

should also be compared, both as to subject and tone, with Addison's *Westminster Abbey*.

Gray is buried in the churchyard at Stoke Pogis, near Slough, about twenty miles west of London, and this spot is generally accepted as the "churchyard" of the *Elegy*. There is nothing in the poem to fix the description to any particular place.

The first three verses give us the scene and time of day. Is there anything to suggest the time of year? (18th century poets are not as definite and accurate in describing nature as more modern writers are). How much of this description would apply to any churchyard you have ever seen? Note how the thought passes on from the scene to those who sleep there, and how the following verses (5 and 6) hang on that word "sleep." Listen to the repetition in lines 20 and 21.

Are such simple, obscure people worth thinking and writing about? Yes, the poet answers, because here, by their graves, we think how the hour of death comes to all, rich and poor, high and low, alike, and how little difference is made then by fame and honor and flattery. And perhaps, the thought goes on, some of the humble people buried here lacked only opportunity to be wise, and great and famous. But, they were also protected from great temptations, and now that their quiet life is over, they lie here, their graves protected, showing that they are cared for and remembered. From their memorials others may learn to die, for death is hard to meet, and we crave help and sympathy and remembrance. Then the poet speaks to himself, and tells what will be said of him after he is dead, if anyone who, like himself, is "mindful of the unhonored dead" shall inquire about him. Follows the imagined account of his life and death given by some gray haired peasant, and the epitaph that will mark his grave.

I have given this skeleton of the poem because I remember how very hazy were my own ideas of it long after I was familiar with the words, and I think most young readers fail to grasp the sequence of thought, and the connections, e.g., the force of the first word in the line

"For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey."

But with judicious help, adapted to the pupil's stage of advancement, each one ought to be able to name the leading thoughts of the *Elegy*, tell which verse contains each one, and how many groups of verses there are.

How does the epitaph compare with those described by Addison?

NOTES ON PARTICULAR PHRASES AND WORDS.

Verse 1. *parting*=departing.

Verse 2, l. 2. Is air subject or object?

l. 12. *Reign*=realm.

l. 16. *Rude*=unlearned, humble.

l. 22. *Ply her evening care*. What does this mean? Make it definite.

l. 30. What does *homely* mean here? What do you mean when you use it?

l. 33. *The boast of heraldry*. Heraldry, the knowledge of the different coats of arms which belonged to those who had done, or whose ancestors had done, brave deeds. Hence, *boast of heraldry*=pride of long descent.

l. 35. Some editors read *awaits*, making *th' inevitable hour* subject instead of object.

ls. 37-40. Compare Irving's *Westminster Abbey*, par. 3.

l. 41. *Storied urn*. An urn, such as is sometimes placed upon tombs having an inscription or "story" about the dead person engraved on it. *Animated bust*=life-like statue.

l. 43. *Provoke*. Latin *pro-voco*=call forth.

l. 46. *Pregnant with celestial fire*=full of divine inspiration.

l. 50. What is meant by the *spoils of time*?

l. 51. *Rage*=enthusiasm.

l. 57. For Hampden, see English History, reign of Charles I.

l. 58. Who would be *the little tyrant of his fields*?

l. 59. Prof. Hales asks: "Could a Milton ever have been mute or inglorious? Or would a genius so vast have in some sort overcome all the circumstances that obstructed it?"

l. 60. Do you consider Cromwell guilty of his country's blood?

ls. 61-72. Their lot forbade them to be great orators or statesmen, to do good to their country and read the record of their acts in the contented looks of the people; but it also prevented them from doing great harm, being merciless tyrants, or (l. 69) hiding truth that they knew and should have spoken, or ceasing to be ashamed of wrong, or being false, flattering poets.

l. 73. Hales asks: "Are ignoble strifes confined to towns, and impossible in villages?"

ls. 73-74. (Since they were) far from the madding etc. l. 73 does not modify *stray*.

l. 76. *Tenour*=continuous course.

l. 84. Explain the use of the plural verb *teach*.

ls. 85-86. For who ever resigned this pleasing, anxious being to be a prey to dumb forgetfulness, i. e., who ever gave up this life, with its pleasures and its pains, reconciled to being forgotten?

ls. 89-92. Hales' note must be quoted: "In this stanza he answers in an exquisite manner the two questions, or, rather, the one question twice repeated, of the preceding stanza. His answers form a climax. The first line seems to regard the near approach of death; the second, its actual advent; the third, the time immediately succeeding that advent; the fourth, a still later time. What he would say is, that every one, while a spark of life yet remains in him, yearns for some kindly, loving remembrance; nay,