

9th Standard English

A Legend of The Northland Summary

About the Poetess

Phoebe Cary (Sept. 4, 1824 – July 31, 1871) was an American poetess, and the younger sister of Alice Cary. These sisters co-published poems in 1849, and then each went to publish volumes of their own.

Cary occasionally attended school. She often had to work at home and hence was largely self-educated. Her mother died in 1835, and two years later her father married again.

Phoebe died of hepatitis and was buried in New York. After the death of both sisters, a joint anthology of their poems was also completed.

Central Idea of the Poem

This poem puts forth the idea that we should not be selfish and always help the needy. A selfish person has no satisfaction in life.

Theme of the Poem

The Northland is a very cold region covered with snow. Its closeness to the north pole gives this place a cold weather with very few hours of sunlight. The poetess has written that here the hours of day are few and nights are long in winter. The people are unable to spend the whole night sleeping. The poetess doesn't believe in the authenticity of the story yet she is tempted to share the story.

Once Saint Peter was on his usual round of travelling and preaching people. He felt hungry. He chanced upon an old cottage where a little woman was making cakes. Saint Peter went near the woman and asked for some cakes to eat.

The little woman started to bake a small cake for him. After the cake was done, she found it too big to be given for free. So she decided to bake an even smaller cake. This went on and on till she made a wafer for Saint Peter. She even kept that wafer with herself instead of giving it to Saint Peter because she was too greedy to part with a single morsel of food.

After Saint Peter's curse the little woman went up through the chimney and turned into a woodpecker. Her whole body turned to coal black because of going up through the chimney.

Her red cap turned to the red scarlet of the woodpecker. After that people see her in the forest where she lives by boring and boring the dry wood in search of food.