

THE SIX BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined, Who went
to see the elephant
Though all of them were blind That
each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The first approached the elephant
And happening to fall
Against the broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
“Why, bless me! But this elephant Is
very much like a wall!”

The second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried: Ho! what have we here So
very round and smooth and sharp?
To me, 'tis very clear,
This wonder of an elephant, “Is very
like a spear!”

The third approached the animal,
And, happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands
Thus boldly up he spake:
“I see, " quoth he, the elephant Is
very much like a snake”

The fourth reached out his eager hand
And felt about the knee:
“What most this wondrous beat is like
Is very pain,” quoth he:
“Tis clear enough,” this elephant
Is very like a tree!”

The fifth who chanced to touch the ear
Said: “E'en the blindest man Can
tell what this resembles most . . .
Deny the fact who can:
This marvel of an elephant
“Is very like a fan!”

The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beat to grope
Than, seizing one the swinging tail
That fell within his scope, “I see, "
quoth he, “the elephant
Is very like a rope!”

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong; Though
each was partly in the right And all
were in the wrong.
John G. Saxe