

2nd year English notes | The Man who Planted Trees Chapter No 11

Study Questions

What does Jean Giono say about his long trip on foot over mountain heights?

When Giono begins his journey some forty years back towards the mountains on foot, during his long exhausting trip he discovers that the mountain heights seem to be unknown to the tourists. One could only find the unique Alps spread on the prehistoric land of Provence. He is surprised to see barren lands all around him with the absolute sense of isolation. The land is not only barren but devoid of colours too. Only wild lavender is present there to welcome the guests with their beauty and fragrance.

Where did Jean Giono find himself after three days' walking?

Answer:

After three days of continuous walk, Jean Giono found himself in the land of complete desolation. He decided to set up his camp near the remains of a deserted village. It was evident that there must be living here years back but now all life has gone with the wind. The ugly looking roofless houses were similar to old wasps' nests. One could find the signs of spring over there but that was dry too like the land. Some nature-beaten houses and a chapel were standing there all alone.

What does Giono say about the shepherd's living conditions?

On his way, weary and dehydrated Giono comes across a man who offers him natural tasteful water. Later on, Giono discovers that he is a shepherd who owns a cottage in a fold of the plain. When the shepherd takes Giono to his cottage, he is quite surprised to see the exquisiteness and cleanliness of it. The cottage is a clear representation of the shepherd's fine lifestyle. Everything is assembled so sophisticatedly that it gives a touch of a well-organized woman's hand. Giono describes the shepherd's cottage as a place in order, the dishes all wash and arrange, the floor sweep, the rifle oiled and set to meet any tragedy, delicious-smelling soup is boiling over the fire.

Why does Giono decide to stay for the night at the shepherd's house?

Answer:

After seeing the pleasant physical appearance of the cottage and hospitable nature of the shepherd, Giono decides to stay for the night at the shepherd's house. Another reason for sure is that he is worn out and wants some rest to regain his lost strength for any further move towards the nearest village that isn't so near as it would take a day and a half to reach it.

What did the shepherd do with the heap of acorns?

After some time, the shepherd went and carried a small sack and poured all its stuff on the table. A large number of acorns spread on the table in front of Giono and the shepherd. Then the shepherd began separating the acorns one by one, examining them just like a doctor treating his patient with great concern and attentiveness, he made a pile of good ones and the bad ones. When he was done with his job, he counted the fine acorns by tens. Side by side he was taking out the small acorns and those he found a bit cracked. After selecting the hundred best acorns from the pile, he resigned from his job and went to bed for a sound slumber.

What did the shepherd carry instead of a stick and what did he do with it?

When Giono and the shepherd left the cottage to rear the flock of sheep in the nearby pasture, Giono noticed that the shepherd was holding an iron rod as thick as his thumb in his hand instead of a stick. Giono was amazed to see that but he didn't dare to ask a question from him. As they moved, the shepherd climbed to the top of the mountain and there to Giono's utmost surprise the shepherd started thrusting his iron rod into the earth. The purpose behind was to make a hole in the surface of the earth where he had to plant an acorn to grow. After burying the acorn the shepherd expertly refilled the hole to provide it with a chance to give birth to a plant in solitude away from the attack of creatures (birds/animals) or nature (wind/storm).

For how long did the shepherd plant acorn trees and how many had grown into full-grown trees?

The shepherd was pretty much interested in planting trees without even knowing on whose land he was doing it. He had no desire to learn about it, he just wanted to see them grow and tall. On asking, the shepherd told Giono that he was in this business for the past three years. He had planted one hundred thousand acorns in that wilderness. He assumed that half of the hundred thousand must be eaten by the rodents or ruined by the impulsive weather conditions of the area. The remaining ten thousand oak trees

made their gentle appearance from the land where no one ever expected to see anything green or grown-up.

What did Giono discover about the shepherd's past life?

Giono was curious to know about the past life of the shepherd so he was asking questions from him time to time as the shepherd was not a talkative sort of a person and liked to stay quiet most of the time. While peering into the past life of the shepherd from the slightly open window of the shepherd's memory, Giono for the first time came to know the name of that man as Elzeard Bouffier. He owned a farm in the lowlands of the country. He was blessed with the only son, who died early. Later, his wife also departed from the world leaving him all alone to live a life on his own. Being a sole creature, he decided to move to this part of the land and made himself busy in the unimaginable task of planting trees all around him on the unknown vast land of someone with sheer passion and dedication without thinking about the reward or recognition.

What was the shepherd studying and for what purpose?

Along with planting oak trees on the far vast land, Elzeard also eagerly involved himself in studying the reproduction of beech trees. For that reason, he had designed a nursery

of seedlings grown from beechnuts near his cottage. He stretched a wire fence all around the nursery to protect it from his sheep. He wanted to take the birches to the valley to be grown well where he was certain that some amount of moisture presents a few yards below the surface of the soil.

What did Giono discover on his second visit to the area after the World War?

After spending five strenuous years performing his duty vigilantly as army personnel, he got a demobilization bonus and some time to spend leisurely without any worry. He again decided to move to the barren lands to relax and soothe his inner self for the second time. On reaching there, he found no noticeable change in the countryside. However, beyond the uninhabited village at a distance, he detected a sort of greyish mist covering the mountaintops just similar to a carpet spread on the floor.

What was the shepherd doing when Giono met him the second time?

On his second visit to the barren lands, Elzeard Bouffier was there at the back of Giono's mind and he was of the view that he might be dead. But when Giono met him, he was quite amazed to see him as agile as before. Elzeard changed his jobs for five years. He sold all his sheep except four as they would turn into a danger for his trees. He began to

nurture bees to get pure nutritious honey and for that purpose, he owned a hundred beehives. Along with this, he has not forgotten his job of planting oak trees.

What is the extent of the oak tree forest measured by Giono?

As the time of five years passed, the oak trees grew and gained height too. They were ten years old and taller than Giono. Elzeard expertly divided his oak tree forest into three sections. According to Giono, in totality, the whole forest generously occupied the land of eleven kilometres in length and three kilometres at its greatest width giving a heart-throbbing touch of beauty to the desolate realm.

What else has the man been planting in addition to oak trees? And what did Giono find there?

Elzeard, being a devoted tree-planter, planted birch trees along with the oak trees which he told Giono five years before. The birch trees also grew tall as high as the shoulder of Giono. As Elzeard dreamt to have them grown in the valleys with the moistened surface, he did the same and one could see them spreading over the land as far as the eyes

could reach. According to Giono, the vast clusters of birch trees were as delicate and beautiful as young girls.

What does Giono mean by chain reaction? What chain reaction does Giono describe which he attributes to that man working alone?

The drastic changes that Giono observed in the valley and barren land made him realize and say that this all happened due to the chain reaction. By chain reaction, he means that natural elements are all also dependent on one another like mankind. He gave the description of the chain reaction associated with the great effort of Elzeard, a man who worked all alone was that just with the emergence of oak and birch trees on the barren land, one could easily find the manifestation of God's blessings all around like the reappearance of water, streams making their smooth emergence, flowers began to bloom, sing and dance, the wind became gentle giving an animated look to the environment.

When did Giono see the man for the last time?

After spending 32 years away from the barren land, busy in participating vigilantly in World War, Giono decided to visit those barren lands again. When Giono visited the desolate lands of the past that turned into an impressive industrious realm, he had a

desire to see and meet Elzeard Bouffier. That was the time when Giono saw the man for the last time in June 1945 at the age of eighty-seven.

What did he discover about the area on his last visit (1945) after 35 years of his first visit (1910)?

On his third visit to the same place, Giono discovered a noticeable change on the land and in the surrounding as well. In the wilderness of that land before, I ran a bus following a proper route. The area comprising ten or twelve houses turned into a small colony of new houses, all well- built with the touch of modesty. Gardens with freshly grown vegetables and vibrant flowers gave a marvellous look to the vicinity. The wind changed its feel from harsh to gentle; the dry cracked land gave birth to brooks and streams, the infertile soil of the land firmly gripped the foundation of the heightened, green oak and birch trees. The valley echoed with the chit chat of men and women, giggling of boys and girls and enthralling spirit of youth. In totality ten thousand of the inhabitants living in comfort were proud of the sincere efforts of Elzeard Bouffier.

How old was Bouffier when he died in 1947?

Bouffier, a tree-lover, was 89 years old when he died in 1947 at the hospice in Banon. We came to know about his exact age as he was fifty-five years old in 1913 when Giono met

him for the very first time and when Giono met him last time in June 1945 he was eighty-seven so he must be eighty- nine after two years i.e. in 1947.

Interpreting

What does the detailed description of Bouffier's abode tell us about the man who planted trees?

When Giono was taken by the shepherd towards his dwelling, the outer and inner look of the house amazed him at once. The detailed description of Bouffier's abode tells us that the man who planted trees was a sophisticated sort of a person. One can imagine through the words of the author that although the cottage was small and simple looking it was arranged quite precisely. The dishes were all washed; the floor thoroughly brushed off without even a mark of dust, the rifle was oiled and the soup was ready to be served. This shows that Bouffier was an orderly man who liked to see and feel order in every sphere of his life.

What does Giono mean by "men could be as effective as God in other realms"? Explain.

After spending years in war and living in the world of destruction, Giono decided to take some rest for the peace of mind and soul. For that purpose, he selected the same barren land where he met Elzeard Bouffier the first time in the year 1910. When he stepped on that land, it was quite difficult for him to recognize it as on the same deserted land stood ten years tall, green, young oak trees.

On seeing such a positive, constructive, redecorated change in the valley, he was sure in his mind that yes God has blessed mankind with the strength of the brain to think and use it in either way of construction or destruction. He appreciated the endeavour and hard work of Bouffier though unrewarded by saying that “men could be as effectual as God in other realms.” According to Giono the men on this planet should make positive use of their mind for the welfare and betterment of mankind.

Why had the barren valley changed into a fertile valley with brooks and plants and trees and flowers? Remember that Giono could not find water there on his first visit. What could be the explanation?

The barren valley was changed into a fertile valley with brooks and plants and trees and flowers just because of tree-plantation by Bouffier. Trees are a great source of bringing about the weather and climatic changing to any kind of land. The same hypothesis was applied by Elzeard Bouffier as he buried seeds, they grew up and became tall trees, and

they changed the weather of the desolate land by inviting clouds to pour down rain. The refreshing rainwater gave new life to the dead, thirsty, barren land. Due to rain, the fertility of the land increased thus making it easy for flowers to make their dazzling appearance and brooks to flow down the way creating an enchanting ambience all around.

Why does Giono declare the work of Bouffier as “a work worthy of God?”

Giono declares the work of Bouffier as “a work worthy of God” because Bouffier was an old man but had vigour and passion just like youth. He established a new civilization all alone single-handed in the uninhabited land. His work must be admired by God too as he with his utmost courage, endeavour and will-power turned the barren land into a fertile valley by planting thousands of oak and birch trees. Those trees then became a firm source of changing the climate of that area and an open invitation to the masses to advance and live a blissful, contented life.

Extending

Which mountainous area of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would you choose to plant trees if

you were a Bouffier? How would you like to see it after ten, twenty years? Be imaginative!

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a land of exquisiteness, vegetation, tranquillity needs no introduction as it has a charisma that can easily attract anyone who is a true beauty lover. Although one can see and feel the soothing effect of green colour everywhere in the form of forests, woods, and meadows still there are some places in the far-reaching mountainous areas of the province that tend to invite someone to beautify them with the touch of green.

If I were a Bouffier who had a desire to plant trees for the betterment of mankind and to save planet Earth, I would select the area titled "Takht-i-Bahi." As it covered an extensive area of Gandhara ruins, it lacks greenery and liveliness.

Before giving a start to my project of planting trees, I would gain a handsome amount of information through the internet or the inhabitants about the weather and climatic conditions of that particular area. This would for sure classify the names of trees in my mind that would grow best and acclimatize well in that area.

I would initiate my work by selecting a small area of land in the beginning. Then I would plant the seeds of the specific tree into the soil which would have enough moisture to cater to the needs of my soon to be newly-born trees. As the area seems to be barren, it would take time for my trees to make their appearance onto the land. If I wanted to see them emerging, growing, turning into full youth, I would have to stay at that place leaving behind all my active city life and other social activities.

I would see them as tall as my shoulders after ten years, as it's a long span. Their small, green leaves must move and sway with the gentle blow of wind, giving a nice enchanting look to the area. Due to the trees, other vegetation also appears on the land that would attract people towards it and they would positively like to reside in the mountainous area of Takht-i-Bahi with their cattle and belongings.

After another ten years i.e. twenty years after the planting of trees, the area would certainly take an altogether new look. One could find hustle-bustle in the area because of the huge number of population living there. There would appear some freshwater streams along with meadows and fields with the carpet of freshly grown grass and scented flowers. People would start farming and cattle grazing over there due to the fertile soil being provided by the trees. There would be some shops too selling the day-to-day commodities of life to the residents.

Twenty years being quite a long time would change the area constructively giving life to it due to the efforts by me or the growth of trees.

Writing Skills

Write an essay on the advantage of wood.

Allah Almighty has blessed mankind with uncountable blessings. Among them, wood is one of the greatest pieces of magnificence as it is not only environment-friendly but

cost-effective too. The advantages of wood are numerous; some of the most important ones are as under:

Trees and wood products have a unique ability to store carbon. Exposure to wooden furniture and fittings has real and measurable health and wellbeing benefits. It helps lower heart rate and stress responses and encourages greater interaction between people.

The production and processing of wood use much less energy than most other building materials, giving wood products a significantly lower carbon footprint. The wood itself is a natural insulator due to air pockets within its cellular structure. Wood is supposed to be a durable material for both homes and commercial buildings. When properly looked after it can last hundreds of years.

Modern wood preservatives enhance natural durability. Wood can be used to substitute for materials that require larger amounts of fossil fuels to be produced.

With thoughtful design and careful workmanship wood bridges prove to be remarkably durable. Throughout the world, there are numerous examples of long-lasting wooden bridges – both historic and modern.

The growing demand for responsibly sourced wood products that store carbon can be met with an increase in well-managed forests and plantations on insignificant or cleared land.

Wood construction is fast and efficient. Wooden buildings can be built year-round in most climates. Wood is naturally beautiful and aesthetically enjoyable. Because woodwork is often done on-site or pre-fabricated locally or regionally, choosing wood means that it provides local jobs to carpenters and craftspeople.

Wood is resistant to a chemical that's why it is often used in the application of Potash storage buildings, salt storage domes, cooling towers, industrial tanks for various types of chemicals.

Wood has several benefits but we should use it effectively and purposefully too. To get good wood, we have to plant trees more and more with great care and attention.

Why is tree plantation necessary in our country and write your views in the form of a paragraph.

Answer:

Pakistan is not our country but also our motherland so we all have to show our love towards the land just as we love our mothers not only by singing patriotic songs or raising slogans "Pakistan Zindabad", but we all have to take firm steps to make it a prosperous, clean, green and healthy nation to live with pleasure. Tree plantation is one such simple step which every one of us can take quite easily. It is also the Sunnah of our

beloved Prophet (S.A.W.W) as he said: "If any Muslim plants any plant and a human being or an animal eats of it, he will be rewarded as if he had given that much in charity".

Tree plantation is necessary for our country because of certain insensitive truths. According to international standards, the area under forests should form at least 25 per cent of the total land inhabited by a human population, but the area covered by forests in our country has been reduced to about 4.8 per cent of the total land. Secondly, the population is increasing at a fast pace and natural resources are decreasing too creating one of the biggest burning issues of present time i.e. pollution. Tree plantation helps to resolve that dilemma to a great extent. Pakistan is also facing the problem of global warming like all other existing nations on the planet earth. It can also be blocked by planting trees as they reduce temperature and give a healthy, beautiful effect to the environment. Last but not the least, deforestation should be avoided by the people and the government should take action to stop it and should encourage all the citizens to plant at least one tree per year.

Language Study Exercise 1

Pick out the Adjective Clauses in the following sentences and tell what noun or pronoun each qualifies:-

1. Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow.
2. The letter brought money which was badly needed.
3. The house that I live in belongs to my father.
4. I am monarch of all I survey.
5. I have a little shadow which goes in and out with me.
6. The dog that barks does not bite.
7. He tells a tale that sounds untrue.
8. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good.
9. The boy stood on the burning deck whence all but he had fled.
10. They never fail who die in a great cause.
11. I remember the house where I was born.
12. He that climbs too high is sure to fall.
13. Here is the book you want.
14. Heaven helps those who help themselves.
15. He died in the village where he was born.
16. He never does anything that is silly.
17. People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
18. It is a long lane that has no turning.
19. He laughs best who laughs last.
20. Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.

Answer:

1. Mary had a little lamb **whose fleece was white as snow**. (Noun: lamb)
2. The letter brought money **which was badly needed**. (Noun: money)
3. The house **that I live in** belongs to my father. (Noun: house)
4. I am monarch **of all I survey**. (Noun: monarch)
5. I have a little shadow **which goes in and out with me**. (Noun: shadow)

6. The dog **that barks does not bite.** (Noun: dog)
7. He tells a tale **that sounds untrue.** (Noun: tale)
8. It's an ill wind **that blows nobody any good.** (Noun: wind)
9. The boy stood on the burning deck **whence all but he had fled.** (Noun: deck)
10. They never fail **who die in a great cause.** (Pronoun: They)
11. I remember the house **where I was born.** (Noun: house)
12. He **that climbs too high** is sure to fall. (Pronoun: He)
13. **Here is the book** you want. (Noun: book)
14. Heaven helps those **who help themselves.** (Noun: Heaven)
15. He died in the village **where he was born.** (Noun: village)
16. He never does anything **that is silly.** (Noun: anything)
17. People **who live in glass houses should not throw stones.** (Noun: People)
18. It is a long lane **that has no turning.** (Noun: lane)
19. He laughs best **who laughs last.** (Pronoun: He)
20. Thrice is he armed **that hath his quarrel just.** (Pronoun: he)

Language Study Exercise 3

In the following sentences replace Adjective Clauses by Adjectives or Adjective Phrases:-

1. The houses in which the Burmese live are generally built of bamboo.
2. The boy who sits near me is my cousin.

3. That was the reason why he came late.
4. The reason, why he failed, is obvious.
5. The workers, who were weary with their exertions, lay down to rest.
6. The sun, which at mid-day was hot, made the traveller thirsty.
7. Which is the road that leads most quickly to the station?
8. People who eat too much die early.
9. Many men who have not been trained to write become journalists.
10. This is the place where our forefathers landed.
11. The explanation he gave was not satisfactory
12. Such men as you cannot be easily disheartened
13. This boy, who has been industrious has earned a prize which he has well deserved
14. A belief which is generally held is not necessarily one which is true
15. An author who was famous in the reign of Queen Anne lived in that cottage which overlooks the lake.

Answer:

1. The Burmese live in a house generally built of bamboo.
2. The boy sitting near me is my cousin.
3. That was the reason for his late arrival.
4. The reason for his failure is obvious.
5. The weary workers lay down to rest.
6. The hot mid-day sun made the traveller thirsty.
7. Which is the road leading quickly to the station?
8. People eating too much die early.
9. Many men having not been trained to write become journalists.
10. Our forefathers landed at this place.
11. His explanation was not satisfactory.

12. Such men as you cannot be easily disheartened.
13. The deserving industrious boy has earned the prize.
14. A generally held belief is not necessarily true.
15. A famous author of Queen Anne's reign lived in that cottage overlooking the lake.

Language Study Exercise 4

1. This is the house that Ahmad built.
2. She sleeps the sleep that knows no waking.
3. We obeyed the order the teacher gave us.
4. They never fail who die in a great cause.
5. We love those who love us.
6. I have a little shadow which goes in and out with me.
7. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good.
8. Youth is the time when the seeds of character are sown.
9. They ever pardon who have done the wrong.
10. A friend who helps you in time of need is a real friend.
11. He could not answer the question I asked him.
12. They that eat balanced diet need no physician.
13. The plan you propose is a very good one.
14. It is a long lane that has no turning.
15. He gave me everything I asked for.
16. He has tricks that remind me of his father.
17. I duly received the message you sent me.

18. He that is down needs fear no fall.

19. Who lives longest sees the most.

Answer:

1. This is the house **that Ahmad built**.

2. She sleeps the sleep **that knows no waking**.

3. We obeyed the order **the teacher gave us**.

4. They never fail **who die in a great cause**.

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