

SELECTIONS FROM GRAY'S LETTERS

MR. GRAY TO MR. WALPOLE.

CAMBRIDGE, Feb. 11, 1751.

As you have brought me into a little sort of distress, you must assist me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yesterday I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain gentlemen (as their bookseller expresses it), who have taken the *Magazine of Magazines* into their hands: They tell me that an *ingenious* Poem, called reflections in a Country Church-yard, has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith; that they are informed that the *excellent* author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his *indulgence*, but the *honour* of his correspondence, &c. As I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent, or so correspondent, as they desire, I have but one bad way left to escape the honour they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a week's time) from your copy, but without my name, in what form is most convenient for him, but on his best paper and character; he must correct the press himself, and print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them; and the title must be,—Elegy, written in a Country Church-yard. If he would add a line or two to say it came into his hands by accident, I should like it better. If you behold the *Magazine of Magazines* in the light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Dodsley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone.

NOTE.—Gray succeeded in forestalling the magazines by a few days. The first edition, as is proved by the next letter, was out by February 20. Its title ran, "*An Elegy wrote in a Country Church-yard.*" London: Printed for R. Dodsley in Pall Mall, and sold by M. Cooper in Paternoster Row, 1751. Price 6d." It appeared in the *Magazine of Magazines* for February, in the *London Magazine* for March, and in the *Grand Magazine of Magazines* for April, 1751. Magazines at that period came out at the end of the month.