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Class - B.A. I
Paper - II
Topic - Explanation
'The Rape of the Lock'

Explanation - 01

Sight is the subject, but not so the
praise,
If she inspire, and he approve my
lays,
Say what strange motive, goddess! could
Compel
A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle?

In the beginning of *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope invokes the Muse in the epic manner. The subject that he has chosen for his mock-heroic poem is very trivial and unimportant, but the execution of the subject is grand and dignified. Pope is aware of the fact and therefore, he thinks that he will be justly entitled to much praise if he can treat that trivial subject in effective manner. He also seeks the approval of his friend, Caryll, who suggested the subject to him and asked him to write a humorous poem to laugh away the petty differences that created a feeling of bitterness between the two families - Miss Fermor's and Lord Peter's. The poet then comes to his immediate subject matter and says that it is strange that a well-bred lord should be so violent as to offend a high-born lady. The reference is to the incident of cutting off a lock of hair from the head of an aristocratic lady, Miss Arabella Fermor by one Lord Peter, who was only distantly related to her and was her lover. Miss Fermor was offended by the liberty taken by the Lord and the event led to a family quarrel between the Fermors and the poet's friend Caryll, suggested to

