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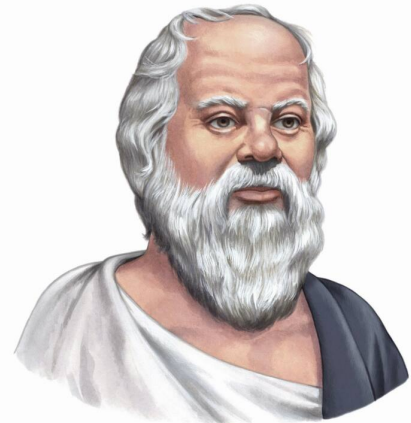
The Thorny Road of Honour

Hans Christian Andersen

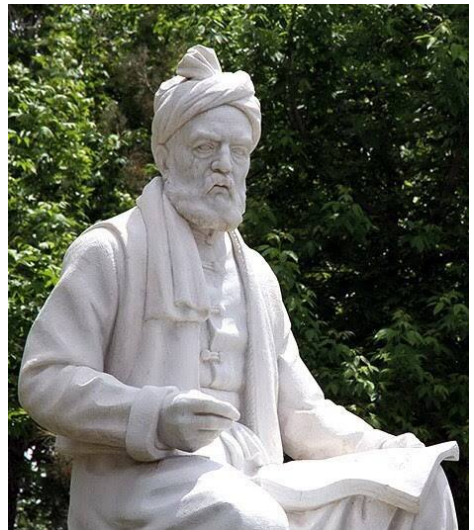
There have been people on earth who have done great things. They became important to history. The life of these people was often not easy. Their wonderful ideas were often ridiculed by other people. Sometimes people were afraid of them. They were locked up. Or they were bullied. But these people did not let it stop them from realising their dreams. Sometimes these people made it very difficult for themselves. You cannot always blame others for your misery. Let's be honest. Sometimes it is also partly your own fault.

History is like a magic lantern. It sheds light on how brave people sacrificed their lives for something they believed in immensely. History shows us images of the lives of these people. How they lived with their personal victories, but also with losses and struggles. Only after their death did it become clear how much they mean to our history. It gives them the fame they deserve. Not during life, but for a long time afterwards. For ever and ever.

Socrates was a wise man. He loved to talk a lot. He also asked many questions. People found this very disturbing. They thought: "This man must be making fun of us!" They got angry because he made them feel stupid. But Socrates did not think like that at all. Answers would make him smarter. Socrates was accused of not believing in the gods and he had to die because of that. Fortunately, Socrates was not afraid of death. He believed that his soul would live on. More and more people came to believe his knowledge of wisdom. After his death, this group of people grew bigger and bigger. The knowledge of wisdom is now called philosophy.



Ferdowsi spent 30 years writing a book. The Book of Kings. It became the most important book of ancient Persia. That country is now called Iran. The book, written in rhyme, covers 3600 years of Persian history. Ferdowsi received a reward from the king, but he thought it was too little and made no secret of it. The king was so irritated that he wanted to have Ferdowsi killed. Ferdowsi saved himself by begging the king not to do so. Ferdowsi was not very happy with himself after that. But he can be proud that we still know his name 1000 years later. He has achieved this with this book.



"You are mad!" cried the French king's minister when Salamon de Caus asked for his help. His help was needed to carry out tests for his invention. With steam he would set machines in motion. The poor man died in the madhouse. But the steam engine, was eventually built!

The French heroine Joan of Arc was a brave young woman. She fought in the war for the French king. Her life ended sadly at the stake. Centuries later, she was canonised and praised for her courage.



Life is not always about roses when you see opportunities others do not. The thorny path of honour is a way of life to show how brave or clever you are. You have to be strong enough for it, because it is not an easy life. But imagine how good it feels when you succeed. And if people don't understand you now, maybe they will later. And if not in this life, then think of the eternal glory that awaits you afterwards. For ever and ever.

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