

Appreciation of the Poem

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The poem 'Death the Leveller' by James Shirley is a fine poem that teaches us a god lesson. It says that our earthly glories are mere shadows. There is no shield against Fate. Death comes to all. Even the mightiest will be levelled with the poorest by Death, who is a leveller. Some men may make big conquests but their strong nerves finally become weak. Finally they also die as poor, pale prisoners of fate. So do not boast about your great actions. On the altar of death victor and the vanquished bleed alike. However great you are, your head must come to the cold tomb. Only the good actions of the just people will be remembered by posterity.

The poem has fine imagery. The poet has used many figures of speech like simile, metaphor, metonymy and oxymoron. These figures make the poem very interesting. The poem is in rhyme with the scheme ababccdd. It has a fine rhythm and it is very melodious.

The poem has a fine message: Death levels everyone. He treats all alike. All, kings and clowns, scholars and the illiterate, the rich and the poor, end up in dust. So we should not boast about our capabilities and achievements. We should remember that all of us are children of God and we all go back to the same dust. Death is a great leveller.