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ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

SELECTIONS
FROM THE POEMS OF
THOMAS GRAY

EDITED BY A. M. VAN DYKE, M.A.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, CINCINNATI HIGH SCHOOL



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Gray

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GRAY

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INTRODUCTION.

THOMAS GRAY was born in Cornhill, London, December 26, 1716. His father, Philip Gray, was a scrivener and broker, a man of violent temper and jealous disposition, with some symptoms of madness. He abandoned his family, and died abroad, leaving but little of his reputed wealth.

His mother was Dorothy Antrobus Gray, most touchingly described by the poet, in the inscription placed on her tombstone, as "the tender mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her." The other eleven children died in infancy. Mrs. Gray supported her son by keeping, with her sister, a millinery shop in London, and it was altogether through her care and industry that Gray enjoyed the advantages of education. In 1727 he was sent to Eton College, under the auspices of his two uncles, Robert and Thomas Antrobus, the former of whom was assistant to a master of Eton, and a fellow of Peterhouse College, and the latter a fellow of King's College, Cambridge. At Eton he met Horace Walpole, son of the prime minister, with whom he formed a friendship that lasted, with a slight interruption, while they both lived, and that was of immense advantage to the future poet.

In 1734 he went to Cambridge, where for a short time he was a pensioner at Pembroke Hall; but he soon went over as a fellow-commoner to Peterhouse, his uncle Robert's college. In the following year Walpole put in an appearance at King's College.

In September, 1738, Gray left Cambridge without taking a degree, but in 1743 he received from this institution the degree of LL.B. He lived for six months at his father's house, with no settled plans for the future, although he had some thoughts of studying law.

Fortunately for him, in March, 1739, Walpole proposed a tour of the Continent, agreeing generously to pay all expenses and at the same time to allow Gray perfect independence of action. It is interesting to note that Walpole made his will before starting, and had he died abroad, Gray would have been his sole legatee. It was during this tour that Walpole and Gray quarreled, and the latter returned home alone after an absence of two and a half years. Walpole generously took all the blame for the quarrel on his own shoulders, and the friendship was later renewed, and thereafter remained uninterrupted. The sketches of his travels written by Gray evince his good taste and his remarkable learning, even at this early period of his life.

Shortly after Gray's return to England, his father died in embarrassed circumstances, leaving him without the means of pursuing his intended study of the law; and he retired to Cambridge, fixing his residence at the university, where, with the exception of two short intervals, he continued to live during the remainder of his life. He chose Cambridge as his home partly from motives of economy, but mainly because of the ready access it afforded to books,—for he found his happiness in study. He became a profound scholar, versed in many fields of knowledge. Philoso-

phy, botany and zoölogy, language, history, archæology, music, art, were among the studies to which he devoted himself, and in which he acquired no little eminence. The one subject that seemed entirely foreign to his tastes was mathematics. "Must I pore upon mathematics?" he said. "Alas! I cannot see in it too much light. I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly."

In 1742 he wrote his "Ode on the Spring" and the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," his "Hymn to Adversity" and the "Sonnet on the Death of Richard West;" and it was probably in the same year that he began the "Elegy." He wrote little, partly because of his studious and contemplative disposition, which left him no leisure for writing, partly because he was so critical that he seldom could approve his own work, and partly because of an excessive reserve which avoided publicity of any kind. His extreme modesty is well illustrated in the following extracts from a letter written to Horace Walpole in 1768:

"Dodsley told me in the spring that the plates from Mr. Bentley's designs were worn out, and he wanted to have them copied and reduced to a smaller scale for a new edition. I dissuaded him from so silly an expense, and desired he would put in no ornaments at all. The 'Long Story' was to be totally omitted, as its only use (that of explaining the prints) was gone; but to supply the place of it in bulk, lest *my works* should be mistaken for the works of a flea, I promised to send him an equal weight of poetry or prose; so, since my return hither, I put up about two ounces of stuff, viz., 'The Fatal Sisters,' 'The Descent of Odin' (of both which you have copies), a bit of something from the Welsh, and certain little notes. . . . This is literally all; and with all this,

I shall be but a shrimp of an author. To what you say to me so civilly, that I ought to write more, I reply in your own words (like the pamphleteer, who is going to confute you out of your own mouth), 'What has one to do, when *turned of fifty*, but really to think of finishing?' However, I will be candid (for you seem to be so with me), and avow to you that till fourscore and ten, whenever the humor takes me, I will write, because I like it, and because I like myself better when I do so. If I do not write much, it is because I cannot."

The "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," published in 1751, won him immediate popularity,—which occasioned no little surprise to himself. Four editions were exhausted in one year. Byron said of this poem: "Had Gray written nothing but his 'Elegy,' high as he stands, I am not sure that he would not stand higher. It is the corner stone of his glory. Gray's 'Elegy' pleased instantly and eternally." And the remark of General Wolfe to his officers, the night before his victory at Quebec, has become famous: "Gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec."

In 1757 Gray published his Pindaric odes, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard," which were not received with favor. Gray ascribed their unpopularity to the unintelligence of his readers, and treated their opinions with contempt. To some friends who had admired these poems he wrote: "You are doing a very unfashionable thing, for all people of condition are agreed not to admire, nor even to understand. One very great man, writing to an acquaintance of his and mine, says that he has read them seven or eight times; and that now, when next he sees him, he shall not have above thirty questions to ask." These "questions" are answered for the present reader in the footnotes, many

of which were later prepared by Gray himself, under pressure of his friends and publishers, "just to tell the gentle reader that Edward I. was not Oliver Cromwell, nor Queen Elizabeth the witch of Endor."

The death of Gray's mother, in 1753, was an occasion of great grief to him, as he was much attached to her, and repaid her with his love for all her sacrifices in his behalf.

In 1757, on Colley Cibber's death, the poet-laureateship was offered to Gray. He declined the appointment, however, for reasons stated in an admirable letter to the Rev. William Mason, from which the following is an extract :

"Though I very well know the bland, emollient, saponaceous qualities both of sack and silver, yet if any great man would say to me, 'I make you rat-catcher to his Majesty, with a salary of £300 a year, and two butts of the best Malaga; and though it has been usual to catch a mouse or two, for form's sake, in public once a year, yet to you, sir, we shall not stand upon these things,' I cannot say I should jump at it. Nay, if they would drop the very name of the office, and call me *Sinecure* to the King's Majesty, I should still feel a little awkward, and think everybody I saw smelled a rat about me. But I do not pretend to blame any one else that has not the same sensations. For my part, I would rather be serjeant trumpeter or pinmaker to the palace. Nevertheless, I interest myself a little in the history of it, and rather wish somebody may accept it that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable or ever had any credit. . . . The office itself has always humbled the professor hitherto (even in an age when kings were somebody), if he were a poor writer by making him more conspicuous, and if he were a good one by setting him at war with the little fry of his own pro-

fession; for there are poets little enough to envy even a poet laureate."

The professorship of modern history at Cambridge falling vacant in 1762, Gray applied for the appointment, but was unsuccessful. In 1765 he went on a tour through Scotland, descriptions of which are preserved for us in the form of many interesting letters to his friends. Not long after his return, in 1768, the professorship which Gray had coveted again fell vacant, and the duke of Grafton bestowed it on the poet. The honor came too late, however, to give him pleasure. Ill health rendered the duties of his office burdensome to him. He never delivered any lectures, and thought seriously of resigning.

In 1771 he was attacked by gout of the stomach, and died on the 30th of July, at the age of 55. He was buried by the side of his mother, at Stoke Pogis, the supposed scene of his "Elegy."

Gray never married, and his life was singularly devoid of variety. His manners were, to some, "disagreeably effeminate and fastidious; but he was a man of the most exact taste, the purest morals, and the most independent spirit." Taine calls him "the morose hermit," others, more appropriately, "the gentle recluse." His devotion to study emphasized a naturally serious disposition, though there are not wanting gleams of sunny humor, seen mostly in his letters.

Gray has given us several sketches of his own character, both in prose and in verse. In two letters written to his friend, Richard West, he says:

"As I am recommending myself to your love, methinks I ought to send you my picture (for I am no more what I was, some circumstances excepted, which I hope I need not particularize to you). You must add, then, to your former idea, two

years of age, a reasonable quantity of dullness, a great deal of silence, and something that rather resembles than is thinking; a confused notion of many strange and fine things that have swum before my eyes for some time, a want of love for general society—indeed, an inability to it. On the good side you may add a sensibility for what others feel, and indulgence for their faults and weaknesses, a love of truth, and detestation of everything else. Then you are to deduct a little impertinence, a little laughter, a great deal of pride, and some spirits. . . .

“Low spirits are my true and faithful companions; they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do, nay, and pay visits, and will even affect to be jocose and force a feeble laugh with me; but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world.”

On a sheet of paper found in his pocketbook, and dated 1761, appeared the following lines:

“Too poor for a bride, and too proud to importune,
 He had not the method of making a fortune;
 Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd;
 No very great wit, he believed in a God;
 A post or a pension he did not desire,
 But left church and state to Charles Townshend and Squire.”

A résumé of the influences that affected Gray's poetry will help us to understand much in his work that might otherwise perplex us. Those who write of the history of English literature usually divide it into three great periods—the Elizabethan, the classic, and the Victorian age. This, of course, does not take into account the time of Chaucer and his contemporaries, sometimes called the pre-English era.

In the transition from one period to the succeeding one there seems to be an interregnum, in which the representative writers reflect to some extent the characteristics of their immediate predecessors in the kingdom of letters, and at the same time foreshadow the manner and style of the succeeding age.

John Milton (1608-1674), who was a boy when Shakespeare died, and John Dryden (1631-1700) illustrated this idea. The former says that he took Spenser as his original, but he was perhaps to a large extent indebted to the influence of all the brighter stars in the splendid galaxy of the English Renaissance. "He took their mythology, their allegories, sometimes their conceits, and discovered anew their rich coloring, their magnificent sentiment of living nature, their inexhaustible admiration of forms and colors. But at the same time he transformed their diction and employed poetry in a new service."¹ His view of nature was therefore largely through the eyes of others. His style, brilliant and composite, was less natural than that of his masters, but more formal, more regular, more concentrated, and is a first step to the purely formal and exact style of the artificial or so-called classic age of Pope and his contemporaries.

Though Dryden is regarded as the founder of the classical school of poetry, he is also, but perhaps not so broadly, reflective of the past age. He "both borrows and mars the inventions of Shakespeare." With Shakespeare words were quickening things, and behind a single word was often a whole scene of imagery, a mass of feeling, sentiment, passion. With Dryden, though there may be in them a little flickering of reflected beams, they create no vivid likeness of natural objects, and only feebly stir an enfeebled passion. They are arranged for form's sake, as if poetry

¹ Taine's English Literature.

were a matter of systematized learning, and a thing resulting from intellectual effort only.

The effort for exactness of formal expression in verse, begun by Dryden, the father of this school of poetry, was perfected by Pope, his devoted disciple, in whom the classical spirit centered, and he became the "prince of the artificial school of poetry." During his time the classical style became dominant, and its ascendancy remains more or less potent to the present time. It is an admirable style; but it is *art*, not *nature*; its pompous declamation is neither impassioned nor impassioning; its classical correctness is not a delicate or simple beauty; it is in no sense "simple, sensuous, passionate."

Although the classical spirit was altogether, and still is somewhat, persistent and dominant, there came again the recurrent transition and a return to nature. Toward the end of the eighteenth century we begin to notice the departure of artificial scene-painting, poetic machinery, the management of words for mere literary effect; poetry begins again to put on the robe of nature, but *with* art; nature appears again as the sun and the clouds and the winds and the rains make it, and not as the poetic artificer fancies it; and passion, feelings, sentiments, are once more as human and intense as human nature makes them. The tinsel of classical embroidery is becoming dull and tarnished.

This period gives us Thomson, a sad, impassioned man who talks with objects, and for whom the sky, the fields, the sun, the rain, and the mists have the genuine smile or frown of nature; Akenside, a profoundly thoughtful man, imbued with the lofty spirit of old Greek poetry; Collins, whose enthusiasm, ending in madness, bursts forth in an "Ode to the Passions;" Goldsmith, the amiable and affectionate poet, whose "Vicar of Wakefield"

is "the most charming of Protestant pastorals," who in his "Deserted Village" and "Traveler," as well as in some of his prose works, discourses wisely on men, manners, and the characteristics of neighboring European civilizations; and Gray, "the morose hermit of Cambridge," who in his earlier odes is influenced by Dryden and in his later poems by Spenser and Milton.

Gray was the greatest English lyric poet of his time and of all ages. "Extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical, is one of the grand beauties of lyric poetry. This I have always aimed at, and never could attain," he writes, with his excessive modesty, yet "his art was a perfect lyric art." His diction is characterized by its perfect finish, its felicity of expression, its wealth of apt and splendid imagery, and a harmony of numbers surpassed by few, if any. His taste is both exact and pure, and his judgment always sound.

As might be expected, Gray's letters are more characteristic of his personality than are his poems. Two brief quotations regarding them will close this introduction. The first is from William Cowper, who says: "I once thought Swift's letters the best that could be written, but I like Gray's better. His humor or his wit, or whatever it is to be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, and yet, I think, equally poignant with the dean's." And William Hazlitt, in his "Lectures on the English Poets," says: "His letters are inimitably fine. If his poems are sometimes finical and pedantic, his prose is quite free from affectation. He pours his thoughts out upon paper as they arise in his mind; and they arise in his mind without pretense or constraint, from the pure impulse of learned leisure and contemplative indolence. . . . He had nothing to do but to read and think, and to tell his friends what he read and thought. His life was a luxurious, thoughtful dream."

CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF GRAY'S LIFE.

YEAR	EVENT	GRAY'S AGE
1716,	December 26. Gray was born at Cornhill, London.	
1727.	Entered Eton College; met Horace Walpole	11
1734.	Entered Peterhouse, Cambridge	18
1738.	Left Cambridge	22
1739.	Tour on the Continent with Walpole	23
1741.	Returned to England; death of his father	25
1742.	Wrote "Ode on the Spring," "Ode on Eton Col- lege," "Hymn to Adversity," "Sonnet on West;" began "Elegy;" removed to Peterhouse, Cam- bridge	26
1743.	Took degree of LL.B. at Cambridge	27
1747.	Wrote "Ode on Death of a Favorite Cat;" his first publication—"Ode on Eton College"	31
1748.	Wrote "Alliance of Education and Government" .	32
1750.	Wrote "A Long Story"	34
1751.	Published the "Elegy"	35
1753.	Death of his mother	37
1754.	Wrote "Ode to Vicissitude"	38
1755.	Wrote "Progress of Poesy;" began "The Bard" .	39
1757.	Published "Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard" .	41
1762.	Declined appointment to poet-laureateship; applica- tion for professorship of modern history refused .	46
1765.	Tour of Scotland	49
1768.	Appointed professor of modern history at Cambridge	52
1769.	Published "Ode for Music" and "Ode on Duke of Grafton"	53
1771,	July 30. Died	55

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.¹

Ἄνθρωπος· ἰκανῆ πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν.²

MENANDER.

YE distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown³ the wat'ry glade,
Where grateful Science⁴ still adores
Her Henry's⁵ holy Shade;
And ye,⁶ that from the stately brow 5
Of Windsor's heights the expanse below
Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along⁷
His silver-winding⁸ way. 10

¹ "This was the first poem of Gray's that appeared in print. It was published in folio in 1747, and republished with some other odes in 1751, when for the first time it attracted attention. It cannot be said to be a very popular poem, perhaps because it is too personal. It seems to lack the apparent spontaneity of the Elegy, and the artistic qualities of the two great odes. However, it expresses very naturally the feelings of a thoughtful and mature man when viewing a scene which recalls the days of his youth" (GOSSE).

² "Because I am a man: a sufficient excuse for being miserable." This was the reply given to the question, "Why are you so miserable?"

³ Adorn; ornament.

⁴ "Grateful Science." Cf. Elegy, line 119.

⁵ Eton College, on the Thames, was founded by Henry VI. in 1440. Shakespeare calls him "holy King Henry." Cf. Gray's comment in *The Bard*, p. 37, Note 7.

⁶ The towers of Windsor Castle.

⁷ In lines 7, 8, the Thames is personified in classic fashion.

⁸ Note the compound epithet.

Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,
 Ah fields beloved in vain,¹
 Where once my careless childhood strayed,
 A stranger yet to pain!
 I feel the gales, that from ye blow, 15
 A momentary bliss bestow,
 As waving fresh their gladsome wing
 My weary soul they seem to soothe,
 And, redolent of joy and youth,²
 To breathe a second spring.³ 20

Say, Father Thames, for thou hast seen
 Full many a sprightly race
 Disporting on thy margent green⁴
 The paths of pleasure trace,
 Who foremost now delight to cleave 25
 With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
 The captive⁵ linnet which intrall?⁵
 What idle progeny succeed⁶
 To chase the rolling circle's speed,⁷
 Or urge the flying ball? 30

While some on earnest business bent
 Their murmuring labors ply⁸
 'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint⁹
 To sweeten liberty;

¹ The promise of happiness and success, which his boyhood days held out to him while at Eton, has not been realized.

² Cf. "And bees their honey redolent of spring"—DRYDEN'S *Fable on the Pythagorean System* (GRAY).

³ "To breathe," etc., i. e., to recall vividly the days of youth.

⁴ "Margent green." Which is the noun?

⁵ Note "captive" and "intrall."

⁶ "Succeed," a literal use.

⁷ The MS. reads: "To chase the hoop's illusive speed." Which is better?

⁸ The busy hum of study.

⁹ Constraint (restraint) sweetens liberty. Cf. "Toil sweetens rest."

Some bold adventurers disdain
 The limits of their little reign,
 And unknown regions dare descry;¹
 Still as they run they look behind,²
 They hear a voice in every wind,
 And snatch a fearful joy. 40

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,³
 Less pleasing when possessed;
 The tear forgot as soon as shed,
 The sunshine of the breast;
 Theirs buxom⁴ 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;⁵
 Yet see how all around 'em wait⁶ 55
 The Ministers of human fate,
 And black Misfortune's baleful train!
 Ah, show them where in ambush stand,⁷
 To seize their prey, the murtherous⁸ band!
 Ah, tell them, they are men! 60

¹ Explore or seek. ² "Still as they run," etc., very true to nature.

³ "Gay hope," etc. Cf. a common saying.

⁴ "Buxom" is here used in its modern sense. An old form sometimes found is *boughsome*, i.e., like the *bough* of a tree, graceful in movement.

⁵ Lines 51-54. Pope's philosophy is better expressed. See his *Essay on Man*, I. lines 81-86. ⁶ "Yet see," etc. Cf. *Progress of Poesy*, ii. 1.

⁷ To whom is this line addressed? ⁸ Old form of "murderous."

These shall the fury Passions¹ tear,
 The vultures of the mind,
 Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
 And Shame that skulks behind ;
 Or pining Love shall waste their youth, 65
 Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart,
 And Envy wan, and faded Care,
 Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,
 And Sorrow's piercing dart. 70

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high,
 To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
 And grinning Infamy.
 The stings of Falsehood those shall try, 75
 And hard Unkindness' altered eye,
 That mocks the tear it forced to flow ;
 And keen Remorse with blood defiled,
 And moody Madness laughing wild²
 Amid severest woe. 80

Lo! in the vale of years beneath
 A grisly³ troop are seen,
 The painful family of Death,
 More hideous than their queen.
 This racks the joints, this fires the veins,⁴ 85
 That every laboring sinew strains,
 Those in the deeper vitals rage ;

¹ Cf. "frantic Passions," *Progress of Poesy*, line 16. Passions fierce as the mythical Furies. What is the predominant figure in the three stanzas, lines 51-80? Note the aptness of the epithets.

² "Madness laughing in his ireful mood"—*DRYDEN'S Palamon and Arcite*, ii. 582 (*GRAY*).

³ Not same as "grizzly." Cf. *The Bard*, line 44.

⁴ Note the sound and sense of this line.

Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
 That numbs the soul with icy hand,¹
 And slow-consuming Age. 90

To each his sufferings; all are men,
 Condemned alike to groan,
 The tender for another's pain,
 The unfeeling for his own.
 Yet ah! why should they know their fate?² 95
 Since sorrow never comes too late,
 And happiness too swiftly flies.
 Thought would destroy their paradise.
 No more; where ignorance is bliss,
 'Tis folly to be wise. 100

¹ Cf. *Elegy*, lines 51, 52.

² The same thought is found in old rime:

“ If ills ne'er come, our fears are vain;
 And if they do, fear but augments the pain.”

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

A PINDARIC ODE.

Φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσι.¹

PINDAR, *Olymp.* ii.

I. 1.

AWAKE, Æolian² lyre, awake,³
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs⁴
A thousand rills⁵ their mazy progress take ;
The laughing flowers,⁶ that round them blow,⁷

5

¹ "Vocal to the intelligent [only]."

² Æolia, a district of Greece, the fabled birth country of poetry.

³ "Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp" (Psalm lvii. 8).

"The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and luster to all it touches, are here described; its quiet, majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers, and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swollen and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions" (GRAY).

⁴ Helicon was a mountain in Bœotia, fabled as the abode of the Muses, to whom the two fountains it contained were sacred.

⁵ Note the music of the word "rills."

⁶ "Laughing flowers," the ornaments of poetry.

⁷ Bloom.

GENERAL NOTE.—This poem was finished in 1745, but not published until 1757, when it appeared in quarto form with *The Bard*. The poems were not

Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
 Now the rich stream of music winds along,
 Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,¹
 Through verdant vales,² and Ceres'³ golden reign;⁴
 Now rolling down the steep amain,⁵ 10
 Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
 The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.⁶

I. 2.⁷

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
 Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
 Enchanting shell!⁸ the sullen Cares 15
 And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.

¹ "Note the movement of the line" (HALES).

² "Verdant vales," i.e., pastoral poetry. ³ Goddess of harvest.

⁴ "Golden reign," i.e., the yellow or golden harvest.

⁵ With force.

⁶ Lines 10-12 are suggestive of the higher forms of poetry, as epic or dramatic.

⁷ Lines 13-24. "Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul" (GRAY).

⁸ According to the myth, the first lyre was made by Mercury from a tortoise shell. Cf. Collins's Ode to the Passions, line 3.

popular at first, their want of success being due to the obscurity which, in the case of The Bard particularly, was the chief source of sublimity, it being cast in the form of a prophetic vision. Gray was persuaded to add some explanatory notes, which he did, saying: "As to the notes, I do it out of spite, because the public did not understand the two odes, though the first was not very dark, and the second alluded to a few very common facts to be found in any six-penny history of England, by way of question and answer, for the use of children." These odes are called "Pindaric," and are constructed on Greek models of Pindar. They are composed of nine stanzas, symmetrically arranged in groups of three (ternaries), the corresponding stanzas of all the ternaries being so exactly intercorrespondent that even unusual poetic forms are repeated in corresponding lines of each ternary. The technical Greek names for these three parts are *strophe*, *antistrophe*, and *epodos*. This manner of construction of odes does not seem to have been a favorite with English poets.

On Thracia's¹ hills the Lord of War
 Has curbed the fury of his car,
 And dropped his thirsty lance² at thy command.
 Perching on the sceptered hand 20
 Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king³
 With ruffled plumes and flagging wing;
 Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
 The terror of his beak, and lightnings of his eye.

I. 3.⁴

Thee the voice, the dance, obey, 25
 Tempered to⁵ thy warbled lay.
 O'er Idalia's⁶ velvet-green⁷
 The rosy-crownèd Loves are seen
 On Cytherea's⁸ day
 With antic⁹ Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures, 30
 Frisking light in frolic measures;
 Now pursuing, now retreating,
 Now in circling troops they meet;
 To brisk notes in cadence beating
 Glance their many-twinkling¹⁰ feet. 35
 Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare;¹¹
 Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.

¹ Mars, the god of war, was worshiped in Thrace.

² Note the force of "thirsty lance."

³ The eagle, "feathered king," was the bird of Jove.

⁴ Lines 25-41. "Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body" (GRAY).

⁵ "Tempered to," i.e., in rhythm with; in time to.

⁶ "Idalia," for Idalium, a town of Cyprus, a favorite seat of Venus.

⁷ Note the compound "velvet-green." ⁸ Another name for Venus.

⁹ Grotesque, because old-fashioned. Cf. "antique."

¹⁰ A curious but very expressive epithet.

¹¹ The first eleven lines have a rapid movement, in perfect keeping with the action described. What is the measure? Note the abrupt change to a longer verse and the resultant slower movement.

With arms sublime,¹ that float upon the air,
 In gliding state² she wins her easy way;
 O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move 40
 The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love.³

II. 1.⁴

Man's feeble race what ills await!
 Labor, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate! 45
 The fond⁵ complaint, my Song, disprove,
 And justify the laws of Jove.⁶
 Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse?
 Night, and all her sickly dews,
 Her specters wan, and birds of boding cry, 50
 He gives to range the dreary sky;
 Till down⁷ the eastern cliffs afar
 Hyperion's⁸ march they spy, and glittering shafts of
 war.⁹

II. 2.¹⁰

In climes beyond¹¹ the solar road,¹²
 Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam, 55

¹ Uplifted (the literal sense).

² "Gliding state." The gods did not *walk*.

³ "Purple light of Love." Purple, being a *royal* color, suggests the power of love.

⁴ Lines 42-53. "To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the day, by its cheerful presence, to dispel the gloom and terrors of the night" (GRAY). ⁵ Foolish.

⁶ "And justify," etc. Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, i. line 26.

⁷ Why not "up"? ⁸ Father of Helios, god of the sun.

⁹ "Glittering shafts of war," i.e., sunbeams. Why "shafts of war"?

¹⁰ Lines 54-65. "Extensive influence of poetic genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations; its connection with liberty and the virtues that naturally attend on it" (GRAY).

¹¹ "Beyond," south of the equator. ¹² "Solar road," path of the sun.

The Muse has broke the twilight gloom¹
 To cheer the shivering Native's dull abode.
 And oft, beneath the odorous shade
 Of Chile's boundless forests laid,
 She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat, 60
 In loose numbers² wildly sweet,³
 Their feather-cinctured Chiefs, and dusky Loves.⁴
 Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,
 Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
 The unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame. 65

II. 3.⁵

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's⁶ steep,
 Isles, that crown the Ægean deep,⁷
 Fields, that cool Ilissus⁸ laves,
 Or where Mæander's⁹ amber waves

¹ "Twilight gloom," intellectual and moral darkness.

² "Loose numbers," irregular but rhythmical verse. "Numbers" is often used for "verse." ³ Note the melody of line 61.

⁴ "Their feather-cinctured," etc., i. e., songs of war and love.

⁵ Lines 66-82. "Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt had traveled in Italy and formed their taste there. Spenser imitated the Italian writers; Milton improved on them; but this school expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since" (GRAY).

⁶ "Delphi." Old form of word is "Delphos." Here was the oracle of Apollo, god of music. It is at the foot of Parnassus.

⁷ Cf. Byron's Song of the Greek Bard, Don Juan, Canto III. :

"The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung."

Cf. also Milton's Comus, lines 21-23.

"That like to rich and various gems inlay
 The unadornèd bosom of the deep."

⁸ A river of Athens.

⁹ Miletus, on the Mæander, was an intellectual center, the birthplace of many famous in letters and philosophy.

In lingering labyrinths creep,¹ 70
 How do your tuneful echoes languish,
 Mute, but to the voice of Anguish!
 Where each old poetic mountain
 Inspiration breathed around ;
 Every shade and hallowed fountain 75
 Murmured deep a solemn sound ;
 Till the sad Nine² in Greece's evil hour
 Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.³
 Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
 And coward Vice, that revels in her chains. 80
 When Latium⁴ had her lofty spirit lost,
 They sought, O Albion!⁵ next thy sea-encircled coast.

III. 1.

Far from the sun⁶ and summer gale,
 In thy green lap⁷ was Nature's Darling⁸ laid,
 What time,⁹ where lucid Avon¹⁰ strayed, 85
 To him the mighty Mother¹¹ did unveil
 Her awful¹² face. The dauntless¹³ Child
 Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
 This pencil take (she said) whose colors clear¹⁴
 Richly paint the vernal year ; 90

¹ Note the alliteration and the slow movement.

² The Muses.

³ Lines 77, 78, allude to the capture of Constantinople in 1453. After the capture of the city the men of letters fled the country, passing westward to Italy, and thence northwestward. This is known as the "renaissance" of learning in Europe.

⁴ Italy.

⁵ England. Inquire as to the origin of this name.

⁶ "Far from the sun." England lies far to the north.

⁷ "Green lap." England is noted for its verdant fields.

⁸ "Nature's Darling," Shakespeare (GRAY).

⁹ "What time," Latin idiom.

¹⁰ The word means "water" or "stream."

¹¹ Nature.

¹² In the sense of inspiring fear with reverence.

¹³ Not repelled by the "awful face."

¹⁴ Lines 89-94 suggest Shakespeare's power in what?

Thine too these golden¹ keys, immortal Boy!
 This can unlock the gates of Joy,
 Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
 Or ope the sacred source² of sympathetic Tears.

III. 2.

Nor second He,³ that rode sublime 95
 Upon the seraph wings of Ecstasy,⁴
 The secrets of th' Abyss⁵ to spy,
 He passed the flaming bounds of Place and Time;⁶
 The living Throne, the sapphure blaze,⁷
 Where Angels tremble, while they gaze, 100
 He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
 Closed his eyes in endless night.⁸
 Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car
 Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
 Two Coursers⁹ of ethereal race, 105
 With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.¹⁰

III. 3.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
 Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er

¹ Note the epithet "golden." ² Why "source" rather than "font"?

³ Milton. ⁴ "Upon the seraph wings," etc. Cf. *Elegy*, line 48.

⁵ "Abyss," space that was void.

⁶ Gray suggests by this line that Milton wrote of what there was before there was any place (outside of heaven and hell) or time as we understand it.

⁷ "The living Throne," etc. Cf. Milton's *Il Penseroso*, line 53, and *Paradise Lost*, vi. lines 758, 771.

⁸ Lines 101, 102. Milton did not lose his sight in writing *Paradise Lost*. Liberty with facts is a poet's license.

⁹ "Two Coursers," probably alluding to the dramatic and lyric verse of Dryden.

¹⁰ Is this line bombastic? Gray says that it was "meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rimes." Gray's admiration for Dryden is boundless. He says, in effect, that he learned the art of verse from a study of that poet.

Scatters from her pictured urn¹
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.² 110
 But ah! 'tis heard no more³—
 Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
 Wakes thee now? though he inherit
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
 That the Theban Eagle⁴ bear 115
 Sailing with supreme dominion
 Through the azure deep of air,
 Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
 Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
 With orient⁵ hues, unborrowed of the Sun; 120
 Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar⁶ fate,
 Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.⁷

¹ Note the metaphor in this line.

² "Thoughts," etc., i.e., some words excite the imagination, others arouse the emotions.

³ "We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's Day" (GRAY).

⁴ "Theban Eagle," Pindar. "Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιθα θεῖον" ("The divine bird of Jove") (Pindar's Olymp. ii.). Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamor in vain below, while it pursues its flight, regardless of their noise" (GRAY).

⁵ Brilliant (an associated meaning).

⁶ Common; from the Latin, *vulgus*.

⁷ "Beneath the Good," etc., i.e., the *good* far outshine the merely *great*.

THE BARD.¹

A PINDARIC ODE.

I. 1.

“RUIN seize thee, ruthless King!²
Confusion on thy banners wait,
Though fanned by Conquest’s crimson wing³
They mock the air with idle state.⁴
Helm, nor hauberk’s⁵ twisted mail, 5
Nor even thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail⁶
To save thy secret soul from nightly⁷ fears,
From Cambria’s⁸ curse, from Cambria’s tears!”

¹ “This ode is founded on a tradition, current in Wales, that Edward I., when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be put to death” (GRAY). It is needless to say that Edward did no such thing, and Gray accepted the tradition, not as having any basis of fact, but purely for poetic use, and perhaps for a moral purpose, “to show the retributive justice that follows an act of tyranny and wickedness.”

² Note the alliteration.

³ What expressive figure in the line?

⁴ “Mocking the air with colors idly spread” (SHAKESPEARE’S *King John*, v. i).

⁵ “The hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail that sat close to the body and adapted itself to every motion” (GRAY).

⁶ It was said in praise of the king: “*Velox est ad veniam, ad vindictam tardus.*”

⁷ Nocturnal.

⁸ Another name for Wales.

Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride¹
 Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay, 10
 As down the steep of Snowdon's² shaggy³ side
 He wound with toilsome march his long array.
 Stout Glo'ster⁴ stood aghast in speechless trance;
 "To arms!" cried Mortimer,⁵ and couched his quivering
 lance.⁶

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow 15
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,
 With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
 (Loose his beard and hoary hair
 Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled air⁷) 20
 And with a Master's hand, and Prophet's fire,
 Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.

"Hark, how each giant oak, and desert cave,
 Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!

¹ "Crested pride." Cf. *Elegy*, line 33.

² The Saxons gave this name to the range of mountains in southeastern Wales.

³ "Shaggy" suggests the great forests that covered the sides of the mountains.

⁴ "Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, earl of Gloucester, and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward" (GRAY).

⁵ "Edmond de Mortimer, lord of Wigmore. Gilbert de Clare and Edmond de Mortimer were both *lord marchers*, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and who probably accompanied the king in this expedition" (GRAY).

⁶ Lines 13, 14, emphasize the idea of "wild dismay."

⁷ "The image was taken from a well-known picture of Raphael, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel. There are two of these paintings (both believed original), one at Florence, the other at Paris" (GRAY). "Shone like a meteor, streaming to the wind" (MILTON'S *Paradise Lost*, i. 537).

O'er thee, O King! their hundred arms they wave, 25
 Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs¹ breathe;
 Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
 To high-born Hoel's² harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.³

I. 3.

“ Cold is Cadwallo's⁴ tongue,
 That hushed the stormy main;⁵ 30
 Brave Urien⁴ sleeps upon his craggy bed;
 Mountains, ye mourn in vain
 Modred,⁶ whose magic song
 Made huge Plinlimmon⁷ bow his cloud-topped head.
 On dreary Arvon's⁸ shore they lie, 35
 Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale;
 Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
 The famished Eagle screams, and passes by.⁹
 Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
 Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes, 40
 Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,¹⁰
 Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—

¹ “Hoarser murmurs.” The epithet may be cumulative in meaning, or it may be like the occasional use of the comparative in Latin.

² Hoel was a famous bard. Some of his poems are still extant. He was a prince of North Wales, hence “high-born.”

³ “Soft Llewellyn's lay.” The context seems to suggest that Llewellyn was a bard; yet it may refer to a poem celebrating him as a “tender-hearted prince.” In an ode by another Welsh poet he is called “Llewellyn the mild.”

⁴ Cadwallo and Urien were bards. None of their songs are extant.

⁵ “That hushed,” etc., the poetic fancy that music influenced inanimate objects. See also line 34.

⁶ Nothing is known of Modred.

⁷ One of the loftiest mountains of Wales. The name appears to be a corruption of Pum-plumon (the “Five Beacons”), from the five piles of stones found on the mountains.

⁸ “The shores of Caernarvonshire, opposite to the isle of Anglesey” (GRAY).

⁹ Note the effect of lines 36–38 in producing the feeling of horror.

¹⁰ Cf. Julius Cæsar, ii. i.

No more I weep. They do not sleep.¹
 On yonder cliffs, a grisly² band,
 I see them sit, they linger yet, 45
 Avengers of their native land;
 With me in dreadful harmony they join,
 And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.”³

II. I.

“Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
 The winding sheet of Edward’s race. 50
 Give ample room, and verge enough
 The characters of hell to trace.
 Mark the year, and mark the night,
 When Severn shall reëcho with affright 54
 The shrieks of death, through Berkeley’s roofs that ring,
 Shrieks of an agonizing King!⁴
 She-Wolf⁵ of France, with unrelenting fangs,
 That tear’st the bowels of thy mangled Mate,⁶
 From thee be born, who o’er thy country hangs⁷ 59
 The scourge of Heaven. What Terrors round him wait!
 Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
 And Sorrow’s faded form, and Solitude behind.

¹ Note the sectional rime in this line; also in line 45, though “sit” and “yet” are not perfect rimes.

² Cf. Eton College, line 82.

³ “And weave,” etc. Gray in his ode, *The Fatal Sisters*, represents the Fates of Gothic mythology as weaving the destinies of those doomed to die in battle.

⁴ Lines 55, 56, allude to the cruel murder of Edward II. in Berkeley Castle, in 1327. He was the first “Prince of Wales.”

⁵ “Isabel of France, Edward II.’s queen” (GRAY).

⁶ Line 58 alludes to the manner of Edward’s murder. Dryden, in his tragedy, *Edward II.*, gives a different account. Hume, in his history, adheres to the first account.

⁷ “Triumphs of Edward III. in France” (GRAY).

II. 2.

"Mighty Victor, mighty Lord!
 Low on his funeral couch he lies!¹
 No pitying heart, no eye, afford 65
 A tear to grace his obsequies.
 Is the sable Warrior² fled?
 Thy son is gone. He rests among the Dead.
 The Swarm,³ that in thy noontide beam⁴ were born?
 Gone to salute the rising Morn.⁵ 70
 Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,
 While proudly riding o'er the azure realm⁶
 In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes;⁷
 Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
 Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,⁸ 75
 That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.⁹

II. 3.

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,¹⁰
 The rich repast prepare,
 Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast;
 Close by the regal chair 80

¹ "Death of that king, abandoned by his children, and even robbed in his last moments by his courtiers and his mistress" (GRAY).

² "Edward, the Black Prince, dead some time before his father" (GRAY).

³ Note the tone of the word.

⁴ "Noontide beam," i.e., in the days of prosperity and peace.

⁵ "Rising Morn," i.e., the new king. "Le roi est mort: vive le roi!"

⁶ "Azure realm" means what?

⁷ Note the alliteration in this line.

⁸ Lines 71-74 allude to the "magnificence of Richard II.'s reign. See Froissard and other contemporary writers" (GRAY).

⁹ Comment on the metaphor in lines 75, 76.

¹⁰ "Fill high," etc. "Richard II. (as we are told by Archbishop Scroop and the confederate lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham and

Fell Thirst and Famine scowl¹
 A baleful smile² upon their baffled Guest.
 Heard ye the din of battle bray,³
 Lance to lance, and hoſe to hoſe?
 Long Years of havoc urge their deſtined course, 85
 And through the kindred ſquadrons mow their way.
 Ye Towers⁴ of Julius, London's laſting ſhame,
 With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
 Revere his Conſort's⁵ faith, his Father's⁶ fame,
 And ſpare the meek Uſurper's holy⁷ head. 90
 Above, below, the roſe of ſnow,⁸
 Twined with her bluſhing⁸ foe, we ſpread ;
 The bristled Boar⁹ in infant gore¹⁰
 Wallows beneath the thorny ſhade.¹¹
 Now, Brothers, bending o'er th' accuſed loom 95
 Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

all the older writers) was ſtarved to death. The ſtory of his aſſaſſination by Sir Piers of Exon is of much later date" (GRAY). Find this later ſtory.

¹ Note the perſonification and the alliteration in lines 81, 82.

² Note the force of "ſcowl a baleful ſmile."

³ "Ruinous wars of York and Lancaſter" (GRAY).

⁴ "Henry VI., George, duke of Clarence, Edward V., Richard, duke of York, etc., believed to be murdered ſecretly in the Tower of London. The oldeſt part of that ſtructure is by tradition attributed to Julius Cæſar" (GRAY).

⁵ "Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic ſpirit, who ſtruggled hard to ſave her huſband and her crown" (GRAY). ⁶ "Henry V." (GRAY).

⁷ "Henry VI., very near being canonized. The line of Lancaſter had no right of inheritance to the crown" (GRAY). Who was firſt of the Lancaſtrian kings? How did he get the crown? Cf. Eton College, line 4.

⁸ The white and red roſes, devices of York and Lancaſter.

⁹ "The ſilver boar was the badge of Richard III., whence he was uſually known in his own time by the name of 'the Boar'" (GRAY). Cf. Shakeſpeare's Richard III., iv. v.

¹⁰ "Infant gore" alludes to the murder of the princes in the Tower. Cf. Shakeſpeare's Richard III., iii. iv.

¹¹ "Thorny ſhade." The helmet of Richard, with his "ſilver boar," was found under a thorn tree after the battle of Boſworth Field. The alluſion is to his death in that battle.

III. 1.

“ Edward, lo! to sudden fate
 (Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
 Half of thy heart we consecrate.¹
 (The web is wove. The work is done.)” 100

“ Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
 Leave me unblest, unpitied, here to mourn;
 In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
 They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
 But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height 105
 Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts unroll?
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
 Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.²
 All hail, ye genuine Kings, Britannia's Issue, hail!³ 110

III. 2.

“ Girt with many a Baron bold
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear;

¹ “ Half of thy heart,” etc. “ Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her lord is well known. [What is the story?] The monuments of his regret and sorrow for the loss of her are still to be seen at Northampton, Geddington, Waltham, and other places” (GRAY). These monuments, the “Eleanor crosses,” were erected at each stopping place for the night on the journey from Hardby, where she died, to Westminster. There were thirteen or fifteen of them. Three yet remain. Charing Cross, in London, was the site of one of them; but the one there now is a facsimile of the original. These were all of exquisite Gothic art.

² Line 109 alludes to “ the common belief of the Welsh nation that King Arthur was still alive in fairyland, and would return again to reign over Britain” (GRAY).

³ Line 110 alludes to the “ accession of the line of Tudor. Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island, which seemed to be accomplished in the house of Tudor” (GRAY). Who was first of the Tudor line? Trace his Welsh origin.

And gorgeous Dames, and Statesmen old
 In bearded majesty, appear.
 In the midst' a Form divine! 115
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton Line;
 Her lion port,¹ her awe-commanding face,
 Attempered sweet to virgin grace.²
 What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
 What strains of vocal transport round her play!³ 120
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin,⁴ hear;
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
 Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
 Waves in the eye of Heaven her many-colored wings.

III. 3.

"The verse adorn again 125
 Fierce War, and faithful Love,
 And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction dressed.⁵
 In buskined measures move
 Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
 With Horror, Tyrant of the throbbing breast.⁶ 130
 A Voice as of the Cherub Choir,
 Gales from blooming Eden bear;⁷
 And distant warblings lessen on my ear,

¹ "Speed, relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzia-
 linski, ambassador of Poland, says: 'And thus she, lionlike rising,
 daunted the malapert orator no less with her stately port and majestic de-
 porture than with the tartness of her princelie cheekes'" (GRAY).

² "Attempered sweet," etc. It was quite fashionable to flatter Queen
 Elizabeth. It is not to be doubted that she was a great sovereign, but there
 is some question as to her having been a sweet-tempered and gracious maiden.

³ What is the allusion in lines 119, 120?

⁴ "Taliessin, chief of the bards, flourished in the sixth century. His
 works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration, among his
 countrymen" (GRAY).

⁵ Lines 126, 127, allude to the allegory, Spenser's *Faërie Queene*.

⁶ Lines 128-130 describe Shakespeare, and the tragic stage.

⁷ Lines 131, 132, refer to Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

That lost in long futurity expire.¹ 134
 Fond² impious Man, think'st thou, yon sanguine cloud,³
 Raised by thy breath, has quenched the Orb of day?⁴
 To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
 And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
 Enough for me. With joy I see
 The different doom our Fates assign. 140
 Be thine Despair, and sceptered Care,
 To triumph, and to die, are mine."

He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
 Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

¹ Lines 133, 134, indicate "the succession of poets after Milton's time" (GRAY). ² Foolish. ³ "Sanguine cloud," i.e., war.

⁴ "Orb of day," i.e., poetry. Cf. *Progress of Poesy*, ii. 1.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.¹

THE curfew² tolls the knell of parting³ day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,⁴
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,⁵
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering⁶ landscape on the sight, 5
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,⁷

¹ This poem was begun in 1742, but not finished until 1750, nor published until 1751, undergoing in the mean time many alterations ; several stanzas were omitted from the first completed form. It is perhaps the most widely known poem in the English language, and has been translated into various languages, both of ancient and of modern Europe. There can be no stronger proof of the universal interest which attaches to the poem.

It is generally conceded to be Gray's greatest work. Byron says : " It is the corner stone of his glory." Hales says that it deals with the obstinate questionings of the soul " in no lofty, philosophical manner, but in a simple, humble, unpretentious way, always with the truest and broadest humanity." Another thinks that " by this poem he will be known forever, alike by the lettered and the unlettered." Every lover of poetry knows this poem by heart.

² French, *couvre-feu*. Origin of ? Purpose?

³ " Parting " means what?

⁴ Note special poetic property of the line. Why " wind " ?

⁵ Note the alliteration in this line. Try how many transformations can be made, preserving the sense of the line.

⁶ Note " glimmering." Define.

⁷ Has. Subject?

Save where the beetle wheels his droning¹ flight,
 And drowsy² tinklings lull³ the distant folds;⁴

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled⁵ tower
 The moping⁶ owl does to the moon complain 10
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret⁷ bower,⁸
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.⁹

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,¹⁰
 Where heaves the turf in many a mold'ring heap,
 Each in his narrow cell forever laid, 15
 The rude¹¹ Forefathers of the hamlet¹² sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing¹³ Morn,¹⁴
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion,¹⁵ or the echoing horn,¹⁶
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.¹⁷ 20

1 "Droning." Define, and explain its effect.

2 Note the double duty of "drowsy."

3 Why is "lull" better than "still"?

4 "Folds." What figure of speech?

5 What suggestion in "ivy-mantled"?

6 Softer than "hooting" or "wailing."

7 "Secret." Literal meaning of?

8 Is "bower" entirely apt?

9 What is the general effect of the first three stanzas? Point out the words and phrases that produce this effect.

10 The branches of the elms interlacing above form, as it were, cathedral arches. The yew tree has both sacred and patriotic associations.

11 Unlearned.

12 A little home. Cf. the Scotch, *hame*.

13 Cf. with "incense" the words "odorous," "fragrance," "perfume."

What is there more in the word used?

14 One MS. reads: "Forever sleep; the breezy call of Morn."

15 The same MS. has: "Or chanticleer so shrill." The present reading is more effective and, besides, removes a foreign word.

16 "Echoing horn" of whom?

17 Note that "bed" is literal, and not figurative.

For them no more the blazing hearth¹ shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care;²
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.³

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25
 Their furrow⁴ oft the stubborn glebe⁵ has broke;⁶
 How jocund did they drive their team afield!⁷
 How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,⁸
 Their homely⁹ joys, and destiny obscure; 30
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals¹⁰ of the poor.¹¹

The boast of heraldry,¹² the pomp of power,
 And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
 Awaits¹³ alike th' inevitable hour. 35
 The paths of glory lead but to the grave.¹⁴

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these¹⁵ the fault,
 If Mem'ry¹⁶ o'er their tomb no trophies¹⁷ raise,
 Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault¹⁸
 The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.¹⁹ 40

¹ What figure in "blazing hearth"?

² Is "ply her evening care" a good expression?

³ Cf. lines 23, 24, with *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, lines 21, 22.

⁴ "Furrow." What figure? ⁵ Define. ⁶ Note "has broke."

⁷ "Afield" is an adverb. ⁸ Note personification.

⁹ One MS. has "rustic" in place of "homely."

¹⁰ History or records. ¹¹ Note the questionable rime in this stanza.

¹² "Heraldry" here stands for those who, having nothing in themselves
 to boast of, are satisfied to boast of the deeds of their ancestors.

¹³ Most modern editions read "await."

¹⁴ "A literal translation from the Latin of Bartholinus" (HAYLEY).

¹⁵ Who? ¹⁶ What figure? ¹⁷ Define.

¹⁸ Meaning? Cf. lines 15, 16.

¹⁹ Lines 39, 40, suggest the pompous funeral ceremonies attending the ob-

Can storied urn¹ or animated² bust
 Back to its mansion³ call the fleeting breath?
 Can Honor's voice⁴ provoke⁵ the silent dust,
 Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull, cold ear of Death?⁶

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;⁷
 Hands that the rod⁸ of empire might have swayed,
 Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.⁹

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
 Rich with the spoils of time,¹⁰ did ne'er unroll; 50
 Chill¹¹ Penury repressed¹² their noble rage,¹³
 And froze the genial current of the soul.¹⁴

Full many a gem of purest ray serene¹⁵
 The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden,¹⁶ that with dauntless breast
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood;

sequies of the titled proud, whose tombs are under the pavements of the sanctuary. Compare the fourth stanza.

¹ "Storied urn," an urn with *some* of the deeds of the departed inscribed.

² Lifelike. ³ "Mansion" means what? Latin, *maneo*.

⁴ "Honor's voice," i.e., words of praise or honor.

⁵ Call forth, i.e., back to life. ⁶ Is this stanza in any sense ironical?

⁷ "Celestial fire," heavenly inspiration.

⁸ One MS. reads "reins" in place of "rod."

⁹ Cowper has "awful lyre;" Cowley has "living lyre;" Pope has "living harp." The epithet is hardly explicable, though the force of it is plainly felt. ¹⁰ What are "the spoils of time"? ¹¹ "Chill" is active.

¹² One MS. reads "depressed." ¹³ Enthusiasm.

¹⁴ This stanza and the following contain together an implied simile.

¹⁵ "Purest ray serene," a Miltonic arrangement of epithets.

¹⁶ John Hampden, a cousin of Oliver Cromwell, in 1636 refused to pay the

Some mute inglorious¹ Milton² here may rest,
Some Cromwell³ 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 history in a nation's eyes,⁴

Their lot forbade;⁵ nor circumscribed alone 65
Their growing virtues,⁶ but their crimes confined;⁷
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,⁸

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,⁹ 70
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride¹⁰
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.¹¹

Far from the madding¹² crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;¹³

ship-money tax levied by Charles I. ("the little tyrant"). He was wounded in the fight at Chalgrove Field, and died of his wound June 24, 1643.

¹ "Mute" and therefore "inglorious."

² Milton, the eminent English poet (1608-1674). What are his chief works?

³ Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) was the master spirit of the great revolution. The line seems to imply that Gray was affected with the prejudice against Cromwell existing during the eighteenth century. These references are examples of the figure *antonomasia*.

⁴ Note that lines 61-64 are objective phrases.

⁵ "Their lot forbade" them to be what?

⁶ "Their growing virtues," i.e., the growth of virtues.

⁷ "Confined," restrained.

⁸ Lines 67, 68, probably another allusion to Cromwell.

⁹ Lines 69, 70, seem labored, or to want spontaneity.

¹⁰ To fawn upon and flatter the luxurious and proud.

¹¹ With eulogistic verse.

¹² "Madding" is passive.

¹³ In this couplet the grammatical connection is not close. Arrange the order of words so as to give the meaning.

Along the cool sequestered vale of life ¹ 75
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
 Some frail memorial ² still erected nigh,
 With uncouth ³ rimes ⁴ and shapeless sculpture ⁵ decked,
 Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelled by th' unlettered Muse, ⁶
 The place of fame and elegy supply;
 And many a holy text around she strews,
 That teach ⁷ the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey, 85
 This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
 Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind? ⁸

On some fond breast the parting ⁹ soul relies,
 Some pious drops ¹⁰ the closing eye requires; 90
 Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
 Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires. ¹¹

¹ "Cool sequestered vale of life" is antithetical.

² "Frail memorial," a crumbling headstone.

³ In the modern sense of awkward.

⁴ It is likely that Gray spelled it "rhymes," following the accepted bad spelling of the word.

⁵ "Shapeless sculpture," inartistic carving. Cf. "storied urn" and "animated bust," line 41. ⁶ "Unlettered Muse," i.e., uncultured poet.

⁷ "That teach," concord of sense rather than of form.

⁸ This is a difficult stanza. Observe that there are two interpretations of the thought in the first two lines. Note the poetic artifices in the last line.

⁹ Cf. line 1.

¹⁰ "Pious drops" not *of*, but *for*, "the closing eye."

¹¹ "Ev'n from the tomb," etc., i.e., "The fires of former affection are still alive beneath our ashes;" "Even after the spark of life is quenched, the yearning for remembrance must still be felt."

“The next with dirges due in sad array
 Slow through the churchway path we saw him borne.
 Approach and read (for thou¹ canst read) the lay, 115
 Graved on the stone beneath yon agèd thorn.”

THE EPITAPH.

*Here rests² his head upon the lap of Earth
 A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown.³
 Fair Science frowned⁴ not on his humble birth,
 And Melancholy marked him for her own. 120*

*Large was his bounty,⁵ and his soul sincere,⁶
 Heav'n did a recompense as largely send;
 He gave to Misery all he had,⁷ a tear,
 He gained from Heav'n ('twas all he wished) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125
 Or draw⁸ his frailties from their dread abode,
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose,
 The bosom of his Father and his God.⁹*

¹ “For thou canst read.” Emphasis is on “thou.” The “swain” could *not* read.

² What is subject of “rests”? What effect would be produced by putting a comma after “rests” and after “Earth”?

³ Note the tender pathos of lines 117, 118.

⁴ “Fair Science frowned.” Note the antithesis, “fair,” “frowned.” How reconcile the apparent contradiction? Cf. stanzas 13, 16.

⁵ Latin, *bonitas*.

⁶ “Sincere” also is here used in its literal or Latin sense.

⁷ “All he had,” an appositional phrase.

⁸ “Draw,” complementary infinitive, as “to disclose” is.

⁹ This line is appositive.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A
FAVORITE CAT,¹

DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLDFISHES.

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers, that blow ;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined, 5
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared ;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies, 10
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw ; and purred applause.

¹ Gray, in a letter to Walpole, March 1, 1747, says: "As one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a sensible satisfaction to me (before I testify my sorrow and the sincere part I take in your misfortune) to know for certain who it is I lament. I knew Zara and Selima (Selima, was it, or Fatima?); or rather I knew them both together, for I cannot justly say which was which. Then, as to your handsome Cat, the name you distinguish her by, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsome cat is always the cat one likes best; or if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is the handsomest.

Still had she gazed ; but 'midst the tide ¹
 Two angel ² forms were seen to glide,
 The Genii ² of the stream ; 15
 Their scaly armor's Tyrian hue
 Through richest purple ³ to the view
 Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless nymph ⁴ with wonder saw ;
 A whisker first and then a claw, 20
 With many an ardent wish,
 She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
 What female heart can gold despise ? ⁵
 What Cat's averse to fish ? ⁶

Presumptuous maid ! with looks intent ⁷ 25
 Again she stretched, again she bent,
 Nor knew the gulf between.
 (Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)
 The slippery verge her feet beguiled,
 She tumbled headlong in. 30

Besides, if the point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred or so imprudent as to forfeit all my interest in the survivor ; oh, no ! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure it must be the tabby one that had met with this sad accident. Till this affair is a little better determined, you will excuse me if I do not begin to cry :

'Tempus inane peto, requiem spatiumque doloris.'

The letter has a vein of pleasant, quiet humor oftener found in his prose, especially his letters, than in his poetry, which is generally of a serious nature.

¹ Note the word " tide " in the mock-heroic vein that characterizes the poem.

² Are the words " angel " and " Genii " consistent ? Suggest another word for " angel."

³ " Purple " explains " Tyrian " in line 16. What is the allusion ?

⁴ Note the word " nymph."

⁵ What is the tone of the line ? To what does " gold " allude ?

⁶ In the edition of 1748, " a foe to fish ? "

⁷ The edition of 1748 reads, " with eyes intent." Any reasons for the changes ?

ADVERTISEMENT.

“ The author once had thoughts (in concert with a friend¹) of giving the history of English Poetry. In the Introduction to it he meant to have produced some specimens of the style that reigned in ancient times among the neighboring nations, or those who had subdued the greater part of this island, and were our progenitors; the following three imitations made a part of them. He has long since dropped his design, especially after he heard that it was already in the hands of a person² well qualified to do it justice, both by his taste and his researches into antiquity” (GRAY, 1768).

PREFACE.

“ In the eleventh century, Sigurd, earl of the Orkney Islands, went with a fleet of ships and a considerable body of troops into Ireland, to the assistance of Sictryg with the silken beard, who was then making war on his father-in-law, Brian, king of Dublin. The earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and Sictryg was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of Brian, their king, who fell in the action. On Christmas Day (the day of the battle) a native of Caithness in Scotland saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback, riding full speed toward a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till, looking through an opening in the rocks, he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women. They were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful song; which when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped six to the North, and as many to the South” (GRAY, 1768).

¹ William Mason (1724–1797), one of Gray’s most intimate friends.

² Thomas Warton (1722–1800), the poet laureate. It is much to be regretted that Gray did not himself give up to the world something more in the romantic vein of this poem from his own extensive mine of antiquarian learning.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

AN ODE

(FROM THE NORSE TONGUE)

IN THE ORCADES OF THORMODUS TORFÆUS; HAFNIÆ, 1697,
FOLIO; AND ALSO IN BARTHOLINUS.

Now the storm begins to lower,¹
(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)²
Iron sleet of arrowy shower³
Hurtles⁴ in the darkened air.

Glitt'ring lances are the loom, 5
Where the dusky⁵ warp we strain,⁶

¹ "The Valkyrie were female divinities, servants of Odin (or Woden), in the Gothic mythology. Their name signifies 'choosers of the slain.' They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to Vahalla, the hall of Odin, or paradise of the brave, where they attended the banquet, and served the departed heroes with horns of mead and ale" (GRAY).

² Cf. The Bard, lines 49-52.

³ Cf. Milton's Paradise Regained, iii. 323, 324:

"How quick they wheeled, and, flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face" (GRAY).

⁴ Cf. Julius Cæsar, ii. ii.: "The noise of battle hurtled in the air."

⁵ A rather mild epithet, used in a moral sense.

⁶ The warp is pulled taut, or strained, in the loom.

Weaving many a Soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

See the grisly¹ texture grow,
('Tis of human entrails made,) 10
And the weights that play below,²
Each a gasping warrior's head.

Shafts³ for shuttles, dipped in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword,⁴ that once a monarch bore, 15
Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista,⁵ black, terrific maid,
Sangrida,⁵ and Hilda,⁵ see,
Join the wayward work⁶ to aid;
 'Tis the woof of victory. 20

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,⁷
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)⁸ 25
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

¹ Horrid. Cf. *The Bard*, line 44.

² This line carries on the metaphor of the loom.

³ Spears.

⁴ The metaphor seems strained.

⁵ "Mista" means black; "Sangrida," terrific. "The names of the sisters, in the original, are Hilda, Hiorthrimol, Sangrida, and Swipol" (GOSSE).

⁶ Note the alliteration. Would "wicked" answer here for "wayward"?

⁷ What is the singing of a javelin?

⁸ Cf. *The Bard*, line 49: "Weave the warp, and weave the woof."

As the paths of fate we tread,
 Wading through th' ensanguined field ; 30
 Gondula, and Geira, spread
 O'er the youthful King your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
 Ours to kill, and ours to spare ;
 Spite of danger he shall live, 35
 (Weave the crimson web of war.)

They whom once the desert beach¹
 Pent within its bleak domain,
 Soon their ample sway shall stretch²
 O'er the plenty of the plain. 40

Low the dauntless Earl is laid,
 Gored with many a gaping wound ;
 Fate demands a nobler head ;
 Soon a King shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep, 45
 Ne'er again his likeness see ;
 Long her strains in sorrow steep,
 Strains of immortality!³

Horror covers all the heath,
 Clouds of carnage⁴ blot the sun. 50
 Sisters, weave the web of death ;
 Sisters, cease, the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
 Songs of joy and triumph sing
 Joy to the victorious bands ; 55
 Triumph to the younger King.

¹ "Beach," i.e., the edge or boundary separating the desert from the fertile plain.

² Note the rime of "stretch" with "beach."

³ Songs that will make his memory immortal.

⁴ "Clouds of carnage." Note the vigor of expression.

Mortal,¹ thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenor of our song.
Scotland, through each winding vale
Far and wide the notes prolong.

60

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed ;
Each her thundering falchion wield,
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry, hurry to the field.

¹ The fatal sisters were *immortal*.

ODE ON THE SPRING.¹

Lo! where the rosy-bosomed Hours,²
Fair Venus' train,³ appear,
Disclose the long expecting flowers,
And wake the purple⁴ year!
The Attic warbler⁵ pours her throat,⁶ 5
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring ;
While, whispering pleasure as they fly,
Cool Zephyrs through the clear blue sky
Their gathered fragrance fling.⁷ 10

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech

¹ The original title of this ode was Noontide: An Ode. It was written in 1742, and published some years later in the Dodsley collection, under the simple title of Ode.

² The Horæ, or "Hours," in mythology, were goddesses presiding over the course of the seasons, who caused all things to blossom and ripen at the proper time. They were represented as adorned with flowers and fruits.

³ The Horæ were often associated with other divinities, as Venus, Apollo, etc. ⁴ "Purple" in poetry very often signifies "magnificent."

⁵ "Attic warbler," the nightingale. There is a legend that Philomela, daughter of an Attic king, was changed into a nightingale. (This word is properly "nightigale," the *n* being intrusive. Give some other examples of the intrusive *n*.) ⁶ "Pours her throat." What is the figure?

⁷ Note the alliteration.

O'er canopies the glade,¹
 Beside some water's rushy brink 15
 With me the Muse shall sit, and think
 (At ease reclined in rustic state)
 How vain the ardor of the crowd,
 How low, how little are the proud,
 How indigent the great! 20

Still is the toiling hand of Care;
 The panting herds repose;
 Yet hark, how through the peopled air²
 The busy murmur glows!³
 The insect youth are on the wing, 25
 Eager to taste the honeyed spring,
 And float amid the liquid noon;⁴
 Some lightly o'er the current skim,
 Some show their gaily-gilded trim⁵
 Quick-glancing to the sun.⁶ 30

To Contemplation's sober eye⁷
 Such is the race of Man;

¹ Cf. *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, ii. ii. :

"A bank . . .

Quite overcanopied with luscious woodbine" (GRAY).

² "Peopled air," i. e., air alive with insect life. Pope has "peopled grass."

³ Cf. Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, Book I. :

". . . This multitude of flies

Is filling all the air with melody."

⁴ Cf. Vergil's *Georgics*, IV. 59: "Nare per æstatem liquidum" (GRAY).

⁵ Cf. Milton's *Comus*, line 299.

⁶ Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, vii. lines 405, 406 :

". . . sporting with quick glance,

Show to the sun their waved coats dropped with gold" (GRAY).

⁷ Cf. Green's *The Grotto*, Dodsley's *Miscellanies*, v. 161: "While insects from the threshold preach" (GRAY).

In a letter to Walpole, Gray acknowledges that the thought on which this

And they that creep, and they that fly,
 Shall end where they began.

Alike the Busy and the Gay 35

But flutter through life's little day,
 In fortune's varying colors dressed ;
 Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
 Or chilled by age, their airy dance
 They leave, in dust to rest. 40

Methinks I hear in accents low

The sportive kind¹ reply :

Poor moralist! and what art thou?

A solitary fly!

Thy joys no glittering female meets, 45

No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,

No painted plumage to display ;²

On hasty wings thy youth is flown ;

Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—

We frolic, while 'tis May.³ 50

ode turns "is manifestly stole" from Green's *The Grotto*. The acknowledgment is made "that I may do justice." It seems, however, to have been a case of "unconscious plagiarism."

¹ The gay and thoughtless. See line 35.

² Note the metaphor in lines 46, 47, and point out the similitude.

³ The springtime of life.

HYMN TO ADVERSITY.¹

DAUGHTER of Jove,² relentless Power,
Thou Tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour
The bad affright, afflict the best!³
Bound in thy adamantine chain⁴ 5
The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants⁵ vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling child, designed, 10
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,⁶
And bade to form her infant mind.⁷

¹ The first edition of this poem was preceded by a motto from the Greek of Æschylus, which describes affliction as being sent by Jove for the ultimate good of man.

² Ate, originally goddess of infatuation or reckless crime. Later she was regarded as the avenger of unrighteousness; but there seems to be no authority for considering her the goddess of adversity.

³ The "scourge" affrights; the "hour" afflicts.

⁴ Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, i. 48: "In adamantine chains and penal fire."

⁵ "Purple tyrants." Purple is the regal color. Perhaps it suggests "bloody."

⁶ Virtue.

⁷ The idea in lines 9-12 is a favorite with moralists. Cf. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. xii. 6).

Stern rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
 With patience many a year she bore ;
 What sorrow was, thou hadst her know, 15
 And from her own she learned to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
 Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,¹
 Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
 And leave us leisure to be good.² 20
 Light they disperse, and with them go
 The summer friend, the flattering foe;³
 By vain Prosperity⁴ received,
 To her they⁵ vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb⁶ arrayed, 25
 Immersed in rapturous thought profound,
 And Melancholy, silent maid⁷
 With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
 Still on thy solemn steps attend ;
 Warm Charity, the general friend, 30
 With justice to herself severe,
 And Pity, dropping soft the sadly pleasing tear.⁸

¹ Cf. Milton's *Il Penseroso*, lines 1, 2 :

“ Hence, vain, deluding joys,
 The brood of Folly, without father bred ! ”

² Is sloth conducive to virtue ?

³ What is the idea ? Note the alliteration. Cf. *The Bard*, lines 69, 70.

⁴ “ Vain Prosperity.” Bacon says : “ Prosperity doth best discover vice ”
 (*Essay on Adversity*). ⁵ What is the antecedent of “ they ” ?

⁶ Gray has also “ the sable garb of woe.” (Cf. *The Bard*, line 17.) Point
 out the distinction in meaning.

⁷ Cf. Collins's *Ode to the Passions*, lines 56, 57 :

“ With eyes *upraised*, as one inspired,
 Pale Melancholy sat retired.”

Also Milton's *Il Penseroso*, line 43 : “ With a sad, leaden, downward cast.”

⁸ Cf. *The Bard*, line 129 : “ Pale Grief, and *pleasing Pain*. Also *The Progress of Poesy*, line 94, “ sympathetic Tears.”

Oh, gently on thy suppliant's head,
 Dread Goddess, lay thy chastening hand!
 Not in thy Gorgon terrors ¹ clad, 35
 Not circled with the vengeful band
 (As by the impious thou art seen),
 With thundering voice, and threat'ning mien,
 With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
 Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty. 40

Thy form benign, O Goddess,² wear,
 Thy milder influence impart,
 Thy philosophic train be there
 To soften, not to wound my heart,³
 The generous spark extinct revive, 45
 Teach me to love and to forgive,
 Exact ⁴ my own defects to scan,
 What others are,⁵ to feel, and know myself a Man.

¹ Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, ii. 611: "Medusa with Gorgonian terror."
 Also *Comus*, line 447: "Snaky-headed Gorgon shield."

² "Goddess," *Ate*. See line 1.

³ "Thy milder influence," etc. As "the mind is its own place" (*Paradise Lost*, I. line 254), one may make the "uses of adversity sweet."

⁴ Compel me.

⁵ What is the grammatical relation of the clause, "What others are"?

But chief, the Skylark warbles high
 His trembling thrilling ecstasy,
 And, lessening from the dazzled sight, 15
 Melts into air and liquid light.

Rise, my soul! on wings of fire,¹
 Rise the rapturous choir among;
 Hark! 'tis Nature strikes the lyre,²
 And leads the general song: 20

* * * * *

Yesterday the sullen³ year
 Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
 Mute was the music of the air,⁴
 The Herd stood drooping by;
 Their raptures now that worldly flow,⁵ 25
 No yesterday, nor morrow know;
 'Tis man alone that Joy descries⁶
 With forward and reverted eyes.⁷

Smiles on past Misfortune's brow
 Soft Reflection's hand can trace; 30
 And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw
 A melancholy grace;
 While Hope prolongs our happier hour,
 Or deepest shades, that dimly lower
 And blacken round our weary way, 35
 Gilds with a gleam of distant day.⁸

¹ "Wings of fire," a very extravagant metaphor.

² What is Nature's lyre? ³ Gloomy; dismal.

⁴ Note the alliteration. ⁵ An obscure line. ⁶ Shows; reveals.

⁷ Looking forward to the future, and backward on the past.

⁸ Lines 33-36. Cf. Pope's Essay on Man, I. lines 95, 96:

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
 Man never *is*, but always to be blest."

Also Essay on Man, II. lines 283, 284:

"Meanwhile opinion gilds with varying rays
 Those painted clouds that beautify our days."

Still, where rosy Pleasure leads,
 See a kindred Grief pursue ;
 Behind the steps that Misery treads,
 Approaching Comfort view ; 40
 The hues of Bliss more brightly glow,
 Chastised by sabler tints of woe ;
 And blended form, with artful strife,
 The strength and harmony of Life.¹

See the Wretch, that long has tossed 45
 On the thorny bed of Pain,
 At length repair his vigor lost,
 And breathe and walk again ;—
 The meanest flow'ret of the vale,
 The simplest note that swells the gale, 50
 The common sun, the air, the skies,
 To him are opening Paradise.²

Humble Quiet builds her cell
 Near the source whence Pleasure flows ;
 She eyes the clear crystalline well, 55
 And tastes it as it goes.³

* * * * *

¹ Lines 43, 44. Cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*, II. lines 121, 122 :

“The lights and shades whose well-accorded strife
 Gives all the strength and color of our life.”

² Lines 48–52. Wordsworth, in his *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, says :

“To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

³ The remainder of the poem is fragmentary.

THE DESCENT OF ODIN.¹

UP rose the King of Men with speed,
And saddled straight his coal-black steed ;
Down the yawning steep he rode,
That leads to Hela's drear abode.²
Him the Dog of Darkness spied, 5
His shaggy throat he opened wide,
While from his jaws, with carnage filled,
Foam and human gore distilled ;
Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin ; 10
And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
The father of the powerful spell.
Onward still his way he takes,
(The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)
Till full before his fearless eyes 15
The portals nine of hell³ arise.

¹ "The Descent of Odin, written at Cambridge in 1761, first appeared in the volume of 1768. It is a paraphrase of the ancient Icelandic lay called *Vegtams Kvida*, and sometimes *Baldrs Draumar*. The best edition of the original is that given in the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, vol. i., p. 181, under the heading *Balder's Doom*" (GOSSE).

² "Niflheimr the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old age, or by any other means than in battle. Over it presided Hela, the goddess of death" (GRAY).

³ "Portals nine of hell." Cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, II. lines 645, 646:

" . . . three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock."

Right against the eastern gate,
 By the moss-grown pile he sate ;
 Where long of yore to sleep was laid
 The dust of the prophetic Maid.¹ 20
 Facing to the northern clime,
 Thrice he traced the runic rime ;
 Thrice pronounced, in accents dread,
 The thrilling verse² that wakes the dead :
 Till from out the hollow ground 25
 Slowly breathed a sullen sound.

Pr. What call unknown, what charms presume
 To break the quiet of the tomb?
 Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,³
 And drags me from the realms of night?⁴ 30
 Long on these mold'ring bones have beat
 The winter's snow, the summer's heat,
 The drenching dews, and driving rain!⁵
 Let me, let me sleep again.
 Who is he, with voice unblest, 35
 That calls me from the bed of rest?

O. A Traveler, to thee unknown,
 Is he that calls, a Warrior's son.
 Thou the deeds of light⁶ shalt know ;
 Tell me what is done below,⁷ 40
 For whom yon glitt'ring board is spread,
 Dressed for whom yon golden bed.

¹ "Prophetic Maid," i.e., Hela.

² "The original word is *valgalldr*; from *valr*, 'mortuus,' and *galldr*, 'incantatio'" (GRAY, MS.).

³ "Sprite," i.e., spirit.

⁴ A prophet properly dwells in the realm of darkness.

⁵ Lines 30-33 show the Norse idea of hell, which was very materialistic.

⁶ "Deeds of light," i.e., things done in the upper world.

⁷ "Odin, we find, both from this ode and the Edda, was solicitous about the fate of his son Balder, who had dreamed he was soon to die. The Edda mentions the manner of his death when killed by Odin's other son Hoder, and

Pr. Mantling in the goblet see
 The pure bev'rage of the bee,
 O'er it hangs the shield of gold ; 45
 'Tis the drink of Balder bold ;
 Balder's head to death is giv'n.
 Pain can reach the sons of Heav'n!
 Unwilling I my lips unclose :
 Leave me, leave me to repose. 50

O. Once again my call obey ;
 Prophetess, arise, and say,
 What dangers Odin's child await,
 Who the Author of his fate.

Pr. In Hoder's hand the Hero's doom : 55
 His brother sends him to the tomb.
 Now my weary lips I close ;
 Leave me, leave me to repose.

O. Prophetess, my spell obey ;
 Once again arise, and say, 60
 Who th' Avenger of his guilt,
 By whom shall Hoder's blood be spilled?

Pr. In the caverns of the west,
 By Odin's fierce embrace compressed,
 A wond'rous Boy shall Rinda bear, 65
 Who ne'er shall comb his raven hair,
 Nor wash his visage in the stream,
 Nor see the sun's departing beam,
 Till he on Hoder's corse shall smile
 Flaming on the fun'ral pile. 70

also that Hoder was himself slain by Vali, the son of Odin and Rinda, consonant with this prophecy" (MASON). (See Matthew Arnold's Balder Dead.) What event in nature does this myth typify?

Now my weary lips I close ;
 Leave me, leave me to repose.

O. Yet awhile my call obey ;
 Prophetess, awake, and say,
 What Virgins these, in speechless woe, 75
 That bend to earth their solemn brow,
 That their flaxen tresses tear,
 And snowy veils, that float in air.
 Tell me, whence their sorrows rose ;
 Then I leave thee to repose. 80

Pr. Ha! no Traveler art thou,
 King of Men, I know thee now ;
 Mightiest of a mighty line—

O. No boding Maid of skill divine
 Art thou, nor Prophetess of good ; 85
 But Mother of the giant brood!

Pr. Hie thee hence, and boast at home,
 That never shall Inquirer come
 To break my iron sleep again ;
 Till Lok¹ has burst his tenfold chain ; 90
 Never, till substantial Night
 Has reassumed her ancient right ;
 Till wrapped in flames, in ruin hurled,
 Sinks the fabric of the world.

¹ “ Lok is the evil Being who continues in chains till the Twilight of the Gods approaches. When he shall break his bonds, the human race, the stars and sun shall disappear, the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies. Even Odin himself and his kindred deities shall perish. For a further explanation of this mythology, see Mallet's Introduction to the History of Denmark, 1755, quarto ” (GRAY).

COMMENTARY ON "THE ALLIANCE OF EDUCATION
AND GOVERNMENT."

This poem will be made clearer to the student by the following commentary taken from William Mason's edition of the works of Gray:

"The author's subject being (as we have seen) *The necessary Alliance between a good Form of Government and a good Mode of Education, in order to produce the Happiness of Mankind*, the poem opens with two similes; an uncommon kind of exordium; but which, I suppose, the poet intentionally chose, to intimate the analogical method he meant to pursue in his subsequent reasonings. First, he asserts that men without education are like sickly plants in a cold or barren soil (lines 1 to 4, and 9 to 12); and, secondly, he compares them, when unblest with a just and well-regulated government, to plants that will not blossom or bear fruit in an unkindly and inclement air (lines 5 to 8, and 13 to 21). Having thus laid down the two propositions he means to prove, he begins by examining into the characteristics which (taking a general view of mankind) all men have in common one with another (lines 22 to 37): they covet pleasure and avoid pain (line 31); they feel gratitude for benefits (line 34); they desire to avenge wrongs, which they effect either by force or cunning (line 35); they are linked to each other by their common feelings, and participate in sorrow and in joy (lines 36, 37). If, then, all the human species agree in so many moral particulars, whence arises the diversity of national characters? This question the poet puts at line 38, and dilates upon it to line 63. Why, says he, have some nations shown a propensity to commerce and industry; others to war and rapine; others to ease and pleasure (lines 40 to 45)? Why have the Northern people overspread in all ages, and prevailed over the Southern (lines 46 to 57)? Why has Asia been, time out of mind, the seat of despotism, and Europe that of freedom (lines 58 to 63)? Are we from these instances to imagine men necessarily enslaved to the inconveniences of the climate where they were born (lines 64 to 71)? Or are we not rather to suppose there is a natural strength in the human mind that is able to vanquish and break through them (lines 72 to 83)? It is confessed, however, that men receive an early tincture from the situation they are placed in and the climate which produces them (lines 84 to 87). Thus the inhabitants of the mountains, inured to labor and patience, are naturally trained to war (lines 88 to 95); while those of the plain are more open to any attack, and softened by ease and plenty (lines 96 to 99). Again, the Egyptians, from the nature of their situation, might be the inventors of home navigation, from a necessity of keeping up an intercourse between their towns during the inundation of the Nile (lines 100 et seq.)."

THE ALLIANCE OF EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT.

A FRAGMENT.¹

As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
Whose barren² bosom starves her generous birth,
Nor genial warmth, nor genial juice retains
Their roots to feed, and fill their verdant veins;
And as in climes, where Winter holds his reign, 5
The soil, though fertile, will not teem in vain.
Forbids her gems³ to swell, her shades⁴ to rise.
Nor trusts her blossoms to the churlish skies.

¹ A posthumous poem. "This poem was written in August, 1748, at Cambridge. While it was being composed, Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Loix* fell into Gray's hands, and his own treatment of the theme became distasteful to him. Some years later he thought of taking it up again, and was about to compose a prefatory ode to M. de Montesquieu, when that writer died, on the 10th of February, 1755, and the whole thing was abandoned" (Gosse).

"Instead of compiling tables of chronology and natural history, why did not Mr. Gray apply the powers of his genius to finish the philosophic poem of which he has left such an exquisite specimen?" (GRAY.)

² Gray first wrote "flinty" bosom, but changed it to "barren."

³ Buds.

⁴ Trees.

So draw mankind in vain the vital airs,
 Unformed, unfriended, by those kindly cares,¹ 10
 That health and vigor to the soul impart,
 Spread the young thought, and warm the opening heart.²
 So fond³ Instruction on the growing powers
 Of Nature idly lavishes her stores,
 If equal Justice with unclouded face⁴ 15
 Smile not indulgent on the rising race,
 And scatter with a free, though frugal, hand
 Light golden showers of plenty o'er the land.
 But Tyranny has⁵ fixed her empire there,
 To check their tender hopes with chilling fear, 20
 And blast the blooming⁶ promise of the year.

This spacious animated scene survey
 From where the rolling orb,⁷ that gives the day,
 His sable sons⁸ with nearer course surrounds
 To either pole, and life's remotest bounds, 25
 How rude soe'er th' exterior form we find,
 Howe'er Opinion tinge the varied mind,
 Alike to all the kind⁹ impartial Heav'n
 The sparks of truth and happiness has given.
 With sense to feel, with mem'ry to retain, 30
 They follow pleasure, and they fly from pain :
 Their judgment mends the plan their fancy draws,
 Th' event presages, and explores the cause.

¹ Note the inversion.

² Note that the poem opens with *two* similes.

³ Vain; foolish.

⁴ "Unclouded face." Cf. "churlish skies," line 8.

⁵ Gray first wrote this :

" But gloomy Sway have fixed her empire there."

⁶ The first writing read " vernal " promise.

⁷ " The rolling orb," i.e., the sun (poetic license).

⁸ " Sable sons," i.e., the planets, which shine not of their own light.

⁹ " Kind " is a substantive.

The soft returns of gratitude they know,
 By fraud elude, by force repel the foe, 35
 While mutual¹ wishes, mutual woes endear
 The social smile, the sympathetic tear.

Say then, through ages by what fate confined
 To different climes seem different souls assigned ?²
 Here measured laws and philosophic ease³ 40
 Fix and improve the polished arts of peace :
 There Industry and Gain their vigils keep,
 Command the winds, and tame th' unwilling deep.
 Here Force and hardy deeds of blood prevail :
 There languid Pleasure sighs in every gale.⁴ 45
 Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar
 Has Scythia⁵ breathed the living cloud of war ;⁶
 And where the deluge burst, with sweepy sway
 Their arms, their kings, their gods were rolled away.
 As oft have issued, host impelling host, 50
 The blue-eyed myriads from the Baltic coast.
 The prostrate South to the destroyer yields
 Her boasted titles and her golden fields ;
 With grim delight the brood of Winter⁷ view
 A brighter day, and heavens⁸ of azure hue : 55
 Scent⁹ the new¹⁰ fragrance of the breathing¹¹ rose,
 And quaff the pendent vintage¹² as it grows.

¹ "Mutual" is here misused as meaning "common."

² The line suggests that men, as to their manners, morals, temperaments, etc., are subject to climatic influences.

³ "Philosophic ease." Cf. Pope's *Essay on Man*, II. line 188.

⁴ Note the antitheses in lines 40-45.

⁵ "Scythia," the indefinite area lying north of the Baltic Sea and probably extending into Asia. The Scythians were Aryans, with a Mongol admixture.

⁶ "Living cloud of war," an expressive metaphor. "Living," i.e., moving.

⁷ "Brood of Winter," i.e., tribes from the wintry North.

⁸ First writing read "skies."

⁹ First writing read "Catch."

¹⁰ "New" to them.

¹¹ "Breathing," i.e., exhaling fragrance.

¹² "Pendent vintage," i.e., grapes.

Proud of the yoke, and pliant to the rod,
 Why yet does Asia dread a monarch's nod,
 While European freedom still withstands 60
 Th' encroaching tide,¹ that drowns her lessening lands,²
 And sees far off with an indignant groan,
 Her native plains, and empires once her own?
 Can opener skies, and suns of fiercer flame,³
 O'erpower the fire that animates our frame; 65
 As lamps, that shed at eve a cheerful ray,
 Fade and expire beneath the eye of day?⁴
 Need we the influence of the northern star⁵
 To string our nerves and steel our hearts to war?
 And, where the face of nature laughs⁶ around, 70
 Must sick'ning virtue⁷ fly the tainted⁸ ground?
 Unmanly thought! what seasons⁹ can control,
 What fancied zone¹⁰ can circumscribe the soul,
 Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,
 By Reason's light on Resolution's wings,¹¹ 75
 Spite of her frail companion¹² dauntless goes
 O'er Libya's¹³ deserts and through Zembla's¹⁴ snows?
 She bids each slumb'ring energy awake,
 Another touch, another temper take,

1 "Encroaching tide" of despotism.

2 "Lessening lands," i.e., narrowing extent of territory.

"Suns of fiercer flame," i.e., tropical heat.

4 "Eye of day," i.e., the sun.

5 "Northern star," rigorous climate of the north.

6 "Where the face of nature laughs," i.e., where the climate is genial.

7 "Virtue," valor.

8 "Tainted" with cowardice.

9 Climatic conditions.

10 Temperature; literally, a *belt* of the earth.

11 Note the force and beauty of the metaphors in line 75.

12 "Frail companion," i.e., the weak body.

13 "Libya," i.e., Africa.

14 "Zembla," i.e., Nova Zembla, a double island in the Arctic Ocean, north of Russia.

Suspends th' inferior laws¹ that rule our clay:² 80

The stubborn elements³ confess her sway,
Their little wants, their low desires refine,
And raise the mortal to a height divine.

Not but the human fabric from the birth
Imbibes a flavor of its parent earth, 85

As various tracts enforce a various toil,
The manners speak the idiom of their soil.

An iron-race⁴ the mountain cliffs maintain,
Foes to the gentler genius of the plain;

For where unwearied sinews must be found 90

With sidelong plow to quell the flinty ground,

To turn the torrent's swift-descending flood,

To brave the savage, rushing from the wood,

What wonder, if to patient valor trained

They guard with spirit what by strength they gained? 95

And while their rocky ramparts round they see,

The rough abode of want and liberty

(As lawless force from confidence will grow),

Insult the plenty of the vales below?

What wonder in the sultry climes, that spread 100

Where Nile redundant⁵ o'er his summer bed

From his broad bosom life and verdure flings

And broods o'er Egypt with his wat'ry wings,

If with advent'rous oar and ready sail

The dusky people drive before the gale; 105

Or on frail floats to distant cities ride,

That rise and glitter o'er the ambient tide?⁶

* * * * *

¹ "Inferior laws," i.e., the lower or baser passions.

² "Clay," i.e., the body.

³ "Stubborn elements." See Note 1.

⁴ "An iron-race." Mountaineers, compelled by necessity to patient labor, are naturally trained to war.

⁵ "Nile redundant" alludes to the spring floods of that river.

⁶ Note that line 107 ends with the sentence or thought incomplete.

STANZAS TO MR. RICHARD BENTLEY.¹

In silent gaze the tuneful choir among,
Half pleased, half blushing, let the Muse admire,
While Bentley leads her sister art along,
And bids the pencil answer to the lyre.

See, in their course, each transitory thought 5
Fixed by his touch a lasting essence take;²
Each dream, in fancy's airy coloring wrought,
To local symmetry and life awake!

The tardy rimes that used to linger on,
To censure cold, and negligent of fame, 10
In swifter measures animated run,
And catch a luster from his genuine flame.³

Ah! could they⁴ catch his strength, his easy grace,
His quick creation,⁵ his unerring line;

¹ A posthumous poem. "These lines were written in 1752 as a compliment to Bentley for drawing the designs for the Six Poems of 1753. Unfortunately the sole existing MS. had the corner of the last stanza torn off when Mason found it" (GOSSE).

² Note the delicate compliment in this line and the two following.

³ "Genuine flame," i.e., true inspiration, the "divine afflatus."

⁴ "They," i.e., his "tardy rimes." See line 9.

⁵ "Quick creation," i.e., lively fancy.

The energy of Pope they might efface,
And Dryden's harmony submit to mine.¹ 15

But not to one in this benighted age
Is that diviner inspiration giv'n,
That burns in Shakespeare's or in Milton's page,
The pomp and prodigality of heav'n.² 20

As when conspiring in the diamond's blaze,³
The meaner gems,⁴ that singly charm the sight,
Together dart their intermingled rays,
And dazzle with a luxury of light.

* * * * *

¹ In Gray's estimation, there could have been no greater poetic glory.

² Note the strength of this line.

³ "The diamond's blaze" implied simile or similes.

⁴ "The meaner gems." Explain the metaphor.

SONNET

ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD WEST.¹

IN vain to me the smiling² Mornings shine,
And reddening³ Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire:
These ears, alas! for other notes repine,⁴ 5
A different object do these eyes require:
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;⁴
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet Morning smiles⁵ the busy race to cheer,

¹ A posthumous poem. "The MS. of this sonnet exists at Pembroke College. At the close Gray has written: 'At Stoke, August, 1742'" (GOSSE).

Richard West was a son of that Richard West who was lord chancellor of Ireland, and a grandson of the famous Bishop Gilbert Burnet. He was one of the "quadruple alliance" of which the others were Gray, Walpole, and Thomas Ashton. Their friendship was very close. West had "a first row in the front box of my [Gray's] heart." He (West) was a poet of merit. His Ode to May has in it passages that would not discredit the later style of Gray himself. He died June 1, 1742, in his twenty-sixth year.

² What sort of an epithet?

³ Why the progressive form?

⁴ "Join" frequently rhymes with words terminating in *ine*. It seems that the word was often pronounced *jine*.

⁵ "Morning smiles." See line 1.

And newborn pleasure brings to happier men: 10
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain:
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.¹

¹ A Stoic said to one who mourned for his dead son: "Why do you weep? You cannot bring him back." "'Tis for that cause," said the father, "that I weep."

SKETCH OF HIS OWN CHARACTER,

WRITTEN IN 1761, AND FOUND IN ONE OF HIS POCKETBOOKS.

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune,
He had not the method of making a fortune ;
Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd ;
No very great wit, he believed in a God ;
A place¹ or a pension he did not desire, 5
But left church and state to Charles Townshend² and Squire.³

¹ It will be remembered that Gray refused the " place " of poet laureate.

² Right Honorable Charles Townshend (1725-1767), English orator and statesman.

³ " At that time fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and afterwards bishop of St. David's. Dr. Squire died in 1766. Bishop Warburton one day met Dean Tucker, who said that he hoped his lordship liked his situation at Gloucester ; on which the sarcastic bishop replied that never bishopric was so bedeaned, for that his predecessor Dr. Squire had made religion his trade, and that he (Dr. Tucker) had made trade his religion " (MITFORD).

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