

29 July  
Wed

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classmate

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B.A Part III Hon  
Paper VI<sup>TH</sup>

Q. Write critical appreciation of Gray's poem 'An Elegy written in a country church'.

Ans. Gray's production is so scanty and so much of it is in a very minor mode, that may well wonder why he seems to be occupy such a key position in English poetry. True he happened to be write one of the greatest poems in the language; but he only did it once, and it is hard to believe, if it were not for the Elegy, that we should be very interested in the rest of his poetry, except in the spirit of historical curiosity. The picture of Gray that emerges in the letter is not a

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very vigorous and happy  
 one. He was charming,  
 generous of his time and  
 trouble, devoted to his  
 friends as they were to  
 him, but he suffered  
 from constitutional  
 melancholy.

Many of his  
 literary projects were  
 abortive, and were  
 undertaken in a spirit  
 almost of resigned  
 hopelessness.

The greatness of  
 The Elegy in a Country  
 Churchyard no one has  
 ever doubted, but many  
 have had to put it to  
 explain in what its  
 greatness consists. It is easy  
 to point out that the  
 thought is common place,  
 that its diction and imagery  
 are correct, not but

but unarguable, and to wonder where is immediately recognizable greatness has slipped in. The Elegy was most preferably begun soon after the death of Gray's school friend West, some reminiscences of whom remain in the conclusion of the poem. West, had been Gray's dearest friend and confidant, and like himself a melancholy and hypochondriac young man. The "youth to fortune and fame unknown" of the closing epitaph might be either G. West or Gray himself, and is, indeed, by a process familiar to dream analysts, a sort of fusion of the two.

To be continued