

"The Eve of St. Agnes"

- John Keats.

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Topic - "The Eve of St. Agnes as a narrative poem"
Lecture-01.

"The Eve of St. Agnes" as a narrative poem

One of all the features of the Romantic Revival is the interest in writing long narrative poems. It was highly regarded as a literary form. Wordsworth's "The Excursion" is a long, philosophical narrative in blank-verse. Byron too wrote dashing tales of romantic adventures. Keats, as a reader and writer loved the poetry that tells a story. Prompted by the spirit of the age and his own fondness, he wrote narrative four narrative poems - Endymion, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and Lamia. All these have a common feature - passionate love. The beautiful Greek mythology, English translation of the epics of Homer, Spenser's Faerie Queene and Milton's Paradise Lost served as ~~ins-~~piration, source-material and stylistic models in writing these narrative poems.

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Deeply hurt by the severe criticism of Endymion and Isabella, Keats wrote The Eve of St. Agnes which won him much applause. It is indeed a great narrative poem and an excellent testimony to the narrative art of Keats. Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy and Brand's Popular Antiquities provided Keats with the legendary background and source material. Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Walter Scott's Lochinvar are some of the other sources of the narrative. Keats' contribution, however, lies in creating a story of flesh and blood out of the bare skeleton and making it palpitating, throbbing with passion and for ever warm and still to be enjoyed, for ever painting and forever young.

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