

Comprehension

All Great Thinkers live and move on a high plane of thought. It is only there they can breathe freely. It is only in contact with spirits like themselves they can live harmoniously and attain that serenity which comes from ideal companionship. The studies of all great thinkers must range along the highest altitudes of human thought, I cannot remember the name of any illuminative genius who did not drink his inspiration from fountains of ancient Greek and Hebrew writers; or such among the moderns as were pupils in ancient thought, and, in turn, became masters in their own. I have always thought that the strongest argument in favour of the Baconian theory was, that no man, however indubitable his genius, could have written the plays and sonnets that have come down to us under Shakespeare's name who had not the liberal education of Bacon. How this habit of intercourse with the gods makes one impatient of mere men. The magnificent ideals that have ever haunted the human mind, and given us our highest proofs of a future immortality by reason of the impossibility of their fulfilment here, are splintered into atoms by contact with life's realities. Hence comes our sublime discontent. You will notice that your first sensation after reading a great book is one of melancholy and dissatisfaction. The ideas, sentiments, expressions, are so far beyond those of ordinary working life that you cannot turn aside from one to the other without an acute sensation and consciousness of the contrast. And the principles are so lofty, so superhuman that it is a positive pain, if once you become imbued with them, to come down and mix in the squalid surroundings of ordinary humanity. It may be spiritual or intellectual pride that is engendered on the high plane of intellectual life. But whatever it is, it becomes inevitable. An habitual meditation on the vast problems that underline human life, and are knit into human destinies-thoughts of immortality, of the littleness of mere man, of the greatness of man's soul, of the splendours of the universe that are invisible to the ordinary traffickers in the street, as the vastness of St. Peter's is to the spider that weaves her web in a corner of the dome-these things do not fit men to understand the average human being, or tolerate with patience the sordid wretchedness of the unregenerate masses. It is easy to understand, therefore, why such thinkers fly to the solitude of their own thoughts, or the silent companionship of the immortals; and if they care to present their views in prose or verse to the world, that these views take a sombre and melancholy setting from "the pale cast of thought" in which they were engendered.

Questions

1. On what plane must great thinkers live and move?

Great thinkers must live and move on high plane of thought. The reason is that this is the only way to live in peace and happiness. Besides, all the great men of the world lived in this fashion.

2. Is a liberal education necessary to produce great literature?

Liberal education is not all essential in producing good literature. Many writers, who did not get liberal education, penned the best literature of the world. For example, Shakespeare came before Bacon, and did not receive liberal education. However, his works have great significance to date.

3. Why does the reading of a great book, according to the author, make one melancholy and disappointed?

The author is of the opinion that reading of a great book makes a person disappointed. It makes him realise that he can not live here forever. In other words, he is immortal. Furthermore, it tells him those harsh realities of the life, which he does not want to know.

4. What are the things that make it hard to understand the average human being?

There are various things, which make it hard to understand the average human being. For example, many problems of humans and their erroneous notion of living forever in this universe. Besides, smallness of their bodies with very high spirits. And huge parts of universe that are not seen by a small traveller.

Precis work

Original paragraph

Ferdinand and Isabella, informed of the return and discoveries of their admiral, awaited him at Barcelona with honour and munificence worthy of the greatness of his services. The nobility came from all the provinces to meet him. He made a triumphal entry as a prince of future kingdoms. The Indians brought over as a living proof of the existence of new races in these newly-discovered lands, marched at the head of the procession, their bodies painted with diverse colours, and adorned with gold necklaces and pearls. The animals and birds, the unknown plants, and the precious stones collected on these shores, were exhibited in golden basins, carried on the heads of Moorish or Negro slaves. The eager crowd pressed close upon them, and wondrous tales were circulated about the officers and companions of Columbus. The admiral himself, mounted on a richly caparisoned charger presented by the king, next appeared, accompanied by a numerous cavalcade of courtiers and gentlemen. All eyes were directed toward the man inspired of Heaven, who first had dared lift the veil of Ocean. People sought in his face for a sign of his mission and thought they could discern one. The beauty of his features, the majesty of his countenance, the vigour of eternal youth joined to the dignity of age the combination of thought with action, of strength with experience, a thorough appreciation of his worth combined with piety, made Columbus then appear (as those relate who saw him enter Barcelona) like a prophet, or a hero of Holy Writ or Grecian story.

"None could compare with him," they say; "all felt him to be the greatest or most fortunate of men."

Ferdinand and Isabella received him on their throne, shaded from the sun by a golden canopy. They rose up before him, as though he had been an inspired messenger. They then made him sit on a level with themselves, and listened to the circumstantial account of his voyage. At the end of his recital, which habitual eloquence had coloured with his exuberant imagination, the king and queen, moved to tears, fell on their knees and repeated the Te Deum, a thanksgiving for the greatest conquest the Almighty had yet vouchsafed to sovereigns.

The title: Discoveries of Columbus

Ferdinand and Isabella were informed about the arrival and discoveries of Columbus. And People of all provinces were gathered at Barcelona to welcome him for his great achievements. Where his entry is concerned, it was like that of a prince. Before him, the Indians, birds and valuable stones were presented to make people believe about their existence in newly-discovered areas. After that, he, along with his companions, gracefully entered. And he grabbed the attention of people towards him, who said that he was matchless. Like a hero, he was warmly welcomed by Ferdinand and Isabella on their throne. Besides, he was honoured to sit with them. After listening the details of his voyage, they thanked God for that achievement.

Total words: 369, required words for precis: 123 and precis words 119

