**1st June, 2020 JESUS AND MARY SCHOOL AND COLLEGE MODULE 3**

**CLASS – 9**

**ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**POEM: THE HEART OF THE TREE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The heart of the Tree by the American poet and novelist Henry Cuyler Bunner focuses our attention on the value of planting a tree. Planting a tree is always a great work for the mankind. But, the poet has found out new ways to look at the plants and plantation. In the poem he glorifies the act further and shows how a tree helps life on earth and says that it has a direct connection to a nation’s growth.

The poem opens with a question: ***“What does he plant who plants a tree?”*** The rest of the poem is the answer to this question provided by the poet. This technique of posing a question and immediately following it with an answer is known as hypophora.

All the three stanzas of the poem starts with a question with the poet asking what the man actually plants who plants a tree. Then he chooses to reply it by himself and shows what a tree means to the mankind and to the nature.

**STANZA 1:**

***What does he plant who plants a tree?***

***He plants a friend of sun and sky;***

***He plants the flag of breezes free;***

***The shaft of beauty, towering high;***

***He plants a home to heaven anigh;***

***For song and mother-croon of bird***

***In hushed and happy twilight heard –***

***The treble of heaven’s harmony –***

***These things he plants who plants a tree.***

**EXPLANATION OF STANZA 1:**

***What does he plant who plants a tree?***

***He plants a friend of sun and sky;***

The poem opens with a question ***“What does he plant who plants a tree?”*** and it sets the tone of the poem. A reader instantly realizes that the poem is going to be about the benefits of planting a tree. However, the poet himself answers by stating that the man plants a friend of sun and sky by planting a tree. The tree is **personified** as a friend of the sun and the sky as the tree, being a living entity, provides a companionship to both.

A plant grows upwards and aims to reach the sun and the sky. It makes friends with the sun for photosynthesis and with sky for carbon dioxide and in return it releases oxygen and purifies air and helps in cloud formation. So it is as if the sun and the sky get a new friend in a tree. The trees absorb the heat and save the earth from the scorching heat from the sun, giving an implication sun becomes friendly in the presence of the trees.

***He plants the flag of breezes free;***

***The shaft of beauty, towering high;***

The poet now adds that the man pants a flag that flies freely in the breeze. He compares the leafy branches of the tree to a flag and the stem of the tree with the pole of the flag that stands tall. Like a flag flutters in the breeze, the leaves of the tree also flutter in the breeze.

***He plants a home to heaven anigh;***

***For song and mother-croon of bird***

By planting a tree the man plants a home for the sweet singing birds high in the sky, near the heaven. So, he keeps the earth habitable for birds and helps in maintaining the eco-system.

***In hushed and happy twilight heard –***

***The treble of heaven’s harmony –***

***These things he plants who plants a tree.***

In quiet and happy twilight we can hear those birds chirping which is harmonious to heaven’s own tunes. The tree provides a safe home to the birds that can rest on its branches at the end of the day and sing songs which are the treble (a high note in music) of heaven’s own tunes.

In the entire first stanza of The Heart of the Tree, the poet emphasizes on the importance of trees in maintaining the beauty of nature. Moreover, the use of words like ‘heaven anigh’, ‘heaven’s harmony’ and ‘towering high’ is aimed at giving an impression that the work of planting a tree is a heavenly and glorious deed.

The finishing line of the stanza forms a logical whole with the opening line, one asking a question and the other completing the answer. He who plants a tree doesn’t just plant a tree. He plants someone’s friend, someone’s home, someone’s safety and someone’s reason to be happy and sing a soothing song of peace.

**WORD MEANINGS:**

1. Breezes free – gentle winds that move with full freedom
2. Shaft – pole or rod
3. Towering – rising
4. Anigh – near
5. Croon – sing in a soft voice, lullaby sang by a mother
6. Hushed – silent
7. Twilight – the period of time at the end of the day after the sun has just gone down
8. Treble – high pitched sound

**STANZA 2:**

***What does he plant who plants a tree?***

***He plants cool shade and tender rain,***

***And seed and bud of days to be,***

***And years that fade and flush again;***

***He plants the glory of the plain***

***He plants the forest’s heritage;***

***The harvest of a coming age;***

***The joy that unborn eyes shall see –***

***These things he plants who plants a tree.***

**EXPLANATION OF STANZA 2:**

***What does he plant who plants a tree?***

***He plants cool shade and tender rain,***

The poet repeats the same question in the second stanza and attempts to answer in the subsequent lines. The tree planter plants cool shade and gentle rain: both for humans and for the soil. Trees provide a cool shade during hot summers and a place to keep dry during rainy days. The use of the words ***“tender rain”*** is used to show the usefulness of trees in preventing the soil erosion.

***And seed and bud of days to be,***

***And years that fade and flush again;***

The planter of trees also plants seeds and buds of the coming days. Seeds and buds represent the promise of life and a potential for growth. A tree will produce seeds and buds for the future generation. Years will pass by and the old trees will wither away but the seeds of today will produce new trees in the future.

***He plants the glory of the plain***

***He plants the forest’s heritage;***

Trees are the main elements that make a plain area green and beautiful. The poet calls the trees the “glory of the plain” as they make the land look green and beautiful. Moreover, today’s single tree may turn into a forest in future. Thus, by planting a tree a tree planter also helps in building up a forest.

***The harvest of a coming age;***

***The joy that unborn eyes shall see –***

***These things he plants who plants a tree.***

The poet says that planting a tree today would give us fruits in the future. Our future generation would be filled with joy by seeing so much vegetation and reap its benefits.

In this stanza the poet explains that by planting a tree a tree planter makes the earth better living place for the future generation. The poet suggests that we plant trees not only for ourselves but also for the future generations to come.

Thus, the person who plants a tree also plants a promise of life, a seed of hope, forest heritage and gives a gift to the future generation.

**WORD MEANINGS:**

1. Tender – gentle, caring
2. Days to be – for the future generation
3. Fade and flush – wither and again growing of green leaves
4. Glory – beauty
5. Heritage – culture, tradition that lasts for years
6. Coming age – future generation
7. Harvest – reward
8. Unborn eyes – unborn children

**STANZA 3:**

***What does he plant who plants a tree?***

***He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,***

***In love of home and loyalty***

***And far-cast of civic good –***

***His blessings on the neighborhood***

***Who in the hollow of His hand***

***Holds all the growth of all our land –***

***A nation’s growth from sea to sea***

***Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.***

**EXPLANATION OF STANZA 3:**

***What does he plant who plants a tree?***

***He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,***

***In love of home and loyalty***

***And far-cast of civic good –***

***His blessings on the neighborhood***

The final stanza celebrates the nobility in the act of planting a tree. By planting a tree the man shows his love and loyalty for this earth (his home), his sense of civic duty and his blessings on the neighbourhood. All these are reflected in the ‘sap and leaf and wood’, in every cell of the tree. The love for home doesn’t merely refer to one’s home but also to Earth, the only place we have to call home in the universe (so far). Similarly, loyalty doesn’t just refer to one’s country but also loyalty towards the environment which has given so much to us.

***Who in the hollow of His hand***

***Holds all the growth of all our land –***

***A nation’s growth from sea to sea***

***Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.***

By planting a tree the man directly or indirectly contributes to the nation’s growth. When a tree is planted, it sets in motion the progress of a nation from beginning to the end. The man who plants trees is given God-like attributes as he takes care of the well-being of the people. The capitalization of word ‘His’ indicates that the man who plants a tree is all-powerful and the destiny-maker of a nation. And all these start from the progressive thought in the man’s heart who plants a tree. This last line is very important as it talks about the man’s heart, his feelings, dreams and wishes behind planting the tree.

**WORD MEANINGS:**

1. Sap – liquid in plant that carries food to all the parts
2. Civic good – something done for the welfare of the society
3. Hollow – empty space
4. From sea to sea – from the beginning to the end
5. Stirs – excites

**WORKSHEET 3:**

**Answer the following questions briefly:**

1. Who is described as a ‘friend of sun and sky’?
2. How is a tree the glory of the plain?
3. How does a tree become ‘the forest’s heritage’?
4. How does a tree planter do civic good?
5. Whom does a tree give shelter? How?
6. How does a person contribute to a nation’s growth by planting a tree?
7. How is a tree compared to a flag?
8. What does the poet means by years fading and flushing?

**NOTE:**

**Please do these works in your copies which will be checked when the school reopens. Please consider this important.**

**SOLUTIONS TO WORKSHEET 1 UPLOADED ON 4th MAY, 2020**

**Answer 1:**

The scene takes place in a street in Venice. Antonio, Salarino and Salanio are present in the scene.

**Answer 2:**

The reasons given by Salarino and Salanio for Antonio’s sadness are:

1. He is worried about his merchant ships in the sea.
2. He might be in love.
3. He is sad because he is not happy.

**Answer 3:**

Nestor was a wise Greek general who fought in Trojan War. He was of very serious nature and joked had to be extremely funny if he laughed at it. He is mentioned in the play by Salarino in the play to represent seriousness, wisdom and good moral judgment.

**Answer 4:**

Salarino refers to the two-headed Roman god, Janus to say that there are two types of people in the world – the non-serious and serious. He wants to suggest that Antonio belongs to the category of serious persons.

**Answer 5:**

Antonio admits of his sadness in the opening line of the play that is how we find out he was in a sad mood. He describes his sadness as a source of trouble to him. His sadness tires him out, depresses him and makes him a dull person that he is having trouble in recognizing himself.

**Answer 6:**

Salarino compares Antonio’s ships sailing on the waves like great lords and wealthy citizens, who look down at the smaller ships as they overtake the smaller merchant ships and these smaller ships bow at them to show respect. He says that compared to smaller ships. Antonio’s ships move swiftly on the sea with their canvas sails and look like grand spectacles or pageants of the sea.

**Answer 7:**

It would remind Salarino of the stormy winds at the sea and of the terrible damages they might cause to the ships.

**Answer 8:**

Salarino refers Bassanio, Lorenzo and Gratiano as the worthier friends.

**SOLUTION TO WORKSHEET 2 UPLOADED ON 18TH MAY, 2020**

**Answer 1:**

Antonio assures Bassanio that if his plans are honourable, he will make his money, his body and all his resources available to Bassanio for use.

**Answer 2:**

Bassanio needs money to compete for Portia’s hand in marriage. He wants to compete with other suitor’s who were going to Belmont to try their luck. He needed money for nicer clothes, to fund his trip to Belmont and possibly buy gifts for her. He wants to present himself as a successful man.

**Answer 3:**

Bassanio refers to his childhood sport of arrows in which he would get his lost arrow by shooting another arrow in the same direction of the lost one. His purpose is to tell Antonio that if he gets another loan from Antonio, he shall be able to get so much money by his new plan that he will repay his old as well as the new loan.

**Answer 4:**

Bassanio’s plan is to compete with the suitors for Portia’s hand in marriage in Belmont. He wants to take a loan from Antonio in order to present himself as a suitable suitor to Portia, a rich beautiful lady of Belmont.

**Answer 5:**

A very beautiful and rich lady, Portia, lives in Belmont. Bassanio has got interested in her as he has received many ‘silent’ messages of love from her. He feels she is in love with him.

**Answer 6:**

Bassanio says that Portia is beautiful and rich. He says that she is fairer than the word fair. She possesses all the good manners and has a good heart. In no way she is inferior to the well-known Portia, the daughter of the Roman senate, Cato and wife of the famous Brutus.

**Answer 7:**

Bassanio wants to go to Belmont in style to woo Portia. He wants Antonio to lend him money for the purpose. He needs money to buy gifts for her, fund his trip to Belmont and present himself as a successful man in front of Portia.

**Answer 8:**

Jason was a Greek hero, who was sent by Pelias, his uncle who had usurped the throne, to fetch the golden fleece from Colchos. In Greek mythology, Golden Fleece is referred to as the fleece of the winged ram Chrysomallos. It was kept at an oak tree in a grove sacred to god Ares and was guarded by a dragon in Colchos.

**Answer 9:**

Cato, the father of Brutus’ wife Portia, was the great-grandson of the famous Cato, the Censor. In the Civil War between Pompey and Caesar he supported Pompey and was defeated by Caesar. Brutus, husband of Portia, was a Roman general and was the chief conspirators against Caesar and caused his assassination. They are referred in the play to show that Portia of Belmont is as precious and great as Cato’s daughter Portia.

**Answer 10:**

Bassanio proposes to pay back his previous as well as the present loan by carefully managing the expenditure of his second loan amount.

**Answer 11:**

Antonio is unable to help Bassanio at once because he has no money in hand as all his money has been utilized in his business ventures at the sea.

**Answer 12:**

Antonio instructs Bassanio to find out a person who is ready to give loan at once on account of his personal credit or against his personal surety.

**NOTE:**

**PLEASE DO ALL THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS OF THE QUESTIONS GIVEN IN THE PREVIOUS TWO MODULES UPLOADED ON 4TH AND 18TH MAY, 2020. THIS WORK IS TO BE DONE IN YOUR NOTEBOOKS.**

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