

Lesson - 1 The Last Lesson

Assignment - 2 Date:

* The Last Lesson is set in the days of the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871) in which France was defeated by Prussia led by Bismarck. Prussia then consisted of what now are the nations of Germany, Poland and parts of Austria. The French districts of Alsace and Lorraine passed into Prussian hands.

It is a sentimental story of national pride and the importance of education and how it is a privilege for some alone. The leading characters of the story are M. Hamel and Franz. M. Hamel is a French teacher and Franz is one of his students. The story moves around how the war plays an a pivotal role in their lives.

1) What was Franz expected to be prepared with for school that day?

Ans:- Franz was expected to be prepared with a lesson on participles in grammar. His French teacher, M. Hamel had told that he would question the class on participles. But Franz did not know ~~at~~ anything, even the first word about participles.

2) What did Franz notice that was unusual about the school that day?

Ans: Franz noticed that the school was unusually quiet. Usually, there was a great commotion of the opening and closing of desks, of lessons repeated in unison and the teacher's huge ruler tapping on the table. The school was as quiet as on a Sunday morning. His teacher M. Hamel was in his ceremonial clothes. The most unusual

(2)

thing was that the village people were sitting quietly on the back benches, which were usually empty.

3) What had been put up on the bulletin-board?

Ans. The French districts of Alsace and Lorraine had been taken over by the Prussians and there was a ban on French language. The bulletin board displayed that an order had come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine and the new teacher would join the school the following day.

4) What changes did the order from Berlin cause in school that day?

Ans. The order from Berlin stated that only German will be taught in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine. The order brought in many changes in the school. First of all there was an unusual silence prevailed everywhere. M. Hamel, the teacher became soft in speaking to the students. People suddenly realized the importance of their language. The students got new copies with "France, Alsace" written on them, and received their last lesson in French. These copies looked like little flags floating everywhere in the school room. On the back benches that were always empty, the elderly village people were sitting quietly like the kids.

5) How did Franz's feelings about M. Hamel and school change?

Ans. Franz felt sorry for not learning his French lessons when he realized that he was to receive his last lesson in French that day. His books seemed precious to him and he felt he could not give them up. Earlier, he had disliked his teacher, M. Hamel, but now he felt sad on that day at the thought of his leaving the school.