

Lecture Sheet on Lesson – 6

From a Railway Carriage

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle
All through the meadows the horses and cattle;
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.
Here is a child who clammers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And here is the green for stringing the daisies
Here is a cart runaway in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill, and there is river;
Each a glimpse and gone forever.

[Robert Louis Stevenson]

Words	Meaning
Hedges	row of bushes that look like fences.
Ditches	a canal or drain
Charging	to rush forward.
Troops	soldiers.

Clambers	climb or move in an awkward way.
Brambles	ashrub with berries.
Stringing	joining.
Lumping	carrying with difficulty.
Tramp	homeless or jobless person
Gaze	look.
Glimpse	to look at something for short time

Explanation of the Poem

Line 1 – 8

The train is moving faster than fairies and witches. The speedy movement of the train leaves bridges, houses, fences and ditches behind. The train rushes forward like soldiers who are attacking their enemies in the battlefield. It also leaves behind the green fields where horses and cattle are grazing. All the scenes of the hill and plain land were being crossed by the train as quick as one drop of rain following the other in a storm. In the next moment, the train passes railway stations and it looked like painted pictures.

Line 9 – 16

The poet sees a child climbing a steep ground and collecting berries. He also sees a homeless person who looks at the train with amazement. As the train moves forward, he sees some ladies in a village making garlands with daisy flowers. The poet then sees a cart moving slowly in the highway. It was full of load and the cart driver was sitting on the top of the load. He also gets a glimpse of a mill and a river by its side. All these objects appeared and disappeared so quickly.

Themes

The joy that we get from travelling is the major theme of the poem. Also beauty of nature comes as a theme in the descriptions like “meadows”, “the horses and cattle”, “sights of the hill and the plain” etc. The poverty of human beings too is a theme, as suggested by the scene in which a tramp looks excitedly at the train.

Summary

The poet shares his experience of his first railway journey in this poem. He has been amazed by the speed of the train. The poet describes all the sceneries that he had experienced from that train journey. But as the train moves faster, the sceneries pass away in a wink of an eye. All the things appeared and disappeared very quickly. The poet presents a series of realistic images that enable the reader to experience the feel of travelling in a train.