

NCERT Solutions for Class 12

English Kaleidoscope

Chapter - Poems by Milton

On Time

Understanding the poem

1. Why has the poet pitted the flight of Time against the ‘lazy leaden-stepping hours’ and ‘the heavy Plummets pace’?

Ans: The poet refers to time as trying to “run out thy race” towards the first line where it is its competitor. Everyone is bound to give up to it with little loss on the one’s side and little gain on time’s side. He says that everyone shall win when they finally reach heaven and remain untouched by their slow competitor, time. The poet John Milton used the lines ‘lazy leaden-stepping hours,’ and ‘the heavy Plummets pace’ to present how slowly yet successfully time wins over the race against humans.

2. What are the things associated with the temporal and what is associated with the eternal?

Ans: The poem beautifully illustrates how earthly worries are temporary, and bliss alone is permanent. It draws out that everyone is destined to that bliss after the end of one’s life. The poet reveals that time is temporal, and the eternal associates are joy, bliss, divinity, truth, peace, and love that one experiences in heaven upon leaving the world we see.

3. What guides human souls towards divinity? Who is the final winner in the race against Time?

Ans: “Everything that is sincerely good” that humans do during their lives guides human souls towards divinity, embracing them with an individual kiss and grating everyone’s joy, as stated by the poet. The final winner within the race against the clock is humans, for they shall triumph over the fears of death and chances in life upon being freed from their bodies and staying untouched by time.

II

On Shakespeare. * 1630

Understanding the poem

1. Why does Milton feel it is not necessary to put up a monument in stone for Shakespeare?

Ans: In his poem "On Shakespeare," John Milton argues that erecting a monument in stacked stone, employing the labour of age for the nobleman Shakespeare, is superfluous, as he had built a long-lasting monument through his works. The poet continues that a monument would be a weak witness of Shakespeare's name, for he is the "son of memory" and the "great heir of fame." A monument might be what kings would wish to die for, but it would only be a poor depiction of Shakespeare's face and bones but would pay no proper respect to him against the name he etched through his contribution to literature.

2. What does the 'weak witness of thy name' refer to?

Ans: The phrase "weak witness of thy name" relates to how a statue of Shakespeare would be a poor symbol for praising his name. Shakespeare, according to the poet, is the greatest writer who ever lived. A "star-pointing pyramid" would only hide his "hallow'd reliques" and be a weak depiction of his generosity.

3. How does Milton describe Shakespeare as the source of inspiration for all succeeding generations of poets?

Ans: Milton describes Shakespeare as the source of inspiration for all succeeding generations of poets to return, as his works comprise all life ranges. From the aesthetics of nature to the fantasies of magic, he has interpolated between love, death, revenge, murder through his emotional plays, empowering poems, and engaging sonnets. He has set the bar high with his comedies, histories, and tragedies with his conventional yet grand style that the modern writer would ever be aspiring to reach.

4. What is the best tribute that posterity has bestowed on Shakespeare?

Ans: Posterity or the future generations have had and will always remember the works of Shakespeare. His magical spell of gaining over his audience and readers will be eternal, and he will be remembered as the world's greatest writer and dramatist. Literature students read his works, his plays are performed to date to recreate the magic they hold, and his verses are quoted very regularly in modern times, even after four centuries from his period. Shakespeare has become the first name when one thinks of English literature, proving the charm his work possesses.

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