

Unquestionably a literary life is for the most part an unhappy life; because, if you have genius, you must suffer the penalty of genius; and, if you have only talent, there are so many cares and worries incidental to the circumstances of men of letters, as to make life exceedingly miserable. Besides the pangs of composition, and the continuous disappointment which a true artist feels at his inability to reveal himself, there is the ever-recurring difficulty of gaining the public ear. Young writers are buoyed up by the hope and the belief that they have only to throw that poem at the world's feet to get back in return the laurel-crown; that they have only to push that novel into print to be acknowledged at once as a new light in literature. You can never convince a young author that the editors of magazines and the publishers of books are a practical body of men, who are by no means frantically anxious about placing the best literature before the public. Nay, that for the most part they are mere brokers, who conduct their business on the hardest lines of a Profit and Loss account. But supposing your book fairly launches, its perils are only beginning. You have to run the gauntlet of the critics. To a young author, again, this seems to be as terrible an ordeal as passing down the files of Sioux or Comanche Indians, each one of whom is thirsting for your scalp. When you are a little older, you will find that criticism is not much more serious than the bye-play of clowns in a circus, when they beat around the ring the victim with bladders slung at the end of long poses. A time comes in the life of every author when he regards critics as comical rather than formidable, and goes his way unheeding. But there are sensitive souls that yield under the chastisement and, perhaps after suffering much silent torture, abandon the profession of the pen for ever. Keats, perhaps, is the saddest example of a fine spirit hounded to death by savage criticism; because, whatever his biographers may aver, that furious attack of Clifford and Terry undoubtedly expedited his death. But no doubt there are hundreds who suffer keenly hostile and unscrupulous criticism, and who have to bear that suffering in silence, because it is a cardinal principle in literature that the most unwise thing in the world for an author is to take public notice of criticism in the way of defending himself. Silence is the only safeguard, as it is the only dignified protest against insult and offence.

#### Questions

1 Why is the Literary Life mostly an unhappy one?

Ans

The literary life is mostly unhappy one. The reason is that a literary person have to take care of certain things all the time. For example, while composing a piece of fiction, a writer have to hide his true feelings. Besides, he has several difficulties in diverting the attention of the people towards his work.

2 What are the ambitions of a young author?

Ans The young author has dozens of ambitions. For example, he wants to depict his true feelings in his writings. He also aims to get his works published as soon as possible. Besides, he yearns for being praised for his works by the public.

3 Are editors and publishers sympathetic to young authors?

Ans Editors and publishers are not sympathetic to young authors. The reason is that they do business. And they are not concerned with publishing good literature. Thus, they publish those writings, which benefit them materialistically.

4 What are some of the ordeals awaiting the young authors from the critics?

Ans Young authors await the several ordeals from the critics. In fact, they always point out mistakes in their works. They also uphold that their works lack artistic charm.

5 What attitude should an author adopt in the face of bitter critics?

Ans In the face of bitter critics, an author must follow a few principles. For example, He must continue with his profession of writing. He must take criticism positively. he must also be silent, instead of answering the people. Besides, he must ensure that his pen gives their answers by improving its work.

6 Explain: Sioux Indians;

### **Indian people**

abandon the profession of the pen; **Stop writing**

laurel-crown; **great appreciations**

to run the gauntlet; **Face criticism**

hounded to death; **Dead**

7 Write in simple English: the pangs of composition; **Composing**

buoyed up by the hope; **Hopeful**

mere brokers; **Only dealers**

thirsting for your scalp: **Anxiously waiting for your writing**