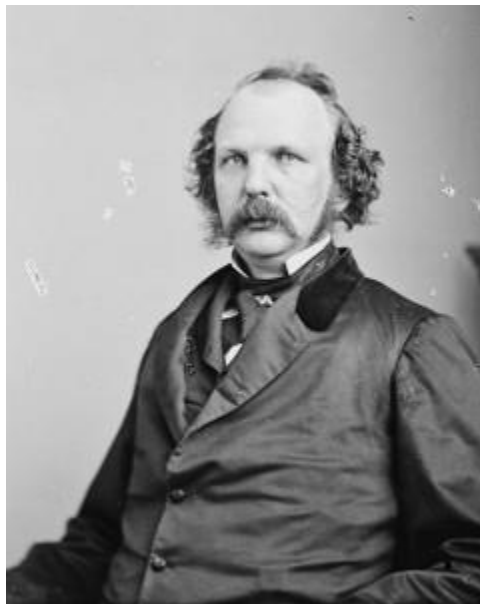


Tea Time: John Godfrey Saxe

post by Wende

John Godfrey Saxe was born on June 2, 1816 in Vermont to strict Methodist parents. He graduated from college in 1839 and became a lawyer. Bored with legal work, he began to write satirical poems, ridiculing and making fun of human vices or weaknesses, which quickly became popular. Saxe became a newspaper editor, and a sought after speaker. He published his poetry in *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, and the *Knickerbocker*. "The Rhyme of the Rail," poking fun at early rail travel, was his most famous early work.



In the 1870's, after a series of tragedies including the deaths of his wife and five of his six children, Saxe became reclusive and his poetry took on a more serious and somber tone. He died on March 31, 1887 while living with his only remaining child in Albany, New York. We shall choose to remember him for his fun retelling of the Indian parable, "The Blind Men and the Elephant."

Activities:

Read Saxe's works found free [HERE](#).

Recite or memorize the poem, "The Blind Men and the Elephant."

Record what you learn about John Godfrey Saxe on the notebooking page.

Analyze “The Blind Men and the Elephant” using the study notes.

Tea Time Treat

Elephant Ears!

Heat oven to 425 °

Combined: 1 cup flour, 2 tablespoons sugar, ½ teaspoon baking powder, ½ teaspoon salt

Stir in: 1/3 cup milk, 3 tablespoons melted butter

Mix until dough forms. Turn onto floured surface and knead 10 times. Roll dough out into a 9” x 5” rectangle. Brush with 1 tablespoon melted butter and sprinkle with mixture of 3 tablespoons of sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Tightly roll dough, starting at narrow end. Cut into 4 equal pieces and place face up on a cookie sheet. Pat each piece into a 6” circle. Bake until golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes.

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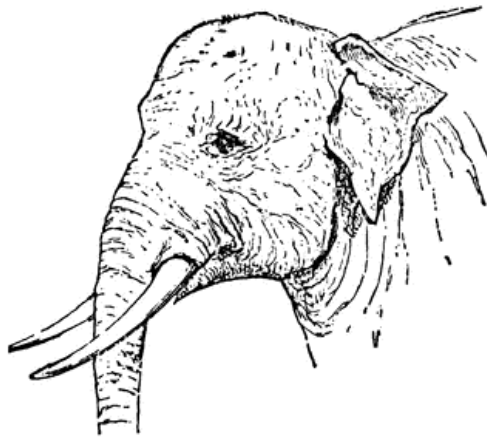
THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT
By John Godfrey Saxe

It was six men of Indostan,
To learning much inclined
Who went to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The first approached the elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a snake!"



The fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail,
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe

First Stanza

It was six men of Indostan,
To learning much inclined
Who went to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line, repeated eight times.

The first approached the elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the elephant
Is very like a wall!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line, repeated eight times.

The second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line, repeated seven times.

The third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a snake!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

The fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.

"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;

"Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail,
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a rope!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom) for writing.

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Handwriting practice lines consisting of five sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
First Stanza

*It was six men of Indostan,
To learning much inclined
Who went to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
Second Stanza

The first approached the elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the elephant
Is very like a wall!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line, repeated seven times.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
Third Stanza

The second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
Fourth Stanza

The third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a snake!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated eight times.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
Fifth Stanza

The fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee.

"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom) for tracing or writing.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
Sixth Stanza

The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom) for tracing or writing.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
Seventh Stanza

The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail,
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a rope!"

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated seven times.

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT by John Godfrey Saxe
Eighth Stanza

*And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!*

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline, repeated seven times.

The Blind Men and the Elephant

By John Godfrey Saxe

Study Notes

Define:

Indostan: _____

Inclined: _____

Bawl: _____

Marvel: _____

Grope: _____

Scope: _____

Interpret:

Why were these blind men all "in the wrong"? How far was each "in the right"?

Examine:

Look at the individual elements of the poem. Give examples of the following:

Repetition – when the same word(s) are used more than once in a line or poem

Simile –comparison using the words "like" or "as" (Hint: each blind man used a different simile for the elephant)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Evaluate:

What may we learn from this poem?

The Blind Men and the Elephant

By John Godfrey Saxe

Study Notes

Define:

Indostan: obsolete name for the country of India

Inclined: having a mind for; tending

Bawl: cry or sob

Marvel: awesome sight; amazing thing

Grope: feeling around

Scope: range; span

Interpret:

Why were these blind men all "in the wrong"? How far was each "in the right"?

The blind men were wrong because they were each observing the elephant and making a judgement from a limited perspective, not taking in the whole of the creature. They were each right only in their observations of the individual parts of the elephant.

Examine:

Look at the individual elements of the poem. Give examples of the following:

Repetition – when the same word(s) are used more than once in a line or poem

Stanzas 2 through 7 each contain the words "Is very like a..." in the last line.

Simile –comparison using the words "like" or "as" (Hint: each blind man used a different simile for the elephant)

First man said elephant is "like a wall".

Fourth man said elephant is "like a tree"

Second man said elephant is "like a spear".

Fifth man said elephant is "like a fan".

Third man said elephant is "like a snake".

Sixth man said elephant is "like a rope".

Evaluate:

What may we learn from this poem?

It is not wise to take a stand on an issue before you look at it as a whole. Standing "stiff and strong" on an issue before having all the facts may leave you looking as foolish as the six blind men.