphere.
Ewer	-	water jug with wide mouth.
Whizzed	-	sound made by body moving through air at great speed.
Imprudent	-	rash, indiscreet.

Furiously	-	angrily
Adjuncts	-	things subordinate or incidental.
Dispose	-	place suitably or in order.
Dallied	-	delay.
Rattling	-	To give out rapid succession of short, sharps hard sound.
Arid	-	dry, parched.
Seized	-	to take hold or possession of
Victorious	-	conquering.
Intersecting	-	divide by crossing.
Restrain	-	check or hold.
Servile	-	like slaves.
Snub	-	rebuff or humiliate with sharp words.
Indifferent	-	lack of interest.
Despair	-	loss or absence of hope.
Convinced	-	firmly persuade.
Withholding	-	holding back.
Instinctively	-	impulsively.
Screeched	-	harsh high pitched scream.
Courteously	-	Politely.
Inevitable	-	Unavoidable.
Hastened	-	In a hurry.
Subordinate	-	of inferior rank.
Commandeered	-	seized for military use.
Daintily	-	delicately.
Fatigued	-	extremely tired.
Tread	-	walk on.
Amateur	-	one who performs with limited skill.
Quatrain	-	four line stanza.

Detached	-	unfasten or separate
Started	-	shocked
Cryptically	-	secretly
Vengeance	-	punish as revenge
Exaggerate	-	make seem larger than reality.
Contradict	-	deny, oppose.
Querulous	-	complaining
Oriental	-	of the eastern.
Expatriate	-	speak or write at length.
Strolled	-	walked in a leisurely way.
Sulkily	-	to be gloomy
Trance	-	dreamy state
Imperial	-	pertaining to an empire (here the British Empire)

19.4 Self Assessment Questions

(a) Answer the following questions in one or two lines each.

1. What do Dr. Aziz and others feel about the English?

.....

2. Who sent a message to Aziz?

.....

3. What message did old Callendar send to Aziz?

.....

4. Why was Aziz forced to take a tonga?

.....

5. Name the two English women who took away Aziz's tonga.

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What impression of the character of Aziz do you get after having read the extract from *Passage to India* prescribed for your study?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

19.5 Answers SAQs

(a) Answers to Short Questions

1. They all believed that friendship between the English and the Indians was not possible.
2. Major Callendar, the Civil surgeon of Chandrapore sent a message for Aziz.
3. “Old Callendar wanted to see Dr. Aziz at his bungalow in Civil Lines” was the message sent to him.
4. Aziz started off to meet Callendar on his bicycle but its tyre went flat on the way so he hired a tonga.
5. The two Englishwomen who took away the tonga of Aziz were Mesdames Callendar and Lesley.
6. After leaving Callendar’s bungalow Aziz went to a mosque.
7. Mrs Moore, an Englishwoman met him at the mosque.
8. Aziz presumed that Mrs Moore must not have taken off her shoes in the mosque which was a holy place for moslems so he got angry with her.
9. The City Magistrate of Chandrapore Mr Heaslp is the son of Mrs Moore.
10. Other than Mr. Heaslop, Ralph and stella are the two members of Mrs. Moore’s family.

(b) Answers to long answer Questions

1. The two Englishwomen at Callendar's bungalow snubbed and insulted Dr Aziz. Firstly they ignored his bow and secondly without taking his permission took away the tonga hired by him. Moreover, they did not thank him and ignored his offer as well.
2. Initially Aziz got furious on seeing Mrs Moore in the mosque as he presumed that she must not have taken off her shoes. After having known that Mrs Moore was considerate enough to have taken off her shoes his mood changed. Then while they conversed, Aziz realized that Mrs Moore was unlike other British as she sympathized with Indians.
3. Dr. Aziz is a young Muslim Doctor working in an English Hospital at Chandrapore. He is eager to please others. He is critical of the 'purdah'. He is the hero of the novel. He is a nationalist. He comes of a prosperous Muslim family and has studied in London. He is handsome and is a competent doctor. He is impulsive and sensitive. Although married twice, he is a widower. He is revengeful to the English. He is the most human, and believable of all Forster's characters.

19.6 Let Us Sum Up

E.M. Forster's *Mosque : A Passage to India* presents western civilization in collision with eastern, imperial with colonial, the human heart in conflict with the machinery of government, class and race. This first chapter of part one – Mosque, of the novel which is discussed in detail here, beautifully introduces this very aspect of the novel.

19.7 Review Questions

1. 'A Passage to India' examines the racial misunderstandings and cultural hypocrisies. Explain.
2. Write a character note on the following characters-
 - a) Doctor Aziz.
 - b) Mrs Moore

19.8 Bibliography

1. Crewe C. Fredrick : The Perils of Humanism. A study of E.M. Forster.
2. Rose Macaulay : The Writings of E.M. Forster.
3. Nirad C. Chaudhari : Passage to and from India.
4. J. J. Oliver : The Art of E.M. Forster.

UNIT-20

E.M.FORSTER : TEMPLE

(An Extract from ‘*A PASSAGE TO INDIA*’)

Structure

- 20.0 Objectives
- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 About the Author
 - 20.2.1 Life and Personality
 - 20.2.2 His works
 - 20.2.3 His Age
- 20.3 The Text: Part III: Temple
 - 20.3.1 Model Explanation
 - 20.3.2 Glossary
- 20.4 Self Assessment Questions
- 20.5 Answers to SAQs
- 20.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 20.7 Review Questions
- 20.8 Bibliography

20.0 Objectives

This unit also discusses E.M. Forster’s *A Passage to India* which is unrivalled in English fiction in its presentation of the complex problems which were to be found in the relationships between the English and the Indians during the colonial rule. The unit comprises the last two chapters of part III entitled Temple of the novel which particularly deals with Forster’s keen interest in the study of personal human relationship and his sympathy towards the Indian side of the colonial argument.

20.1 Introduction

Forster started writing *A Passage to India* in 1913 and got it published in 1924. The novel examines the cultural hypocrisies that characterized the complex interactions between the Indians and the English during the British rule in India and also the degrading effects it had

on both. Forster emphasizes the need for personal relationship and the supremacy of the emotional life in order to bridge the gulf between people of different races. In this concluding chapter of the novel which has been taken up for discussion here Forster emphasizes the worth of personal relations. Through the relationship of Aziz and Fielding, the novelist attempts to show that the barriers of understanding among men are due to the rigid conventions and their narrow prejudices. Through this friendship Forster suggests good will as a solution to the racial problem. He wants that men must not be bound by conventions and prejudices and must follow their hearts and impulses in reaching out towards one another. Through the various complex personal relationships of Aziz, Fielding, Mrs Moore and Miss Adela Quested Forster achieves this goal.

20.2 About the Author

20.2.1 Life and Personality

Edward Morgan Forster was born at 8, Melcombe Place, Dorset Square, London, on January 1, 1879. Forster's great aunt Marianne left to him a legacy of eight thousand pounds which helped him in his education at Cambridge. This wealth also helped him to travel and gain continental experience whereby he visited India thrice in his whole life. In 1921, he worked as the Private Secretary of the Maharajah of Dewas (India).

20.2.2 His works

Forster wrote five novels. His earliest novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* was published in 1905 in which his concern for the conflict between two different cultures is seen. Next came *The Longest Journey* in 1907 which though a less attractive work shows the same skill in characterisation. Published in 1908 *A Room with a view* like his first novel, is set in Italy. It contains very delicately handled comedy. Then came his two masterpieces-*Howards End* in 1910 and some time later *A Passage to India* in 1924. Both these novels deal with the misunderstandings which arise in relationships between individuals in one case, and between races in the other.

20.2.3 His Age

Forster was not an idle reflector of his age but a keen interpreter of it. His literary career covers the first quarter of the Twentieth century. The age of Forster holds complexity, contradiction, progress as well as retrogression. As the World War broke out in 1914, tremors shook the industrial and political surface of Britain. Initially optimism prevailed and poets greeted the war as patriots. But later on they realized the futilities of war. T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land* appeared in 1922 and then two years later *A Passage to India* in 1924. The age of Forster is remarkable for the growth of democracy as well as industrialization. But the menace of industrialization was visible which posed various problems in the society. Though scientific

and material progress was visible everywhere spiritual values were on the decline. Forster responded to all these problems and his novels are a reflection of this. He emphasized the racial differences as well as the spiritual vacuum in his novels. His novel *A Passage to India* is a valuable critique of British rule in India.

20.3 The Text: Part III- Temple

Chapter XXXVI & XXXVII

All the time the palace ceased not to thrum and tum-tum. The revelation was over, but its effect was to make men feel that the revelation had not yet come. Hope existed despite fulfilment, as it will be in heaven. Although the God had been born, His procession – loosely supposed by many to be the Birth – had not taken place. In normal years, the middle hours of this day were signalized by performances of great beauty in the private apartments of the Rajah. He owned a consecrated troupe of men and boys, whose duty it was to dance various actions and meditations of his faith before him. Seated at his ease, he could witness the Three Steps by which the Saviour ascended the universe to the discomfiture of India, also the death of the dragon, the mountain that turned into an umbrella, and the saddhu who (with comic results) invoked the God before dining. All culminated in the dance of the milkmaidens before Krishna, and in the still greater dance of sKrishna before the milkmaidens, when the music and the musicians swirled through the dark blue robes of the actors into their tinsel crowns, and all became one. . . . The procession was beginning to form as he passed the palace. A large crowd watched the loading of the State palanquin, the prow of which protruded in the form of a silver dragon's head through the lofty half-opened door. Gods, big and little, were getting aboard. . . . The water below, the hills and sky above, were not involved as yet ; there was still only a little light and song struggling among the shapeless lumps of the universe. The song became audible through much repetition; the choir was repeating and inverting the names of deities.

‘ Radhakrishna Radhakrishna,
Radhakrishna Radhakrishna,
Krishnaradha Radhakrishna,
Radhakrishna Radhakrishna’

They sang, and woke the sleeping sentry in the Guest House; he leant upon his iron-tipped spear. . . . Gusts of wind mixed darkness and light, sheets of rain cut from the north, stopped, cut from the south, began rising from below, and across them struggled the singers, sounding every note but terror, and preparing to throw God away, God Himself (not that God can be thrown), into the storm. Thus was He thrown year after year, and were others thrown – little images of Ganpati, baskets of ten-day corn, tiny tazias after Mohurram – scapegoats, husks, emblems of passage; a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be apprehended except when it is unattainable : the God to be thrown was an emblem of that. . . . The singing went on even longer . . . ragged edges of religion . . . unsatisfactory and undramatic tangles . . .

‘God is love.’ Looking back at the great blur of the last twenty-four hours, no man could say where was the emotional centre of it, any more than he could locate the heart of a cloud.

Friends again, yet aware that they would meet no more, Aziz and Fielding went for their last ride in the Mau jungles. The floods had abated and the Rajah was officially dead, so the Guest House party was departing next morning, as decorum required. What with the mourning and the festivity, the visit was a failure. Fielding had scarcely seen Godbole, who promised every day to show him over the King Emperor George Fifth High School, his main objective, but always made some excuse. This afternoon Aziz let out what had happened: the King Emperor had been converted into a granary, and the Ministry of Education did not like to admit this to his former Principal. The school had been opened only last year by the Agent to the Governor-General, and it still flourished on paper; he hoped to start it again before its absence was remarked and to collect its scholars before they produced children of their own. Fielding laughed at the tangle and waste of energy, but he did not travel as lightly as in the past; education was a continuous concern to him because his income and the comfort of his family depended on it. He knew that few Indians think education good in itself, and he deplored this now on the widest grounds. He began to say something heavy on the subject of Native States, but the friendliness of Aziz distracted him. This reconciliation was a success, anyhow. After the funny shipwreck there had been no more nonsense or bitterness, and they went back laughingly to their old relationship as if nothing had happened. Now they rode between jolly bushes and rocks. Presently the ground opened into full sunlight and they saw a grassy slope bright with butterflies, also a cobra, which crawled across doing nothing in particular, and disappeared among some custard-apple trees. There were round white clouds in the sky, and white pools on the earth; the hills in the distance were purple. The scene was as part-like as England, but did not cease being queer. They drew rein, to give the cobra elbow-room, and Aziz produced a letter that he wanted to send to Miss Quested. A charming letter. He wanted to thank his old enemy for her fine behaviour two years back; perfectly plain was it now that she had behaved well. “As I fell into our largest Mau tank under circumstances our other friends will relate, I thought how brave Miss Quested was, and decided to tell her so, despite my imperfect English. Through you I am happy here with my children instead of in a prison, of that I make no doubt. My children shall be taught to speak of you with the greatest affection and respect”.

‘Miss Quested will be greatly pleased. I am glad you have seen her courage at last’.

‘I want to do kind action all round and wipe out the wretched business of the Marabar for ever. I have been so disgracefully hasty, thinking you meant to get hold of my money; as bad mistake as the cave itself’.

‘Aziz, I wish you would talk to my wife. She too believes that the Marabar is wiped out’.

‘How so?’

‘I don’t know, perhaps she might tell you, she won’t tell me. She has ideas I don’t

share - indeed, when I'm away from her I think them ridiculous. When I'm with her, I suppose because I'm fond of her, I feel different, I feel half deaf and half blind. My wife's after something. You and I and Miss Quested are, roughly speaking, not after anything. We jog on as decently as we can, you a little in front - a laudable little party. But my wife is not with us.'

'What are you meaning? Is Stella not faithful to you, Cyril? This fills me with great concern'.

Fielding hesitated. He was not quite happy about his marriage. He was passionate physically again - and final flare up before the clinkers of middle age - and he knew that his wife did not love him as much as he loved her, and he was ashamed of pestering her. But during the visit to Mau the situation had improved. There seemed a link between them at last that link outside either participant that is necessary to every relationship. In the language of theology, their union had been blessed. He could assure Aziz that Stella was not only faithful to him, but likely to become more so; and, trying to express what was not clear to himself, he added dully that different people had different points of view. 'If you won't talk about the Marabar to Stella, why won't you talk to Ralph? He is a wise boy really. And (same metaphor) he rides a little behind her, though with her'.

'Tell him also, I have nothing to say to him, but he is indeed a wise boy and has always one Indian friend. I partly love him because he brought me back to you to say good bye. For this is a good bye, Cyril, though to think about it will spoil our ride and make us sad.'

'No, we won't think about it'. He too felt that this was their last free intercourse. All the stupid misunderstandings had been cleared up, but socially they had no meeting-place. He had thrown in his lot with Anglo-India by marrying a countrywomen, and he was acquiring some of its limitations, and already felt surprise at his own past heroism. Would he today defy all his own people for the sake of a stray Indian? Aziz was a memento, a trophy, they were proud of each other, yet they must inevitably part. And, anxious to make what he could of this last afternoon, he forced himself to speak intimately about his wife, the person most dear to him. He said: 'From her point of view, Mau has been a success. It calmed her - both of them suffer from restlessness. She found something soothing, some solution of her queer troubles here'. After a silence - myriads of kisses around them as the earth drew the water in - he continued: 'Do you know anything about this Krishna business?'

'My dear chap, officially they call it Gokul Ashtami. All the State offices are closed, but how else should it concern you and me?'

'Gokul is the village where Krishna was born - well, more or less born, for there's the same hovering between it and another village as between Bethlehem and Nazareth. What I want to discover is its spiritual side, if it has one'.

'It is useless discussing Hindus with me. Living with them teaches me no more. When I think I annoy them, I do not. When I think I don't annoy them, I do. Perhaps they will sack me for tumbling onto their doll's house; on the other hand perhaps they will double my salary.'

Time will prove. Why so curious about them?’

‘It’s difficult to explain. I never really understood or liked them, except an occasional scrap of Godbole. Does the old fellow still say “Come, come”?’

‘Oh, presumably.’

Fielding signed, opened his lips, shut them, then said with a little laugh, ‘I can’t explain, because it isn’t in words at all, but why do my wife and her brother like Hinduism, though they take no interest in its forms? They won’t talk to me about this. They know I think a certain side of their lives is a mistake, and are shy. That’s why I wish you would talk to them, for at all events you’re oriental.’

Aziz refused to reply. He didn’t want to meet Stella and Ralph again, knew they didn’t want to meet him was incurious about their secrets, and felt good old Cyril to be a bit clumsy. Something - not a sight, but a sound - flitted past him, and caused him to reread his letter to Miss Quedsted. Hadn’t he wanted to say something else to her? Taking out his pen, he added: ‘For my own part, I shall henceforth connect you with the name that is very sacred in my mind, namely Mrs Moore’. When he had finished, the mirror of the scenery was shattered, the meadow disintegrated into butterflies. A poem about Mecca - the Caaba of Union - the thorn-bushes where pilgrims die before they have seen the Fried - they flitted next; he thought of his wife; and then the whole semi-mystic, semi-sensuous overturn so characteristic of his spiritual life, came to end like a landslide and rested in its due place, and he found himself riding in the jungle with his dear Cyril.

‘Oh, shut up,’ he said. ‘Don’t spoil our last hour with foolish questions. Leave Krishna alone, and talk about something sensible’.

They did. All the way back to Mau they wrangled about politics. Each had hardened since Chandrapore, and a good knock-about proved enjoyable. They trusted each other, although they were going to part, perhaps because they were going to part. Fielding had ‘no further use for politeness,’ he said, meaning that the British Empire really can’t be abolished because it’s rude. Aziz retorted, ‘Very well, and we have no use for you,’ and glared at him with abstract hate. Fielding said: ‘Away from us Indians go to seed at once. Look at the King Emperor High School? Look at you, forgetting your medicine and going back to charms. Look at your poems.’ - ‘Jolly good poems, I’m getting published Bombay side.’ - ‘Yes, and what do they say? Free our women and India will be free. Try it, my lad. Free your own lady in the first place, and see who’ll wash Ahmed, Karim and Jamila’s faces. A nice situation!’

Aziz grew more excited. He rose in his stirrups and pulled at his horse’s head in the hope it would rear. Then he should feel in a battle. He cried: ‘Clear out, all you Turtons and Burtons. We wanted to know you ten years back - now it’s too late. If we see you and sit on your committees, it’s for political reasons, don’t you make any mistake.’ His horse did rear. ‘Clear out, clear out, I say. Why are we put to so much suffering? We used to blame you, now

we blame ourselves, we grow wiser. Until England is in difficulties we keep silent, but in the next European war - aha, aha! Then is our time'. He paused, and the scenery, though it smiled, fell like a gravestone on any human hope. They cantered past a temple to Hanuman - God so loved the world that he took money's flesh upon him - and past a Saivite temple, which invited to lust, but under the semblance of eternity, its obscenities bearing no relation to those of our flesh and blood. They splashed through butterflies and frogs; great trees with leaves like plates rose among the brushwood. The divisions of daily life were returning, the shrine had almost shut.

'Who do you want instead of the English? The Japanese?' jeered Fielding, drawing rein.

'No, the Afghans. My own ancestors'.

'Oh, your Hindu friends will like that, won't they?'

'It will be arranged - a conference of oriental statesmen.'

'It will indeed be arranged'.

'Old story of 'We will rob every man and rape every woman from Peshawar to Calcutta'. I suppose, which you get some nobody to repeat and then quote every week in the Pioneer in order to frighten us into retaining you! We know!' Still he couldn't quite fit in Afghans at Mau, and, finding he was in a corner, made his horse rear again until he remembered that he had, or ought to have, a mother-land. Then he shouted: 'India shall be a nation! No foreigners of any sort! Hindu and Moslem and Sikh and all shall be one! Hurrah! Hurrah for India! Hurrah! Hurrah!

India a nation! What an apotheosis! Last comer to the drab nineteenth-century sisterhood! Waddling in at this hour of the world to take her seat! She, whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Guatemala and Belgium perhaps! Fielding mocked again. And Aziz in an awful rage danced this way and that, no knowing what to do, and cried: 'Down with the English anyhow. That's certain. Clear out you fellows, double quick, I say. We may hate one another, but we hate you most. If I don't make you go, Ahmed will, Karim will, if it's fifty or five hundred years we shall get rid of you, yes, we shall drive every blasted Englishman into the sea, and then' - he rode against him furiously - 'and then,' he concluded, half kissing him, 'you and I shall be friends'.

'Why can't we be friends now?' said the other, holding him affectionately. 'It's what I want. It's what you want'.

But the horses didn't want it - they swerved apart; the earth didn't want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single-file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House, that came into view as they issued from the gap and saw Mau beneath: they didn't want it, they said in their hundred voices, 'No, not yet,' and the sky said, 'No, not there.'

20.3.1 Model Explanations

(a) He began to say happened.(Para I,line 14-18)

This passage is one of the most important parts of the novel *A Passage to India* where we witness the reconciliation of the friendship between Fielding and Aziz.

Aziz and Fielding become friends once more, as reconciliation is established between the two on the occasion a Hindu festival. While taking a last ride together in the jungles of Mau they feel that after all the misunderstandings and tensions they have once again become friends. They talk to each other on various subjects. Although they are cautious lest they hurt the sentiments of each other, they argue over certain things.

The force and fineness of the friendship and former relationship of Fielding and Aziz is revived again. Although the re-establishment of freindship is brief, it is still a triumph. This affirmation of their friendship is an answer to the evil episode of Marabar Caves.

(b) But the horses No, not there.(Last Para)

These lines from the last paragraph of chaepther XXXVI from *A Passage to India*. Although it begins with a note of reunion and reconciliation Forster towards the end emphasises that the forces of disunion are still powerful.

After an affectionate as well as argumentative conversation Fielding and Aziz were overjoyed with the fact that they were friends once again. They knew that they would part for ever but were happy that they were parting as friends. They brought their horses nearer to embrace each other but the horses moved apart thereby suggesting that the sub human India is still hostile to inter-racial friendships and so this union is only temporary. The forces of disorder are still powerful and persistent and take them apart from each other.

Forster shows a reunion and reconciliation followed by a sense of disunion. The friendship of fielding and Aziz is the most important personal relationship shown by Forster in the novel. They are representative of Anglo-Indian relationship. After this initial feel of reconciliation discussion sets in. The forces of disorder takes them apart. But the novel ends on a note of hope. Even if the forces of disorder seem to triumph presently they can be fought against and subdued, if not conquered. Everything depends upon man himself, if man is strong enough, he can have union with his fellow men.

20.3.2 Glossary

Consecrated	–	dedicated to God
Troupe	–	group of performers
Discomfiture	–	upsetting the confidence
Swirled	–	flew with a whirling movement

Audible	–	which can be heard
Dieties	–	Gods
Scapegoat	–	person made to bear the blame of other person
Abated	-	make less, weaken
Departing	-	going away
Mourning	-	showing deep sorrow
Scarcely	-	hardly
Flourish	-	prosper or grow
Deplored	-	regretted deeply
Distracted	-	drew away the attention
Reconciliation	-	become friends after estrangement
Lease	-	to stop
Queer	-	strange, odd
Ridiculous	-	deserving to be laughed at.
Wretched	-	unhappy or miserable.
Hasty	-	quick
Laudable	-	which can be praised
Acquiring	-	gaining
Memento	-	object serving as reminder/symbol of memory
Intimately	-	closely acquainted
Presumably	-	may be reasonably presumed
Meadow	-	piece of grassland.
Disintegrated	-	separated
Wrangled	-	noisy argument.
Stirrups	-	horse rider's footstep
Jeered	-	derided

20.4 Self Assessment Questions

(a) Answer the following questions in two or three lines each :

1. Where did Aziz and Fielding go after becoming friends again?

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2. What had Godbole promised to Fielding?

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3. Why had Fielding come to India?

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4. Whom did Fielding marry?

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(b) Answer the following questions in 300 words each.

1. Trace the circumstances of the reunion of Aziz and Fielding.

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2. Is the reconciliation between Aziz and Fielding successful? Discuss the factors and causes of Disunion.

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3. Describe the religious celebration going on in Chandrapore.

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20.5 Answers to SAQs

(a) Short Answers

1. Aziz and Fielding went for a horse ride in the jungles of man.
2. Godbole had promised Fielding to show him over to the king-emperor George Fifth High School.
3. Fielding had come back to India as a Government Education Officer to inspect the functioning of the schools.
4. Fielding married Stella, the daughter of Mrs. Moore.

(b) Brief Answers

1. When Aziz and Fielding meet each other again in the last section of the novel, there is no joyous reunion between friends. In the meanwhile, Fielding has become older, sterner, more official, more like a pucca sahib. Aziz, who has turned into an unforgiving enemy of the British, is now bitterly hostile towards his former friend due to the misunderstanding about Fielding's marriage. The spirit of Mrs Moore, the spirit of Hinduism and the propitious season together serve to bring about reconciliation between the two. Aziz, bitter and angry, is paradoxically the instrument of reconciliation between himself and the British. Aziz wants to take revenge on Ralph for what the British had done to him. But when he realizes that Ralph is like his mother in every respect, the memory of Mrs Moore floods in his mind, expelling all bitterness and hatred. Instead of avoiding reinvolvement with the English (as he had planned to), Aziz now arms towards the boy and, in friendship takes the boy out on the river where the festivities are taking place. Meanwhile, Fielding and his wife are also in another boat, having come to witness the Hindu ceremony. When Aziz and Ralph approach the place where the Hindus are celebrating the birth of Krishna, they find themselves in the midst of a divine muddle. A clay model of Gokul, Krishna's birth place, is pushed out into the waters. Aziz and Fielding, in different boats are so absorbed by the ceremony that their boats collide with each other and there is total confusion. Yet this confusion is liberating. In the forcible meeting between Aziz and Fielding, there is a combination of the mysterious influences, of Mrs Moore, Shri Krishna and the healing waters. The letters of Ronny and Adela which had increased Aziz's distrust of Fielding, now float away in the water. The misunderstanding of Aziz, the restricted responses of the British, the suspicion, hatred and pettiness between them - all these seem to dissolve in water. Aziz, Fielding, Ralph and Stella together are plunged in water and undergo a sort of purification, a sort of spiritual baptism. The estrangement that existed between Fielding and Aziz is ended and they are friends once more.
2. In the last chapter of the novel, Aziz and Fielding are taking a last ride together in the jungles of Mau and they know they cannot see each other again. The force and fineness of their former relationship is revived again; the re-establishment of friendship is brief, but still it is a triumph. However, it is a limited triumph : The forces of disunion are still powerful. This becomes clearer as the two friends continue their last ride together. They start talking frankly and intimately about what means most to them and they find that they are now different from what they were in Chandrapore. Their talk reveals to them how precarious their former personal understanding was and how powerless they were to maintain it. As they start talking about politics, friendly but with no holds barred, they realize that their characters and ways of life have changed radically for them to be able to continue as close friends. They have never been closer than now; and yet they speak more as an Englishman and an Indian than as Fielding and Aziz; both are angry and excited, Aziz begins to shout, Fielding mocks at him and Aziz is enraged. But, as they ride on, their abstract hatred brings a vital, if temporary, bond

between them - something that their sincerity and self-revelation could not do. They bring their horses nearer to embrace each other, but the horses swerve apart. This suggests that sub-human India is hostile to interfacial friendships and, therefore, their union, by necessity, is transitory. But the novel ends on a note of hope. The forces of disorder are powerful and persistent, but they can be fought against and subdued, if not conquered. Everything depends upon himself; if man does not give up, there may be moments, outside time, in which man can have union with his fellowmen. An Englishman may after all be friends with an Indian, at least in some future time.

3. After a lapse of two years, a few hundred miles from Chandrapore, the Janmashtami festival (festival of Lord Krishan's birth) was being celebrated at the palace of Mau. Prof. Godbole, minister of education, had arranged the mysterious ceremony. He led the choir, danced along with the other Hindus of all castes and was totally absorbed in the performance. All present imagined themselves in the place of Lord Krishan and tried to love others. The worshippers were so elated with the feelings of universal love that they forgot all religious decorum.

At midnight when the Lord was born the 'conch' was sounded. The noise of people talking excitedly became greater and greater leading towards the water where the God is finally immersed. The chanting of '*radhakrishan*' '*radhakrishan*' echoes everywhere. This is how the religious celebration goes on.

20.6 Let Us Sum Up

A Passage to India is a liberal classic as well as the earnest effort in the whole range of modern English fiction to render into an artistic and aesthetic form the dialectical pattern of a novel of ideas. So the principle theme of the novel is of fission and fusion. The concluding chapter of the novel taken up for discussion here presents this very idea.

20.7 Review Questions

1. What were the causes which lead to the break up and reunion of friendship between Fielding and Aziz.
2. What Fielding wanted to seek in India ?

20.8 Bibliography

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