**STD 6 POEM 1: THE OLD HORSE DOBBIN NOTES**

 **BY ALFRED NOYES**

**Value: “Honor your life by living to its fullest.”**

**Q.1 Answer the following questions.**

1. **Where is Dobbin? What is he doing there?**

**Ans: Due to his old age, Dobbin has been abandoned and rendered homeless. Without any work or a master, all he can do is idly stare after the road leading to the town. All by himself, he is looking back on his life and missing the days of his youth when he was useful to his master.**

1. **What does dwindling fields mean?**

**Ans: The word ‘dwindling’ means ‘gradually diminishing in size, amount or strength’. Dobbin is shown to be physically distant from the fields, the town and his master, and by extension, his old life. This is from the perspective of Dobbin since the open farm fields and the opportunity to work on them is no longer available to him anymore due to his age. It also suggests that everyone has moved ahead without him because he is no longer important.**

1. **What is the snip-snap that Dobbin hears? What does he notice?**

**Ans: The ‘snip-snap’ sound refers to the sounds of a young horse galloping in the distance. He notices his old master riding a different horse, ‘a new mare’ from town. This physical description of the new horse suggests that it is faster and speedier than Dobbin. This is used to further draw contrasts between them and emphasize that Dobbin is ageing.**

1. **What does the sight remind Dobbin of?**

**Ans: Looking at his master ride a new horse makes Dobbin recall his own youth and how often he trotted down the same road.**

 **5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?**

 **Ans: The rhyme scheme of the poem ‘The Old Horse Dobbin’ is abcb.**

1. **Why has Dobbin been turned out?**

**Ans: Horses, donkeys and mules are often domesticated and used only for the purpose of carrying heavy burdens or transportation. Now that Dobbin is old, physically weaker and slower; he has been abandoned. The master has already gotten his money’s worth from a horse like Dobbin and has moved onto a new horse.**

1. **Why does Dobbin’s old heart ache?**

**Ans: As a draft animal, the sole purpose of his life was to serve his master and carry burdens on his back. But now that he is old, he has been abandoned and replaced, without any sense of purpose in life. This realization makes him despair and his ‘old heart ache’. He feels emotionally and psychologically hurt.**

1. **Onomatopoeia are words that sound like the objects they name or the sounds those objects make. For example: tick-tock, oink, moo, bang, splat, cock-a-doodle-doo and meow. In the line, A snip-snap trot, what do the words snip-snap express?**

**Ans: The phrase ‘snip-snap trot’ has been used to refer to the sound of footsteps made by the new horse. It shows that the new horse is fast and runs at full speed as opposed to Dobbin who can barely walk due to his old age.**

1. **The poet uses visual and auditory imagery to contrast the old horse Dobbin to the new horse. Complete the table with these imageries. Dobbin New horse a. Visual imagery b. Auditory imagery**

**Ans: Dobbin New Horse a. Visual imagery • His coat is ragged and blown awry. • He is alone. • He is the smart new mare from Pulborough fair. • The master is riding him. b. Auditory imagery • Out at grass • Snip-snap trot**

1. **Identify the words that reflect Dobbin’s melancholic mood.**

**Ans: Words and phrases such as ‘He drops his head, And he knows not why’ as well as ‘Something has happened, Something is gone’ give a melancholic tone to the poem. These indicate the universal theme of time progressing and the helplessness Dobbin feels as an old, abandoned animal.**

**HOD PRINCIPAL**

**POEM 1: THE OLD HORSE DOBBIN**

**Themes: loneliness, ageing, nostalgia (homesickness remembrance) , abandonment**

**Summary: The poem is a poignant depiction of a once-energetic farm horse named Dobbin who is now past his prime and has become old. The speaker of the poem re­flects on the transitory nature of life through the life of Dobbin whose master has replaced him with a new and younger horse. It also depicts the feelings and sense of abandonment experienced by Dobbin due to his devalued status while focusing on the utilitarian bond humans share with their farm animals.**

**Competencies built in this chapter: introspection, emotional development, sympathy**