



ENGLISH LITERATURE
LESSON 1 – THE LAST LESSON
ALPHONSE DAUDET

NOTES

“The Last Lesson” written by Alphonse Daudet narrates about the year 1870 when the Prussian forces under Bismarck attacked and captured France. The French districts of Alsace and Lorraine went into Prussian rulers and discontinued the teaching of French in the schools of these two districts. The French teachers were asked to leave. Now M. Hamel could no longer stay in his school. Still he gave lesson to his students with utmost devotion and sincerity as ever. One such student of M. Hamel, Franz who dreaded French class and M. Hamel’s iron rod, came to the school that day thinking he would be punished as he had not learnt his lesson on participles. But on reaching school he found Hamel dressed in his fine Sunday clothes and the old people of the village sitting quietly on the back benches.

That was the day when he realized for the first time that how important French was for him, but it was his last lesson in French. The story depicts the pathos of the whole situation about how people feel when they don’t learn their own language. It tells us about the significance of one’s language in one’s life for the very existence of the race and how important it is to safeguard it.

Points to Remember

- Notice on the Bulletin Board about the war front.
- Order from Berlin to teach only German.
- No sound of desks, lessons, teacher’s ruler
- Did not scold/spoke quietly.
- M. Hamel wore green coat, frilled shirt, black silk-cap
- Announced last lesson in French, German to be taught.
- Unexpected announcement for everyone.
- Villagers, Hauser, Postmaster, others on back benches
- Everyone working very quietly
- Only sound heard was the scratching of pens over paper.
- M. Hamel wrote ‘*Vive La France!*’