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Lecture No - 23  
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Class - B.A. I  
Paper - II  
Topic - 'The Eve  
of St. Agnes'

Q:- Write a note on the romantic or medieval element in 'The Eve of St. Agnes', or comment on Keats' medievalism in 'The Eve of St. Agnes'.

Ans:- 'The Eve of St. Agnes' is a masterpiece of narrative poetry written in the Romantic mode. In this poem, Keats transports us to the Middle Ages. Mediaevalism is an important characteristic of the Poetry of Romantic Revival. In this poem Keats tells a love story of the middle ages. The setting is in a mediaeval castle and chapel. The owner of the castle and the father of Madeline, the heroine was a Baron. The love story of Porphyro is set against the background of Porphyro's feud between Barons. The love story - the love of Porphyro and Madeline is mediaeval. It reminds us of the Shakespearean tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, which is a story of star-crossed love of the mediaeval. In 'The Eve of St. Agnes', the description of the old nursery with the ancient beadman, the riotous rivalry, the beautiful mediaeval decoration of Madeline's chamber and the casement with mediaeval imagery - all take us back to the middle ages.

Thus, Keats makes an artistic absorption of mediaeval materials in this poem. The poem is enriched by magic suggestiveness that is associated with the remote and the unfamiliar. The blue-enchancement of distance is created by this distant setting. It is an effect of the Romantic time-traveling to distant lands and distant epochs. The Romantic mind was unsatisfied with the present, "Glances from heaven to earth, from the earth to heaven and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." The delight in the strange and unfamiliar.