

The path to rome by hilaire belloc

Literature



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The Path to Rome By Hilaire Belloc. Hilaire Belloc's The Path to Rome described his journey as a personal pilgrimage on

foot as he walked from France to Rome. He wrote on his views of western Europe before

the World Wars. He wrote in epigrams; consisting of short, witty observations about

western civilization. His sayings of commonplace truths have become so popular that he

has been attributed as a proverb maker. He used paradoxes to illustrate his points. He

wanted to convey that although western civilization had good resources like good wine

and verse, they should not misuse or abuse the resources. Initially, he praised the rail

transport system for helping industrialization, the modern march of his time, but then

contradicted himself when he said that the rails also disrupted the peace and conservation

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of the countryside. His sharp observation that the 'railways are trenches to drain our

modern marsh' has another ambiguous meaning. He meant that modern civilization was

destroying the geography and topography of the land. On the other hand, the railways

may not be figurative trenches but have aided the land by bringing industrialization and

modernization to improve the economy.

Belloc is guilty of empiricism, as he believed that all knowledge was derived from sensual experience. It may seem that he unduly criticized the people and the lands

but he was actually very proud of western civilization and his Catholic religion. He

believed his western Christian faith saved the land. He used the phrase; 'all the world is

my garden' as he considered himself to be the loving gardener, tending to his wards

under his care. For indeed, he meant to evangelize as he used his wit to make his account

humorous and entertaining. Belloc loved the land, his Catholic faith and his fellow

compatriots.

The End.

Belloc made good fun of Italy's hot weather when he started his monologue.

He then

digressed to become nostalgic, talking about his days down the memory lane. He has

imbedded different levels of narratives here; 'and that reminds me: your fathers and mine,

to whom allusion has been made above.....' The younger generation had 'the heat

increased'; by which he could have meant that the younger were more fiery

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in temper

than their fathers. This was his humorous opinion. Then he referred to the lector, who is a

member of one of the lowest ranked of the minor orders of the clergy, asking the 'auctor'

how many items of interior brackets to use. As there is no such word as 'auctor' in the

English vocabulary, we assume that Belloc has deliberately distorted his choice of word.

Perhaps he meant to suggest the occupation called the auditor. The auctor / auditor

reminded the minion Lector that he should take make his own decisions and take

responsibility for his own work. He hinted that his current generation realized that they

could have been fooled by their fathers' tomfoolery because their fathers took their own

sweet time traveling across the Alps. He suggested that all their forefathers' work were in

vain because they were defeated by the hot climate. Belloc was an apologist. He excused

the visions of his ancestors when he said; 'No wonder they saw visions, the dear people!'

He argued that his forefathers were weary and disillusioned and defended them. He

reminded us that we are ungrateful and forgetful because; 'we do not even know their

names'. He then ended his soliloquy by confirming of his guilt in being absent minded or

forgetful by pretending to have lost his thread of thought. This is Belloc's genius in

writing humor.

The End.

Works Cited.

Belloc, Hilaire. The Path to Rome. Amazon. com