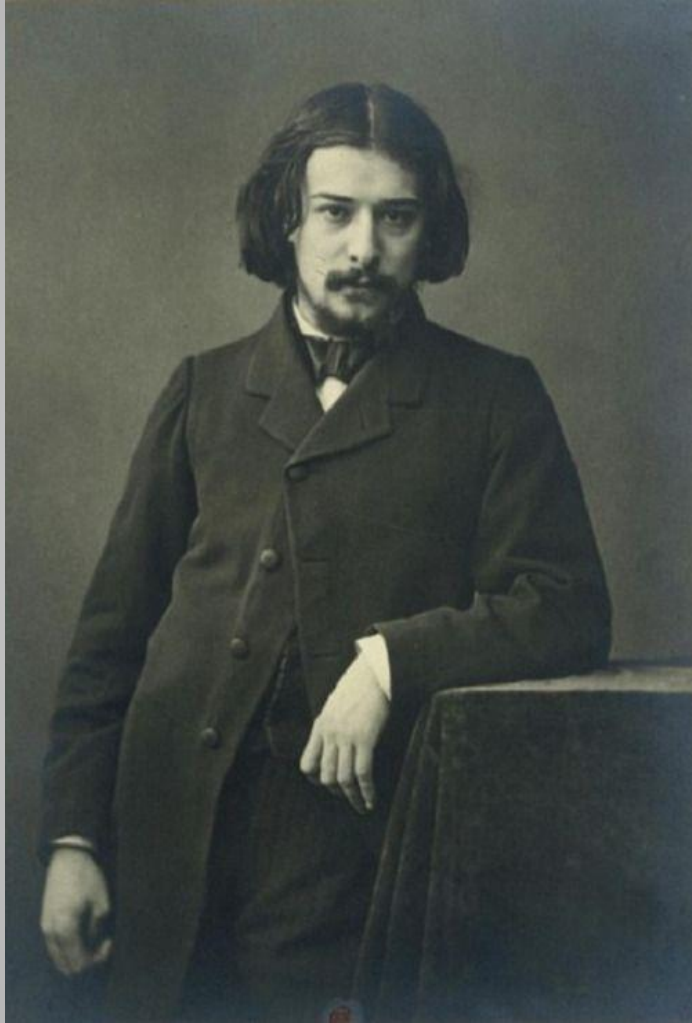


# THE LAST LESSON

-Alphonse Daudet

# About the author



Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897) was a French short story writer and novelist. He is now remembered chiefly as the author of sentimental tales of provincial life in the south of France. He portrays human emotions in a very realistic manner. His chief works are 'Sapho', 'Le Petit Chose', 'In the Land of Pain' and 'The Last Lesson'.

## Theme of the story

- ❑ Relates to culture and language
- ❑ Dominance of the imperial and colonial power
- ❑ Lust for ruling the world influencing culture and identities
- ❑ Linguistic Chauvinism
- ❑ Language: an asset , more so in times of crisis
- ❑ Fear, shame and agony of losing freedom of learning and using mother tongue
- ❑ Student and teacher attitudes to learning and teaching

# FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR



## Background of the story

- ❑ 'The Last Lesson' is set in the days of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871).
- ❑ The Prussian forces under Bismarck attacked and captured France.
- ❑ The French districts of Alsace and Lorraine went into Prussian hands.
- ❑ The new Prussian rulers discontinued the teaching of French in the schools of these two districts.
- ❑ The French teachers were asked to leave.

# FRANCE 1870-1871



# THE STORY



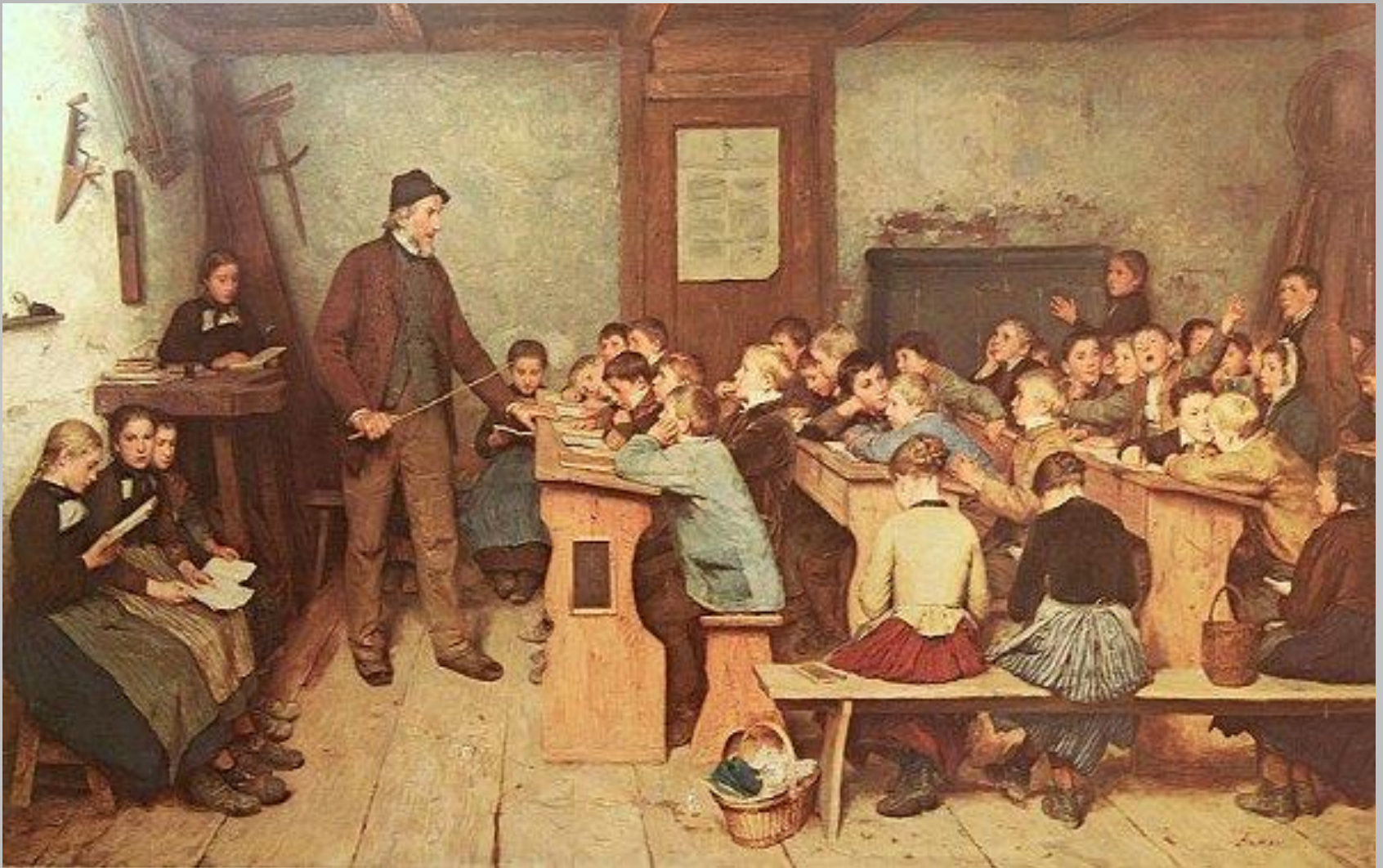
- ❑ Franz was afraid of going to school as he did not learn participles.
- ❑ Wanted to enjoy beauty of nature, sunshine ,chirping birds, Prussian soldiers drilling but resisted.
- ❑ Bulletin-boards: all bad news, lost battles, the drafts and orders of the commanding officers ; wondered what it could be now.
- ❑ Noticed the changes in the school.
- ❑ No commotion, no noisy classrooms.
- ❑ Everything as quiet as Sunday morning.



## M. Hamel and Franz



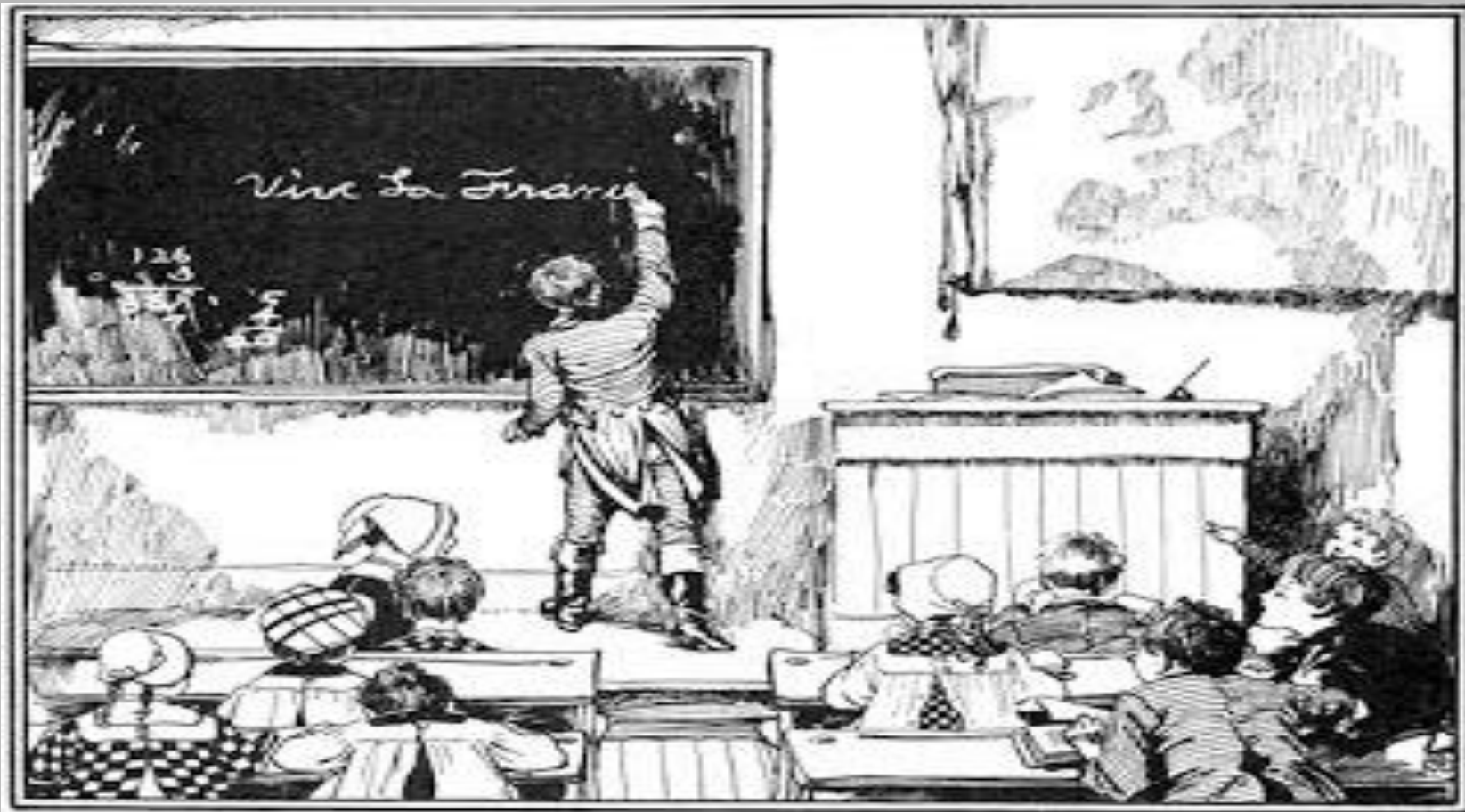
- ❑ M.Hamel, the teacher did not scold him, but spoke kindly.
- ❑ Franz noticed the teacher dressed in his Sunday best.
- ❑ Villagers occupying the last benches.
- ❑ To pay tribute to M. Hamel for his 40 years of sincere service.
- ❑ To express their solidarity with France.
- ❑ Hamel made the announcement of it being the last French lesson.
- ❑ Franz realized what was put on the bulletin -board.
- ❑ Regretted that he did not know his mother-tongue.
- ❑ Repented of not taking his lessons seriously.



# M.Hamel, the students and the villagers

Vikram Singh Nagore

- ❑ Franz realized why the teacher was dressed in his Sunday best and villagers sitting at the back.
- ❑ Hamel accepted that all three - the children, parents and he himself were to be blamed for losing respect and regard for the mother tongue.
- ❑ Always keep the mother - tongue close to your heart as it is the key to the prison of slavery.
- ❑ Atmosphere in class: teacher teaching sincerely and patiently; students and others studying with utmost sincerity.
- ❑ Franz wondered sarcastically if the Prussians could force pigeons to coo in German.
- ❑ Tears rolled down their eyes.



- ❑ M. Hamel roused the spirit of patriotism.
- ❑ Overwhelmed with emotions , could not speak.
- ❑ Wrote on the blackboard 'Vive La France!'— 'Long Live France'.
- ❑ Made a gesture with his hand to them.
- ❑ "School is dismissed — you may go."

**THANK YOU**