

“Elegant economy!” How naturally one fold back into the phraseology of Cranford! There economy was always “elegant”, and money-spending always “Vulgar and Ostentatoin;” a sort of sour grapeism which made up very peaceful and satisfied I shall never forget the dismay felt when certain Captain Brown came to live at Cranford, and openly spoke of his being poor __ not in a whisper to an intimate friend, the doors and windows being previously closed, but in the public street! in a loud military voice! alleging his poverty as a reason for not taking a particular house. The ladies of Cranford were already moving over the invasion of their territories by a man and a gentleman. He was a half-pay captain, and had obtained some situation on a neighbouring rail-road, which had been vehemently petitioned against by the little town; and if in addition to his masculine gender, and his connection with the obnoxious railroad, he was so brazen as to talk of his being poor __ why, then indeed, he must be sent to Coventry. Death was as true and as common as poverty; yet people never spoke about that loud on the streets. It was a word not to be mentioned to ears polite. We had tacitly agreed to ignore that any with whom we associated on terms of visiting equality could ever be prevented by poverty from doing anything they wished. If we walked to or from a party, it was because the weather was so fine, or the air so refreshing, not because sedan chairs were expensive. If we wore prints instead of summer silks, it was because we preferred a washing material; and so on, till we blinded ourselves to the vulgar fact that we were, all of us, people of very moderate means.

Questions

(a) Give in thirty of your own words what we learn from this passage of Captain Brown. (4 marks)

After reading this passage, one can learn that Mr. Brown was a captain. He started invading Cranford. Besides, he did not have any issue in letting other people know about his poverty. According to him, he could not have owned a special house for him due to his penury. In short, this paragraph talks of the live of Captain Brown in great details.

(b) Why did the ladies of Cranford dislike the Captain. (2marks)

The ladies of Cranford did not like the captain. The reason is that they had to move due to invasion by captain on their land. If captain had not disturbed them, they would not have disliked him. Thus, the only cause for hating the captain for his attacks.

(c) What reasons were given by the ladies of Cranford for “not doing anything that they wished”? (2 marks)

The ladies of Cranford did not live their dreams. It happened because they were deprived of their land. In this way, they found it difficult to get what they wanted. Hence, depriving women of their territory was the reason for not realizing their dreams.

(d) “Ears Polite”. How do you justify this construction? (2 marks)

In this passage, several phrases are used to convey the ideas of the author. Ears polite is one of them. As far as its construction with regard to this particular paragraph is concerned, it denotes that one must not let other people know the truth. In other words, one must be silent. For example, death was inevitable, but people could not have talked of it openly due to the fears. In sum, ears polite indicates that one must observe silent over one’s circumstances.

(e) What is the meaning and implication of the phrases? (2 marks each)

(1) Sour-grapeism: something in great quantity.

(2) The invasion of their territories: To attack their land

(3) Sent to Coventry: To deprive one of one’s privileges.

(4) Tacitly agreed: agreed with heart and soul

(5) Elegant economy: Suitable economic conditions