Q. How has the opening of the story *The Fall of the House of Usher* helped the story writer in presenting the total effect of his creation?

OR

Write a detail note on the opening of the story ‘The Fall of the House of Usher’.

Ans:- Whether it is Shakespeare’s Hamlet or Edgar Ellen Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the opening has always been a prophet of what is going to happen next. The entire environment, ambiances with certain suitable characters have much to owe to the opening of the story. When a story starts with the lines like ‘*During the whole of a dull, dark and soundless day in the autumn of the year”* and ends with ‘… *the deep and dark turn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments*…”. There must be a series of doubts and depths, mist and mysteries covering the middle. For the middle to be a joining point of both the beginning and the end, the opening should have a grip of everything- plot, characterization, and mood and so on.

The very beginning of the story establishes an atmosphere of desolation and disintegration. And goes on to be more and more depressing because of the loneliness of the path through which the horse riding narrator had been coming. The oppressive autumn day and the decaying ancient family mansion are both symbolic of the terrible doom the awaited the hero Roderick Usher. There was ‘insufferable gloom’ upon the house, upon the vacant windows. Notably, the windows are said to be eyelid which the gothic dimension inherently overshadowing the atmosphere. The narrator was supposed to annihilate the capacity of sorrowful impression, but in no time he himself had been affected. The reference to the letter written by Usher explaining his malady (disease) and thereby reminding the narrator of Usher’s ‘peculiar sensibility’ of temperament continued the same mood of melancholy. Thus the tempestuous element of nature, the slow movement of the prose and all the strength of the story contributing to the single effect produces the grin phantasm. Thus solemnity combine with trepidation ultimately dominates the story. The strange appearances of the house, the peculiar actions of the mad inhabitant of the house, the strange burial and return to the life of Madeline, the death of Usher and the fall of the house are incidences that contribute to producing the effect of horror. And the seed of all these had been planted within the first two or three pages of the story. There are other factors that built up an atmosphere of horror. When carefully scanned, it becomes clear that much of such factors and the narrative, instead of being directed towards the observable facts of the stories’ world, are springing from the psychological inputs of the narrator. Since the narrator has some direct affinity with the story writer, the letter would definitely put the former in a situation where from he could predict certain things. The predictions started right at the beginning, a sense of trepidation characterized the mood of the story. With that mood hovering all around, the reader can get the total effect of Poe’s creation.