

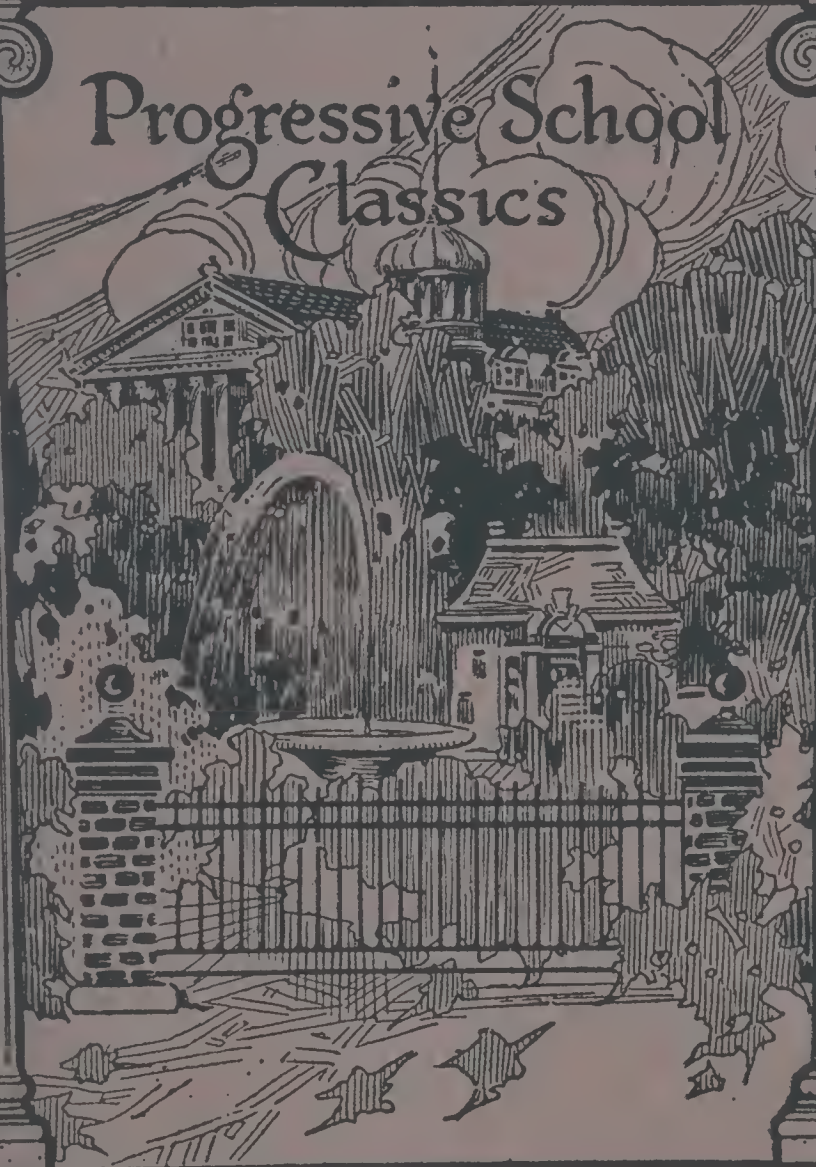
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# THE DESERTED VILLAGE

BY  
OLIVER GOLDSMITH

## ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

BY  
THOMAS GRAY

Edited with  
Biographical Sketches, Portraits, and Notes  
by

HELEN WOODROW BONES



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## OLIVER GOLDSMITH

OLIVER GOLDSMITH was born November 10, 1728, in the hamlet of Pallas, in County Longford, Ireland. His father, a poor clergyman with a large family, moved to the little village of Lissoy when Oliver was two years old and here the boy grew up. His



education was more varied than thorough, for he attended at least four different schools before he was fifteen years old, when he entered Trinity College, Dublin.

Young Goldsmith's college years were not happy ones, though he had many friends and some merry times, and when in 1749 he was graduated, his degree of B. A. was all he had with which to start out in life. His father had died and his mother was very poor. His relatives made several attempts to launch him on a career and in 1752 furnished him with means to go to Edinburgh, where he began the study of medicine. He had hardly made a good beginning when he decided

that he could study better at Leyden; once in Holland, he longed to visit other countries, and in 1755 he set out on foot to "see the world." Living from hand to mouth, for a year he wandered, visiting various cities of Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. In 1756 he made his way to London, almost penniless but filled with impressions that were to show themselves later in his writings.

Somewhere on the Continent he had received his medical degree and in London he began the practice of medicine. Not succeeding in that, he made various attempts to secure lucrative employment. By mere chance he became a contributor to one of the leading reviews of the day and from that time on he made his living with his pen. It was as a hack writer that Goldsmith began his real career and to the end of his days he wrote under the greatest pressure. Reviews, essays, biographical sketches, histories, plays, were produced in response to the demands of the publishers and booksellers; but so poorly was he paid for most of his work and so extravagant and so generous was he when he had money to spend or give away, that he was always driven and harassed. And yet when he died, in 1774, he left at least five works which have lived: his "Good-natured Man" and "She Stoops to Conquer" have not been crowded from the stage by modern plays; and "The Vicar of Wakefield," "The Traveller," and "The Deserted Village" are looked upon to-day as classics.

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## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,  
Where health and plenty cheer'd the laboring swain,  
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,  
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd;  
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5  
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,  
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,  
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!  
How often have I paus'd on every charm,  
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm, 10  
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
The decent church that topt the neighboring hill,  
The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made!  
How often have I blest the coming day, 15  
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
And all the village train, from labor free,  
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;  
While many a pastime circled in the shade,  
The young contending as the old survey'd; 20  
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,  
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round!  
And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,  
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;  
The dancing pair that simply sought renown, 25  
By holding out to tire each other down,  
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face  
While secret laughter titter'd round the place,

The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,  
 30 The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.  
 These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,  
 With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;  
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed;  
 These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

35 Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;  
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,  
 And desolation saddens all thy green:  
 One only master grasps the whole domain,  
 40 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain,  
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
 But chok'd with sedges works its weedy way;  
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;  
 45 Amidst thy desert-walks the lapwing flies,  
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.  
 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;  
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
 50 Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
 Where wealth accumulates and men decay;  
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—  
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made—  
 55 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
 When every rood of ground maintain'd its man:  
 For him light labor spread her wholesome store,  
 60 Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more;  
 His best companions, innocence and health,  
 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train  
 Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain:  
 Along the lawn where scatter'd hamlets rose, 65  
 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,  
 And every want to opulence allied,  
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
 Those calm desires that ask'd but little room, 70  
 Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,  
 Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green—  
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour, 75  
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.  
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds  
 Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,  
 And, many a year elaps'd, return to view  
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80  
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,  
 In all my griefs—and God has given my share—  
 I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, 85  
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;  
 To husband out life's taper at the close,  
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose.  
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
 Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill, 90  
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;  
 And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue  
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,  
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95  
 Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,  
 Retreats from care that never must be mine!  
 How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,  
 100 A youth of labor with an age of ease;  
 Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
 And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly!  
 For him no wretches, born to work and weep,  
 Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;  
 105 No surly porter stands, in guilty state,  
 To spurn imploring famine from the gate;  
 But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
 Angels around befriending virtue's friend,  
 Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,  
 110 While resignation gently slopes the way,  
 And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
 His heaven commences ere the world be past.

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close  
 Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.  
 115 There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,  
 The mingling notes came soften'd from below:  
 The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,  
 The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,  
 The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
 120 The playful children just let loose from school,  
 The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,  
 And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind—  
 These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
 And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.  
 125 But now the sounds of population fail,  
 No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,  
 No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,  
 For all the bloomy flush of life is fled—  
 All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,  
 130 That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;



She, wretched matron—forc'd in age, for bread,  
 To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
 To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,  
 To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn—  
 She only left of all the harmless train, 135  
 The sad historian of the pensive plain!

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,  
 And still where many a garden-flower grows wild;  
 There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
 The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140  
 A man he was to all the country dear,  
 And passing rich with forty pounds a year,  
 Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
 Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change, his place;  
 Unpractic'd he to fawn, or seek for power, 145  
 By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;  
 Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,  
 More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.  
 His house was known to all the vagrant train,  
 He chid their wanderings, but reliev'd their pain; 150  
 The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,  
 Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;  
 The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
 Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;  
 The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155  
 Sate by his fire, and talk'd the night away;  
 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,  
 Shoulder'd his crutch and show'd how fields were won.  
 Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,  
 And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160  
 Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
 His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
 And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side:

165 But in his duty prompt at every call,  
 He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all.  
 And, as a bird each fond endearment tries  
 To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,  
 He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
 170 Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
 And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,  
 The reverend champion stood: at his control  
 Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;  
 175 Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,  
 And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
 His looks adorn'd the venerable place;  
 Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,  
 180 And fools who came to scoff remain'd to pray.  
 The service past, around the pious man,  
 With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;  
 Even children follow'd, with endearing wile,  
 And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile:  
 185 His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,  
 Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest;  
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven:  
 As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,  
 190 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
 With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,  
 195 There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,  
 The village master taught his little school.  
 A man severe he was, and stern to view;  
 I knew him well, and every truant knew:

Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace  
 The day's disasters in his morning face; 200  
 Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee  
 At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;  
 Full well the busy whisper, circling round,  
 Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.  
 Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205  
 The love he bore to learning was in fault.  
 The village all declar'd how much he knew;  
 'T was certain he could write, and cipher too;  
 Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,  
 And even the story ran that he could gauge, 210  
 In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,  
 For even though vanquish'd he could argue still;  
 While words of learned length and thundering sound  
 Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around;  
 And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew 215  
 That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame: the very spot,  
 Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.  
 Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,  
 Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220  
 Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,  
 Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,  
 Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,  
 And news much older than their ale went round.  
 Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225  
 The parlor splendors of that festive place:  
 The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,  
 The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;  
 The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,  
 A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230  
 The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,  
 The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;

The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,  
 With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;  
 235 While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,  
 Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain, transitory splendors! could not all  
 Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?  
 Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
 240 An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.  
 Thither no more the peasant shall repair  
 To sweet oblivion of his daily care;  
 No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,  
 No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;  
 245 No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,  
 Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;  
 The host himself no longer shall be found  
 Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;  
 Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,  
 250 Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,  
 These simple blessings of the lowly train;  
 To me more dear, congenial to my heart,  
 One native charm, than all the gloss of art.  
 255 Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,  
 The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;  
 Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,  
 Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd.

But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,  
 260 With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd—  
 In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,  
 The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;  
 And even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,  
 The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy.

265 Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey  
 The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,

'T is yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
 Between a splendid and a happy land.  
 Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,  
 And shouting Folly hails them from her shore; 270  
 Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,  
 And rich men flock from all the world around.  
 Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name,  
 That leaves our useful products still the same.  
 Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride 275  
 Takes up a space that many poor supplied—  
 Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,  
 Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;  
 The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth  
 Has robb'd the neighboring fields of half their growth; 280  
 His seat, where solitary sports are seen,  
 Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;  
 Around the world each needful product flies,  
 For all the luxuries the world supplies.  
 While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure, all 285  
 In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.  
 As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,  
 Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,  
 Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,  
 Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes; 290  
 But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,  
 When time advances, and when lovers fail,  
 She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,  
 In all the glaring impotence of dress.  
 Thus fares the land by luxury betray'd: 295  
 In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,  
 But verging to decline, its splendors rise,  
 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;  
 While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,  
 The mournful peasant leads his humble band; 300

And while he sinks, without one arm to save,  
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,  
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?  
305 If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,  
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,  
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
And even the bare-worn common is denied.  
If to the city sped, what waits him there?  
310 To see profusion that he must not share;  
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd  
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;  
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know  
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.  
315 Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,  
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;  
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,  
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.  
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,  
320 Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;  
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,  
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.  
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!  
Sure these denote one universal joy!  
325 Are these thy serious thoughts? Ah, turn thine eyes  
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.  
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,  
Has wept at tales of innocence distress;  
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,  
330 Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;  
Now lost to all—her friends, her virtue fled—  
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,  
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the  
shower,

With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour  
 When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335  
 She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn—thine, the loveliest train—  
 Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?  
 Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,  
 At proud men's doors they ask a little bread! 340  
 Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,  
 Where half the convex world intrudes between,  
 Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,  
 Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.  
 Far different there from all that charm'd before, 345  
 The various terrors of that horrid shore:  
 Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,  
 And fiercely shed intolerable day;  
 Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,  
 But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling; 350  
 Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,  
 Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;  
 Where at each step the stranger fears to wake  
 The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;  
 Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 355  
 And savage men more murderous still than they;  
 While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,  
 Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.  
 Far different these from every former scene,  
 The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360  
 The breezy covert of the warbling grove,  
 That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting  
 day,  
 That call'd them from their native walks away;  
 When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365  
 Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,

And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain  
 For seats like these beyond the western main;  
 And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,  
 370 Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep!  
 The good old sire the first prepar'd to go  
 To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;  
 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,  
 He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.  
 375 His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,  
 The fond companion of his helpless years,  
 Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,  
 And left a lover's for a father's arms.  
 With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,  
 380 And blest the cot where every pleasure rose,  
 And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,  
 And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;  
 Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief  
 In all the silent manliness of grief.  
 385 O Luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,  
 How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!  
 How do thy potions, with insidious joy,  
 Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!  
 Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,  
 390 Boast of a florid vigor not their own:  
 At every draught more large and large they grow,  
 A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe;  
 Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,  
 Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.  
 395 Even now the devastation is begun,  
 And half the business of destruction done;  
 Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,  
 I see the rural Virtues leave the land.  
 Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,  
 400 That idly waiting flaps with every gale,



Downward they move, a melancholy band,  
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.  
Contented Toil, and hospitable Care,  
And kind connubial Tenderness are there;  
And Piety with wishes plac'd above, 405  
And steady Loyalty, and faithful Love.  
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,  
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade,  
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,  
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame; 410  
Dear, charming nymph, neglected and decried,  
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride,  
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,  
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so,  
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel, 415  
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!  
Farewell! and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,  
On Torno's cliffs or Pambamarca's side,  
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,  
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420  
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,  
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime;  
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;  
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;  
Teach him, that states of native strength possess, 425  
Though very poor, may still be very blest;  
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,  
As ocean sweeps the labor'd mole away;  
While self-dependent power can time defy,  
As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

## THOMAS GRAY

THOMAS GRAY was born in London, December 26, 1716. His father, a man of some means, neglected his family shamefully, and it was to his mother that Gray owed everything, even the money for his support and education being earned by her.



Thomas was one of twelve children, and the only one to grow up. He was a delicate child and it is perhaps due to this fact that we hear little of his schooling until he went to Eton, in 1727. It was at that school that he formed a friendship with Horace Walpole which lasted for forty years with only one break.

He went from Eton to Cambridge in 1734. During his university life his health was no better than it had been in his childhood; but, notwithstanding this fact, he was at Cambridge, as he had been at the preparatory school, a hard-working student, especially of the classics, languages, and history. At Eton he had written very creditable Latin

verse and at Cambridge he wrote both Latin and Greek poetry and made translations, into prose and verse, from the classics.

He left Cambridge in the autumn of 1738 and soon afterward Horace Walpole invited him to travel with him, as his guest, on the Continent. Gray gladly accepted his friend's generous invitation and the two young men traveled together for over two years.

Gray returned to England in 1741, and soon after his return his father died. The following year he published his "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College." His father had left very little for the young man and his mother to live on. Gray went into residence at Cambridge, where with economy he could live comfortably on his small income, and his mother soon moved to the parish of Stoke Pogis, not far from Eton. The poet spent his yearly vacations with her and it was at Stoke Pogis that, in 1742, he began his famous *Elegy*, finished over seven years later.

For thirty years Gray lived quietly at Cambridge, studying and writing continuously in spite of ill health; going up to London occasionally; at long intervals visiting other parts of the country, and once going to Scotland. In 1757—the year in which his "Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard" were published—he was offered the poet-laureateship, which he refused. In 1768 he accepted the professorship of modern history at Cambridge, holding the position till his death, in 1771. While it is as a poet that Gray is celebrated, poetry formed only a small part of the work he accomplished at Cambridge, and he was known to his contemporaries as one of the most learned scholars of his time.

## ELEGY

### WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight, 5  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,  
The moping owl does to the moon complain 10  
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid, 15  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,  
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;

No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

25 Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;  
How jocund did they drive their team afield!  
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,  
30 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
35 Await alike th' inevitable hour.  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,  
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault  
40 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

45 Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
50 Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;

Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,  
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
 The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:  
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air. 55

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast  
 The little Tyrant of his fields withstood;  
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,  
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
 And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone 65  
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;  
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70  
 Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride  
 With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
 Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;  
 Along the cool sequester'd vale of life 75  
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect  
 Some frail memorial still erected nigh,

With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
 80 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,  
 The place of fame and elegy supply;  
 And many a holy text around she strews,  
 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

85 For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,  
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,  
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
 Nor cast one ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
 90 Some pious drops the closing eye requires;  
 E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
 E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonored dead,  
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,  
 95 If chance, by lonely contemplation led,  
 Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
 “Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away  
 100 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

“There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
 That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
 His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
 And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

105 “Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
 Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;

Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,  
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

“One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,  
Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree; 110  
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

“The next, with dirges due in sad array,  
Slow through the churchway path we saw him  
borne.—

Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay 115  
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.”

## THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,  
A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:  
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,  
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own. 120*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,  
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:  
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,  
He gain'd from Heav'n ('t was all he wish'd) a  
friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,  
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON  
COLLEGE

*\*Ανθρωπος, ἰκανὴ πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν.*

—MENANDER

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,  
That crown the wat'ry glade,  
Where grateful Science still adores  
Her Henry's holy shade;  
5 And ye, that from the stately brow  
Of Windsor's heights th' expanse below  
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,  
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among  
Wanders the hoary Thames along  
10 His silver-winding way :

Ah, happy hills! ah, pleasing shade!  
Ah, fields belov'd in vain!  
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,  
A stranger yet to pain!  
15 I feel the gales that from ye blow  
A momentary bliss bestow,  
As waving fresh their gladsome wing  
My weary soul they seem to soothe,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
20 To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen  
Full many a sprightly race  
Disporting on thy margent green,  
The paths of pleasure trace ;



Who foremost now delight to cleave  
 With pliant arm thy glassy wave? 25

The captive linnet which enthrall?  
 What idle progeny succeed  
 To chase the rolling circle's speed,  
 Or urge the flying ball? 30

While some on earnest business bent  
 Their murm'ring labors ply  
 'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint  
 To sweeten liberty:

Some bold adventurers disdain 35  
 The limits of their little reign,

And unknown regions dare descry:  
 Still as they run they look behind,  
 They hear a voice in every wind,  
 And snatch a fearful joy. 40

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,  
 Less pleasing when possess;  
 The tear forgot as soon as shed,  
 The sunshine of the breast;

Theirs buxom health of rosy hue, 45  
 Wild wit, invention ever-new,

And lively cheer of vigor born;  
 The thoughtless day, the easy night,  
 The spirits pure, the slumbers light,  
 That fly th' approach of morn. 50

Alas, regardless of their doom,  
 The little victims play!  
 No sense have they of ills to come,  
 Nor care beyond to-day;  
 Yet see how all around 'em wait 55

The ministers of human fate,  
 And black Misfortune's baleful train!  
 Ah, show them where in ambush stand,  
 To seize their prey, the murth'rous band!  
 60 Ah, tell them, they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,  
 The vultures of the mind,  
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,  
 And Shame that skulks behind;  
 65 Or pining Love shall waste their youth,  
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,  
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,  
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,  
 Grim-visag'd, comfortless Despair,  
 70 And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,  
 Then whirl the wretch from high,  
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,  
 And grinning Infamy.  
 75 The stings of Falsehood those shall try,  
 And hard Unkindness' alter'd eye,  
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;  
 And keen Remorse with blood defil'd,  
 And moody Madness laughing wild  
 80 Amid severest woe.

Lo! in the vale of years beneath  
 A grisly troop are seen,  
 The painful family of Death,  
 More hideous than their queen:  
 85 This racks the joints, this fires the veins,

That every laboring sinew strains,  
Those in the deeper vitals rage:  
Lo! Poverty, to fill the band,  
That numbs the soul with icy hand,  
And slow-consuming Age.

90

To each his suff'rings: all are men,  
Condemn'd alike to groan;  
The tender for another's pain,  
Th' unfeeling for his own.  
Yet, ah! why should they know their fate,  
Since sorrow never comes too late,  
And happiness too swiftly flies?  
Thought would destroy their paradise.  
No more;—where ignorance is bliss,  
'T is folly to be wise.

95

100

## NOTES

[The numbers refer to lines in the text.]

### THE DESERTED VILLAGE

This poem was first published in 1770 and bore the following dedication to Goldsmith's friend Sir Joshua Reynolds:

DEAR SIR,—I can have no expectations, in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest, therefore, aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion), that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarce make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry, whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages, and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed, so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.—I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend and ardent Admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

1. **Auburn.** It is generally supposed that Goldsmith in describing this rural village had in mind the little Irish town of Lissoy, in which he grew up, and probably he has reproduced in the poem many of the scenes of his childhood. But of course it is not to any one village he has reference; Auburn is simply typical—in its prosperity an ideal English village, and in its ruin symbolic of what the poet believed to be the tendency of his times. **Plain** has, here, the meaning of “countryside.”

4. **parting:** here, departing.

5-6. **bowers . . . seats.** Both words mean, here, homes. Goldsmith was fond of using “bower.” See lines 33, 37, 47, and 86.

10. **cot.** Poetical for cottage.

12. **decent:** here, neat.

17. **train:** used here, as often in Goldsmith’s time, to mean a company of people.

19-21. **many a pastime circled . . . gambol frolick’d.** The reference is, of course, to folk-games played by the young people of the village.

22. **sleights:** a word once commonly used for “feats.”

25. **simply:** artlessly.

27. **mistrustless:** unconscious.

35. **lawn:** here, the same as “plain,” in line 1.

37-39. **the tyrant’s hand . . . one only master.** That is, a greedy landlord—the “spoiler” mentioned in line 49—has taken all the land for his own use.

40. **half a tillage, etc.** The people of the village have been deprived of half their harvest.

42. **sedges:** coarse grasslike plants which grow in thick tufts in marshy places.

44. **bittern:** a bird which frequents marshes. At certain seasons its note has a deep booming sound.

45. **lapwing:** a small bird of the plover family.

52. **decay:** degenerate.

57. **England’s griefs.** See note on line 1.

58. **rood:** in Great Britain a rod, or five and a half yards.

59. **store:** abundance.

63. **train:** here, followers. See note on line 17.

65. **lawn.** See note on line 35.

69. **gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom.** What is the subject here?

74. **manners:** customs, rather.

81. **her busy train.** Explain.

84. **in all my griefs.** We may well believe the poet here has in mind the many ups and downs of his own life.

87. **husband out:** expend economically. What is meant by **life’s taper?**

105. **surly porter.** In “The Citizen of the World” Goldsmith says: “I never saw a nobleman’s door half opened, that some surly porter or footman does not stand full in the breach.”

106. imploring famine. By metonymy made to mean beggars in general.

113. evening's close. The poet uses "evening" for "afternoon," as many people in our Southern States do to-day.

122. vacant: here, carefree.

126. gale. The word, much too strong here, is of course used for the sake of the rhyme.

130. plashy: watery.

140. the village preacher's modest mansion. Goldsmith's father and his brother Henry were just such village preachers as are here described. Probably the poet has the latter more especially in mind, as this gentleman died not long before "The Deserted Village" was written. Mansion is much too pretentious a word here, but the poet seems fond of using it thus.

142. passing: surpassingly. "The Traveller" was dedicated by Goldsmith to the Reverend Henry Goldsmith. In his dedication the poet characterizes his brother as "a man, who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year."

144. place: circumstances.

159. glow: become roused to interest.

162. pity gave ere charity began. Explain. The poet might have been describing himself here, for he was forever giving when he had anything to give.

170. led the way. That is, showed by his life how to live.

171. parting life. See note on line 4.

173. reverend champion. Why may a good pastor be justly called a "champion"?

194. unprofitably gay. The furze is by no means unprofitable; it is put to various uses.

195. mansion. See note on line 140.

196. the village master. The poet probably had in mind here the schoolmaster who taught him in Lissoy—Thomas, or "Paddy," Byrne.

199. boding: fearful (of what was to come).

207. village. By metonymy, the villagers.

209. terms: sessions of the law-courts. By tides "seasons" is meant.

210. gauge: ascertain the capacity of vessels filled with liquids.

221. nut-brown draughts. That is, the ale mentioned in line 224.

222. gray-beard mirth . . . smiling toil. Explain these figures of speech.

226. parlor: befitting a parlor.

231. use. Of what use could pictures be on a wall?

232. twelve good rules. The reference is to a set of rules of conduct often to be found on the walls of public houses in olden days. Charles I is given credit for their composition. They were: (1) Urge no healths. (2) Profane no divine ordinances.

(3) Touch no state matters. (4) Reveal no secrets. (5) Pick no quarrels. (6) Make no comparisons. (7) Maintain no ill opinions. (8) Keep no bad company. (9) Encourage no vice. (10) Make no long meals. (11) Repeat no grievances. (12) Lay no wagers. The royal game of goose resembled that of checkers. According to Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes," it was played on a board divided into sixty-two compartments, and took its name from the fact that "at every fourth and fifth compartment in succession a goose was depicted. . . . If the cast thrown by a player falls upon a goose, he moves forward double the number of his throw."

234. aspen boughs . . . fennel. Every one who has ever been in the country, probably, has seen the fireplace of the "best room" decorated in this way.

236. chimney. Of course the fireplace or mantel is meant.

239. obscure it sinks: it sinks into obscurity.

244. woodman's ballad. Here, "woodman" is used for "hunter."

250. kiss the cup. That is, touch it with her lips.

252. train. See lines 17 and 63.

257. vacant mind. See note on line 122.

259. pomp: procession. (The original meaning of the word.)

265. survey: observe.

267-268. how wide the limits stand, etc. This is, what a difference there is between them.

269. freighted ore: ore laden upon ships.

279. silken sloth. Explain.

281. solitary sports. That is, sports unshared by his neighbors.

287. plain: here, natural.

288. secure to please: sure of pleasing.

293. solicitous to bless: anxious to make some man happy.

297. verging: as it tends.

298. vistas: views.

300. band: family.

316. pale artist, etc. Here artist is used for "artisan," the sickly trade being any work which overtaxes the workman's strength or injures his health.

317. pomps. See note on line 259.

318. glooms: shows darkly. See line 363.

319. dome: mansion or palace. (Commonly so used in poetry.)

321. blazing: brightly lighted by the torches mentioned below.

322. chariots: carriages. Before the days of street lights link-boys, or men carrying torches, lighted people on their way about large towns and cities.

335. idly: foolishly. ambitious of the town: longing for city life.

336. wheel: spinning-wheel.

343-358. torrid tracts. This, of course, is intended as a description of our own country—in Goldsmith's time still, for the most part, an unknown wilderness. We excuse him for depicting

life on this side of the Atlantic as so wretched when we consider the terrors and hardships he believed formed a part of it—tigers, for instance, which are to be found nowhere in America.

**344.** *Altama*: the *Altamaha*, a river which runs through Georgia. A Georgian would hardly recognize this description as that of a part of his state.

**348.** *intolerable day*: hot sunlight.

**352.** *gathers death*: accumulates venom.

**354.** *rattling terrors*: warning of the rattlesnake.

**363.** *gloom'd*: made dark. See line 318.

**368.** *seats*: homes.

**384.** *silent manliness*: manly silence.

**399.** *anchoring*: anchored.

**405.** *wishes plac'd above*: desires turned toward heaven.

**409.** *unfit*: unsuited. "English poetry, like that in the latter empire of Rome, is nothing at present but a combination of luxuriant images, without plot or connection—a string of epithets that improve the sound without carrying on the sense."—*The Vicar of Wakefield*.

**412.** *my shame in crowds*. Apparently Goldsmith's friends agreed with him in his estimate of his inability to express himself orally. Dr. Johnson tells us that "no man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had."

**418.** *Torno's cliffs*. Probably a reference to Lake Tornea, in northern Sweden. *Pambamanca* is a mountain of the Andes Range, in South America.

**419.** *equinoctial fervors*. That is, heat such as prevails near the Equator.

**422.** *redress the rigors, etc.*: make up for the severity of the climate.

**424.** *rage of gain*: rage for gain—avarice.

**427-430.** *That trade's proud empire, etc.* These lines were written by Dr. Johnson.

**428.** *mole*: a mass of masonry placed outside the entrance of a harbor to protect it from the rough waters of the ocean.

**430.** *sky*: here, weather.

#### ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Lord Byron called this poem the cornerstone of Gray's glory. It was first published in 1751.

**1.** *curfew* (from two French words—*couvre*, to cover, and *feu*, fire): originally the ringing of a bell at eight o'clock in the evening, as a signal for people to cover their fires and extinguish their lights and retire for the night. We must remember that in England the twilight lasts much later than in our own country.  
*parting*: departing.

**2.** *wind*. Why not "winds"?

**5.** *glimmering*: faintly gleaming, as seen in the twilight.

**7.** *droning*. Why is this word especially appropriate?

**8.** *folds*. By metonymy used to mean the flocks in the folds.

**10.** *the moping owl*. Explain.



12. **reign**: realm, domain.
16. **rude**: unlearned, rustic.
19. **echoing horn** of the hunter.
20. **bed**. Meant literally here, probably, though at first thought we might take **lowly bed** to mean the grave.
21. **blazing hearth**. What figure of speech is this?
26. **glebe**: ground. **Broke**, here, is a curtailed form of "broken," commonly used by early writers.
27. **jocund**: merry, light-hearted. (An adjective.)
30. **homely**: domestic, simple.
32. **annals**: here, personal history.
33. **heraldry**. That is, illustrious ancestors.
36. **The paths of glory lead but to the grave**. Hayley points out that this is a literal translation from the Latin of Bartholinus. Parkman in his "Montcalm and Wolfe," tells us that General Wolfe quoted lines 33-36 the night before he was killed, declaring that he would rather have written them than take Quebec.
37. **these**. That is, the people buried here.
- 39-40. **where**, etc. Explain what the poet had in mind.
41. **storied urn**: urn containing the ashes of the departed, and bearing on it an inscription setting forth his virtues. **animated**: lifelike.
42. **mansion**. Explain.
46. **pregnant with celestial fire**: filled with heavenly inspiration.
50. **spoils of time**. Explain.
51. **noble rage**: lofty enthusiasm.
- 57-60. **Hampden [John]**: a celebrated English statesman (1594-1643) who is remembered chiefly for his refusal to pay the ship-money tax, the collection of which Charles I tried to revive without the consent of Parliament. Explain the reference to Milton and that to Cromwell.
58. **the little tyrant**. The real Hampden's tyrant was Charles I. What is meant by "the little tyrant of the fields"?
- 61-65. **th' applause . . . their lot forbade**. Express in prose the thought of these five lines.
- 65-72. **nor circumscrib'd**, etc. Put into prose the thought expressed here.
- 71-72. **heap**, etc. That is, add in verse to the flattery bestowed upon the rich and proud. In the original MS this was followed by four stanzas which the poet later omitted.
- 73-74. **far**, etc. Is the thought in these lines correctly expressed, grammatically? Put it into prose.
77. **these bones**. That is, the bones of the people buried in the churchyard.
78. **frail memorial**. That is, the gravestone, worn by time and weather.
79. **uncouth**: awkward. **shapeless**: poorly executed.
81. **spelt by th' unletter'd muse**: written by an uneducated poet.

83. she: the muse.  
 84. that teach the rustic moralist to die. "How" is understood here.  
 93. for thee. The poet is now addressing himself.  
 95. chance: perchance.  
 97. haply: perhaps. hoary-headed swain: gray-haired rustic.  
 104. pore: thoughtfully observe. Why babbles?  
 105. Hard by: close to. Who was smiling?  
 109. custom'd: accustomed.  
 111. another came. That is, another morn.  
 113. dirges due: customary dirges.  
 119. Science: here, simply, knowledge. (Personification.)  
 120. Melancholy mark'd him. This was true of the poet during the greater part of his life.

#### ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE

The quotation from the Greek poet Menander, which precedes this poem, may be translated: "To be a man is reason enough for being miserable." The Ode was the first of Gray's poems to be published; it first appeared in 1747, though it was written some years earlier.

1. antique: here, ancient.  
 4. her Henry's holy shade. Henry VI, after his death regarded by the English people almost as a saint, founded Eton College in 1440. He is called "holy King Henry" by Shakespeare.  
 6. Windsor's heights. Eton is situated near the royal residence of Windsor Castle.  
 12. fields belov'd in vain. Can you think of any reason why the poet should feel that his years at Eton had been in vain?  
 20. to breathe a second spring. Explain.  
 23. margent green. Both margent and green may be used as an adjective or as a noun, so two meanings are possible here. As a noun margent means margin or shore; as an adjective, marginal or bordering.  
 29. rolling circle's. Originally this line read: "To chase the hoop's illusive speed."  
 32. their murm'ring labors ply. Explain.  
 36. reign: realm, domain.  
 37. descry. The word is used here in the sense of "explore."  
 38. they look behind. Why?  
 40. snatch: to seize or take hastily. (Frequently used figuratively, as here.)  
 45. buxom: sturdy, robust.  
 56-57. The ministers of human fate, etc.—"the murth'rous band"—are named in the two stanzas which follow, lines 61-80. Murtherous (murth'rous), an old form of "murderous," was frequently used by Shakespeare.  
 60. they are men. See opening note, regarding the Greek quotation preceding the poem.  
 61. fury: violent.  
 82. grisly: terrible, gruesome.

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# MORNING EXERCISES FOR ALL THE YEAR

—A DAY BOOK FOR TEACHERS—

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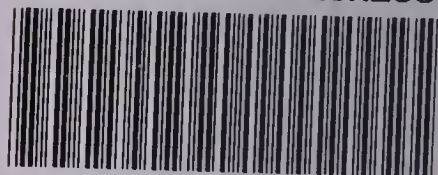
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