

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL MASTER By : Oliver Goldsmith

INTRODUCTION Oliver Goldsmith was born in Longfield and was educated at the Trinity College, Dublin. He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine, but he never practiced as a Doctor. His main works are The Traveler(1764), Vicar of Wakefield(1766), The Deserted Village(1770) and She Stoops to Conquer(1773). In this poem, which is an extract from ?The Deserted Village?, he describes the village, Auburn modeled on his own village, Lissoy. He describes the sight of the muted villages, as the villagers have abandoned it and have gone to the cities in search of ?Wanton wealth?. This extract is focused over the village school and gives a character sketch of the village schoolmaster who taught at that school. It also gives an account on the views of the children as well as that of the villagers of Auburn about the school master.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

The opening lines of the poem describe the building of the village school which was surrounded by an irregular hedge, which was fully blossomed. The village school is referred to as a ?Noisy mansion? which is a transferred epithet. ?There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule? The building is noisy as it holds a number of school children in it.

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL MASTER

The poet depicts the undisputed and sovereign power of the village school master. He was a strict disciplinarian with a hard and rigid expression on his face, which made every truant anxious. ?A man severe he was and stern to view? The poet also describes that the dangers of that day to be faced by the students could be predicted from the grim expression on his face.

THE CHILDREN'S VIEW OF THE SCHOOL MASTER

The children were quite afraid of the village school master. The truants, especially were quite anxious about him. The children could foresee the dangers that were awaiting them that day from the grim expression of the school master. ?The day's disaster in his morning face? When the school master expressed his sense of humor by a joke, the children laughed to it with ?Counterfeited glee?. ?Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee? In these lines, the poet gives a vivid description of an ideal classroom in a village school.

THE VILLAGER'S VIEW OF THE SCHOOLMASTER

Since education was scarce in villages, the school master was very much respected by the villagers of Auburn for his abundant knowledge. The school master could measure, write and count, which was of great help for them. ?Twas certain he could write and cipher too? He could measure lands, and foretell the terms and tides, which was useful for the peasants for making various payments such as their rents, wages, etc?

He was very good in debating and even though he was defeated, he could still argue. ?For even though vanquished, he could argue still? The villagers were awed by the speeches delivered by him and wondered about the fact that how all that knowledge of his could be stored within his small head.