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Class-XII

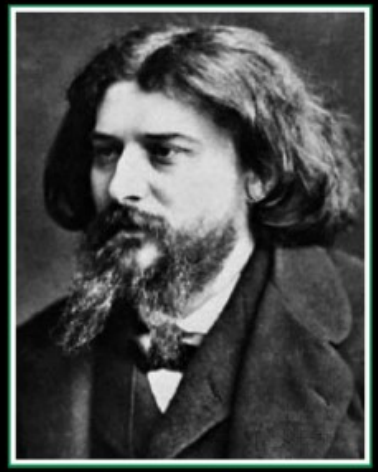
English

Flamingo

Chapter-1

The Last Lesson

Neha Rajvanshi



Alphonse Daudet

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I heard M. Hamel say to me, "I won't scold you, little Franz;
you must feel bad enough. See how it is!
Every day we have said to ourselves, 'Bah!
I've plenty of time. I'll learn it tomorrow.'
And now you see where we've come out.
Ah, that's the great trouble with Alsace;
she puts off learning till tomorrow. Now
those fellows out there will have the right
to say to you,

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pretend : दिखावा करना

reproach ourselves : स्वयं पर शर्म

anxious : चिंतित

'How is it; you pretend to be Frenchmen, and yet you can neither speak nor write your own language?' But you are not the worst, poor little Franz.

We've all a great deal to reproach ourselves with."

"Your parents were not anxious enough to have you learn.

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blame : दोष देना

They preferred to put you to work on a farm or at the mills, so as to have a little more money. And I? I've been to blame also. Have I not often sent you to water my flowers instead of learning your lessons? And when I wanted to go fishing, did I not just give you a holiday?"

Then, from one thing to another,

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logical: तार्किक
enslaved: गुलाम बनाना
hold fast: पकड़ बनाना

M. Hamel went on to talk of the French language, saying that it was the most beautiful language in the world — the clearest, the most logical; that we must guard it among us and never forget it, because when a people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their prison.

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amazed : चकित होना
explained : समझाना

Then he opened a grammar and read us our lesson.

I was amazed to see how well I understood it. All he said seemed so easy, so easy! I think, too, that I had never listened so carefully, and that he had never explained everything with so much patience.

It seemed almost as if the poor man wanted to give us all he knew before going away, and to put it all into our heads at one stroke.

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After the grammar, we had a lesson in writing. That day M. Hamel had new copies for us, written in a beautiful round hand — France, Alsace, France, Alsace. They looked like little flags floating everywhere in the school-room, hung from the rod at the top of our desks. You ought to have seen how every one set to work, and how quiet it was!

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attention : ध्यान देना



The only sound was the scratching of the pens over the paper. Once some beetles flew in; but nobody paid any attention to them, not even the littlest ones, who worked right on tracing their fish-hooks, as if that was French, too. On the roof the pigeons cooed very low, and I thought to myself, "Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons?"





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motionless : स्थिर
gazeing: एकटक देखना

Whenever I looked up from my writing I saw M. Hamel sitting motionless in his chair and gazing first at one thing, then at another, as if he wanted to fix in his mind just how everything looked in that little school-room. Fancy! For forty years he had been there in the same place, with his garden outside the window and his class in front of him, just like that.

worn : खराब होना

hopvine : बेल



Only the desks and benches had been worn smooth; the walnut-trees in the garden were taller, and the hopvine that he had planted himself twined about the windows to the roof. How it must have broken his heart to leave it all, poor man; to hear his sister moving about in the room above, packing their trunks! For they must leave the country next day.

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But he had the courage to hear every lesson to the very last. After the writing, we had a lesson in history, and then the babies chanted their ba, be bi, bo, bu. Down there at the back of the room old Hauser had put on his spectacles and, holding his primer in both hands, spelled the letters with them.

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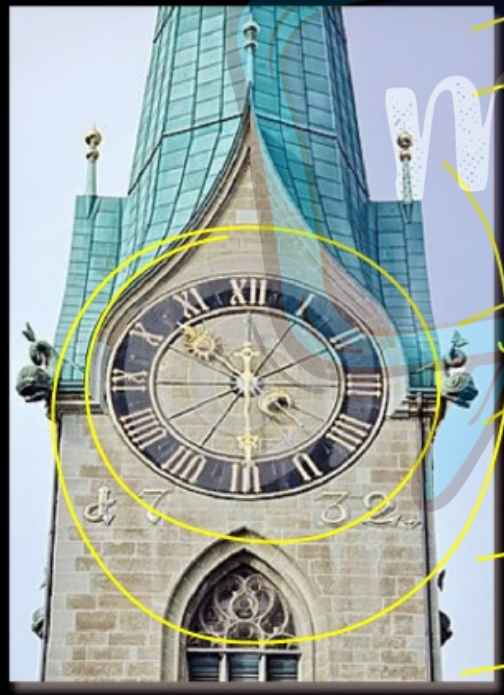
trembled : काँपना



You could see that he, too, was crying; his voice trembled with emotion, and it was so funny to hear him that we all wanted to laugh and cry. Ah, how well I remember it, that last lesson!

All at once the church-clock struck twelve. Then the Angelus. At the same moment the trumpets of the Prussians, returning from drill,

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sounded under our windows. M. Hamel stood up, very pale, in his chair.

I never saw him look so tall.

"My friends," said he, "I—I—" But something choked him. He could not go on.

Then he turned to the blackboard, took a piece of chalk, and, bearing on with all his might, he wrote as

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Vive La France: long live France

gesture : हाव-भाव

large as he could —

"Vive La France!"

Then he stopped and leaned his head against the wall, and, without a word, he made a gesture to us with his hand —

"School is dismissed — you may go."