

popularity had it been written in prose. The secret of the greatness of the "Elegy" as a poem resides in its subject, which touches the universal heart and lifts mankind to a plane of true kinship in death. Of course there is no doubting the artistic merits of the poem.

In support of this view it may be well to quote here the opinion of Hales, in his introduction to the poem. He says: "The 'Elegy' is, perhaps, the most widely known poem in our language. The reason of this extensive popularity is, perhaps, to be sought in the fact that it expresses in an exquisite manner feelings and thoughts that are universal. In the current of ideas in the 'Elegy' there is, perhaps, nothing that is rare or exceptional or out of the common way. The musings are of the most rational and obvious character possible; it is difficult to conceive of any one musing under similar circumstances who should not muse so; but they are not the less deep and moving on this account. The mystery of life does not become clearer or less solemn and awful for any amount of contemplation. Such inevitable, such everlasting questions as rise in the mind when one lingers in the precincts of death, can never lose their freshness, never cease to fascinate and to move. It is with such questions, that would have been commonplace long ages since, if they