



The Blind Men and the Elephant

1. It was six men of Hindustan,
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant,
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.
2. The first approached the elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl,
"Why, bless me!-but the elephant
Is very like a wall!"
3. 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!"

4. 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 like a snake!"

5. The fourth reached out his eager hand,
And felt about the knee;
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is very plain," quoth he;
'Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!"

6. 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!"

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

8. And so these men of Hindustan
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 Godfrey Saxe.