

POEM

SYMPATHY



Preparatory activity :

- I. Read the story given below and suggest a suitable title to it.**

A sweet little girl sees a thin little bird in a park. She is filled with sympathy for the little bird. She thinks that the bird must be feeling very cold since it has no clothes. The bird too feels deep sympathy for the little girl. The bird thinks that the little girl does not have a single feather on her body, so she must be feeling very cold. Thus both the little girl and the little bird shiver thinking of each other's pain.

Now let us read the poem 'Sympathy'.

I lay in sorrow, deep depressed...

My grief a proud man heard...

His looks were cold. He gave me gold.

But not a kindly word.

My sorrow passed - I paid him back

The gold he gave to me.

Then stood erect and spoke my thanks

And blessed his charity...

I lay in want, and grief and pain.

A poor man passed my way.

He bound my head. He gave me bread.

He watched me night and day.

How shall I pay him back again
For all he did to me?
Oh! Gold is great. But greater far
Is heavenly sympathy!

Charles Mackay

Glossary :

<i>depressed</i>	: <i>in great pain or sadness</i>
<i>grief</i>	: <i>deep sorrow</i>
<i>cold</i>	: <i>unfriendly</i>
<i>kindly</i>	: <i>kind and caring</i>
<i>erect</i>	: <i>straight</i>
<i>charity</i>	: <i>kindness or sympathy</i>
<i>want</i>	: <i>poverty</i>
<i>bind</i>	: <i>tie a long thin piece of fabric around something</i>
<i>far</i>	: <i>very much</i>

Let's Understand :

C1. Discuss the following questions in small groups and present your answers to the class :

1. How did the proud man react to the poet's sorrow?
2. What do you mean by 'his looks were cold'?
3. In spite of having gold, the poor man was not happy. Why?
4. The poet paid back the proud man. What does this tell you about the poet's character?