

CSS-2006

"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)

We ^{have} learned from Captain Brown that we should accept our reality instead of pretending what we are not. Moreover, such social norms can be broken. Authenticity is essential for life.

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

Ladies of Cranford disliked Captain because he openly discussed about his poverty and did not pretended to be elegant and refined. Therefore, they considered

him vulgar and impolite.

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

Ladies claimed they did not do things they wished due to seasons like fine weather or preference for washing materials. They are reluctant to admit that, they could not afford those things.

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

Ears Polite mean one cannot bear to hear unpleasant truths. It justifies that Ladies of Cranford could not face reality that they can't afford things. They preferred hypocrisy over reality.

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

- (1) Sour-grapeism — To criticize something you can not have to make yourself feel better
- (2) The invasion of their territories — feel threatened in personal domain
- (3) Sent to Coventry — To ignore socially
- (4) Tacitly agreed — unspoken but mutually understood agreement
- (5) Elegant economy — managing with limited means

