THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)’s version of the famous Indian legend

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Indostan- old name for northern IndiaTo learning much inclined – very interested in learningspake- old-fashioned past tense of *speak*quoth- saidE’en- evengrope- search by feelingDisputed- arguedExceeding stiff and strong- going beyond just being stubbornoft- oftentheologic- religiousdisputants- those involved in the argumentI ween- I believerail on- complain bitterlyprate- chatter at length about nothing really important | http://www.noogenesis.com/pineapple/elephant/elephant.JPGIt was six men of Indostan,To learning much inclined,Who went to see the Elephant(Though all of them were blind),That each by observationMight satisfy his mind.The *First* approach'd the Elephant,And happening to fallAgainst his broad and sturdy side,At once began to bawl:"God bless me! but the ElephantIs very like a wall!"The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,Cried, -"Ho! what have we hereSo very round and smooth and sharp?To me 'tis mighty clear,This wonder of an ElephantIs very like a spear!"The *Third* approach'd the animal,And happening to takeThe squirming trunk within his hands,Thus boldly up and spake:"I see," -quoth he- "the ElephantIs very like a snake!"The *Fourth* reached out an eager hand,And felt about the knee:"What most this wondrous beast is likeIs mighty plain," -quoth he,-"'Tis clear enough the Elephant Is very like a tree!"The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the ear,Said- "E'en the blindest manCan tell what this resembles most;Deny the fact who can,This marvel of an ElephantIs very like a fan!"The *Sixth* no sooner had begunAbout the beast to grope,Then, seizing on the swinging tailThat fell within his scope,"I see," -quoth he,- "the ElephantIs very like a rope!"And so these men of IndostanDisputed loud and long,Each in his own opinionExceeding stiff and strong,Though each was partly in the right,And all were in the wrong!MORAL, So, oft in theologic wars The disputants, I ween, Rail on in utter ignorance Of what each other mean; *And prate about an Elephant* *Not one of them has seen!*  |