





English Readings

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Matthew Arnold

From the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery painted and presented by G. F. Watts, R. A.

POEMS OF
WORDSWORTH

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY
MATTHEW ARNOLD ✓

EDITED BY
MYRON R. WILLIAMS

INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH IN PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY



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INTRODUCTION

I

MATTHEW ARNOLD

MATTHEW ARNOLD was born December 24th, 1822, at Laleham, England, the son of Doctor Thomas Arnold, who later became the great headmaster of Rugby, celebrated in *Tom Brown's School-Days*. His mother was Mary Penrose. When the boy was five years old, the family left the small town for the school which, under his father's leadership, was to become one of the foremost in England. From Rugby, in 1841, Matthew Arnold went to Oxford, and two years later his father died, having lived to see Winchester, Rugby, and Balliol College, Oxford, mold his son much after his own heart into a scholar, a critic, and a growing master of "the Oriel Style."

If Doctor Arnold thus saw to it that his son was, externally, everything that he ought to be, a gentleman and a scholar, it was Mrs. Arnold who quietly encouraged her son to be exactly what he was—a poet. Arnold's debt to his two parents was equally great, and to this fact can be attributed a personality of such surprising poise: the critic who could create; the poet who could wisely judge; and the public official who for thirty-five years occupied a

position as inspector of schools for Westminster—of exacting responsibility and vast importance to the country. In each of his three contemporary careers Arnold made a lasting name for himself.

His literary career, begun as poet and ending as critic and essayist, contained at first little promise and much discouragement. In 1840, as a schoolboy he had won a prize at Rugby with his first published poem, *Alaric at Rome*, followed three years later by *Cromwell*, which won the Newdigate prize at Oxford. Of the two, the former suggests more prophetic possibilities, but neither seems, to the most discerning reader, much beyond the powers of a capable youth doing what his family had reason to expect him to do. Five years later, after his graduation from Oxford, Arnold published anonymously in 1849, *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems, by A.* Although all of these poems but one have been reprinted in later editions of the poet's work and now occupy a secure place in English literature, their first appearance was as a dismal failure. Only a few copies were sold, and the volume was presently withdrawn from public sale. Quite as unkind fate met a second anonymous volume which appeared in 1852, *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems, by A.* The record of the next three years is hardly more than that of perseverance—and its reward. In 1853 he republished the contents of most of the two rejected volumes, adding a few verses that were new, with his own name on the title page and a prefatory essay

on his conception of the province of poetry. This reissue, wherein appeared *Sohrab and Rustum*, attracted, though tardily, much of the attention and interest which his poems had originally deserved. In 1855 *Poems by Matthew Arnold: Second Series*, appeared, and containing but two new poems, *Balder Dead* and *Separation*, won the welcome which Arnold's reappearances were now certain to expect. His popularity as a poet was growing and was stamped in a singularly gratifying way when, on May 5, 1857, Matthew Arnold was elected to the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford. At the age of thirty-four, then, he had climbed out of the slough of obscurity. For ten years Arnold occupied the chair, and during this time, in word and deed, lived up to the title of his position, publishing many separate poems and finally in 1867 a volume of *New Poems*, besides writing numerous magazine articles, criticisms, essays, and lectures on a wide range of literary subjects. In 1867, coincident with the close of the Oxford professorship, Arnold's poetical career came practically to an end.

All this time, however, his poetical productiveness had been in no sense the result, like Wordsworth's, of sedentary incubation. In 1844 he graduated from Oxford with second-class honors, a mild disgrace to the name of Arnold which was retrieved the following year by his election to a fellowship in Oriel College, Oxford. Here he met A. H. Clough, a fellow poet who became his friend and whose death

in 1861 is the subject of Arnold's exquisite *Thyrsis*, an elegy of college friendship comparable to *Lycidas* or *In Memoriam*. After winning the fellowship, Arnold returned to Rugby to teach classics in the fifth form and began that career in public education that was to last nearly a half century. A year later, in 1847, he was appointed private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and withdrew from Rugby and participated in the polite political life of that discreet Liberal for four years. In 1851, Arnold was appointed to an inspectorship of schools, a position which he occupied for thirty-five years. This position required a vast deal of traveling, of interviewing teachers and conducting examinations, of writing exhaustive reports, all of which Arnold prepared with more of a hearty and patriotic conscience than enthusiasm. On the other hand, he was sent by the government on tours of investigation into the state of education in France, Germany, Holland, and other countries, a recognition of his authority on the subject of education and a genuine pleasure to the urbane cosmopolitan that he was. Arnold was as familiar with French and German as with Latin and Greek.

In June of the year in which he became inspector of schools, Matthew Arnold was married to Frances Lucy Wightman, daughter of Mr. Justice Wightman. "Though I am a schoolmaster's son, I confess that school-teaching or school-inspecting is not the line of life I should naturally have chosen. I

adopted it in order to marry a lady who is here to-night . . .” In these very frank words delivered before the Westminster Teacher’s Association on his retirement from the position in 1886, the poet makes a very human confession. Matthew Arnold’s love for his wife was clearly the dominating motive of his life as it is whimsically suggested to be here, and he no doubt felt that any shirking of the deadly dull means of his livelihood would be a kind of treachery to her. This is practical poetry of a pretty fine sort. “There must be many,” writes G. W. E. Russell, Arnold’s biographer, “who still remember with amused affection his demeanor in an elementary school. They see the tall figure, at once graceful and stately; the benign air, as of an affable archangel; the critical brow and enquiring eyeglass bent on some very immature performance in penmanship or needlework; and the frightened children and the anxious teacher, gradually lapsing into smiles and peace, as the great man tested the proficiency in some such humble art as spelling. ‘Well, my little man, and how do you spell *dog*?’ ‘Please sir, *d-o-g*.’ ‘Capital, very good indeed. I couldn’t do it better myself. And now let us go a little further, and see if we can spell *cat*.’ (Chorus excitedly) ‘*C-A-T!*’ ‘Now, this is really excellent. (To the teacher) You have brought them on wonderfully in spelling since I was here last!’” A friend has written: “His effect on the teachers when he examined a school was extraordinary. He was

sympathetic without being condescending, and he reconciled the humblest drudge in a London school to his or her drudgery for the next twelve months."

A version of what others thought of Arnold comes in the remark of Lord Salisbury's, that when he conferred the degree of D. C. L. on him (at Oxford in 1870) he ought to have addressed him as *vir dulcissime et lucidissime*, a happy reference to the "sweetness and light" which Arnold had so effectively preached. In 1883 recognition came from the crown in a pension of £250 conferred for the literary merit of his work.

In the same year Arnold came on a lecture tour to America to talk to American audiences, among other things, about Emerson. The result of this was a volume of essays, *Discourses in America*, which contain some of his shrewdest and cleverest comment, and the volume of his writings by which he said that he most desired to be remembered. It was here also that Arnold ran afoul of P. T. Barnum. "You, Mr. Arnold, are a celebrity, I am a notoriety," the irrepressible showman wrote. "We ought to be acquainted." "I couldn't go," Matthew Arnold commented in telling of the invitation afterwards, "but it was very nice of him."

Matthew Arnold died very suddenly in Liverpool, of heart failure, April 15, 1888. He had come to the seaport with his wife to meet his elder daughter who was on her way home from the United States, and the violent exercise of running for a tramcar

caused the abrupt collapse from which he died almost instantly.

Of Arnold's definite place in literature as a poet and as a prose writer, little has been indicated in this rapid survey of his career. Enough has perhaps been said to indicate, however, that Arnold is a poet for the chastened tastes of educated persons rather than for the masses. Popularity, by the definition of the word, his work can never attain, and yet the reason for this lies far less in the need for information on the reader's part than it does in the poet's own preference for ideas and words over story, action, or the music of his verses. Beautiful lines abound in his work such as "The unplumb'd salt, estranging sea," and occasionally passages of such passionate power as the *Requiescat*, beginning

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!

and ending

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

Yet there was something either in Arnold's veneration for the classic restraint of the Greeks, or his admiration for Wordsworth, his great teacher, which unconsciously restrained him from following to the full length the counsel of Milton (from whom otherwise Arnold learned much) that poetry must be

simple, sensuous, and passionate. Arnold finds place comfortably among the Victorian poets of his day—Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, William Morris, and Swinburne in that quest of the beautiful not known to this day and generation. In this he and they resembled their predecessors—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron—but as one critic observes, in each group there is a division between the seekers for physical and those for moral beauty. Among the latter, certainly, lie Matthew Arnold and Wordsworth.

What many might regard as the defect in Arnold's poetry, every reader must credit to his prose. If Rossetti can be accused of painting his sonnets and writing his pictures, it can be said that Arnold wrote much of his poetry in prose. To his prose, however, he applied only the fine skill of a literary craftsman, and there is in it little suggestion of the poetic prose which is so offensive. In spirit, however, there lies over it the weight of the classic tradition. This can be paraphrased in one writer's allusion to "Matthew Arnold's belief in the preference of the Almighty for University men." And in comparing Arnold with two other contemporary prose writers, Mr. G. K. Chesterton produces, with some exaggeration, a beguiling picture: "If Newman seemed suddenly to fly into a temper, Carlyle seemed never to fly out of one. But Arnold kept a smile of heart-broken forbearance, as of the teacher in an idiot school, that was enormously insulting." Keen of wit and severe

in judgment, Arnold in all his criticisms preserves his temper. This was, in truth, his innovation into the art of criticism—*urbanity*. When one recalls the literary squabbles of Grub Street, one perceives the distance from them of the smooth though often devastating judgment of Matthew Arnold and of Walter Pater. With it all, however, Arnold's aim was clearness.

His favorite tools were epigrams, epithets, or the scrupulously chosen word. Arnold's assertion that "poetry is a criticism of life," is an oft quoted example from the essay on Wordsworth. Like it, too, is the whimsical picture of the social science congress, which explains quite clearly why much philosophical poetry is not poetry at all. "Sweetness and light" is a phrase of Swift's which Arnold popularized with his own meaning of "intellectual enlightenment." "Philistine," meaning a rather self-satisfied member of the middle class, he brought over from the German "Philister," to wage war on the middle-class complacency which he so thoroughly hated. The list of words which have been added by Matthew Arnold as weapons to the critical armory of English-speaking peoples could be multiplied at length. They can, however, be fittingly concluded with his brave definition of that much abused word, "culture," which to him had a fine, fresh significance. This is, he says, "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which

has been thought and said in the world." No more fitting example of this sort of culture can be found than Matthew Arnold himself, who is, next to Milton, the most scholarly poet in the English language.

II

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

BIRTH. William Wordsworth was born in the little town of Cockermouth, Cumberland, on April 7th, 1770. For over half a century he lived in Grasmere vale, in the heart of his chosen Lake Country, with his wife and his sister Dorothy, and died at the age of eighty not twenty-five miles from his birth-place. Something like this is the common impression of Wordsworth. It is all mathematically correct, but insufficient. To this Lord Morley would add the brief that the years 1770-1850 were vastly important ones to England, France, and Europe generally, and that "during all the tumult of the great war which for so many years bathed Europe in fire, through all the throes and agitations in which peace brought forth the new time, Wordsworth for half a century dwelt sequestered in unbroken composure and steadfastness amid the mountains and lakes of his native region, working out his own ideal of the poet's high office." This also is true, and I cannot think that the writer meant to imply that Wordsworth was not well occupied. With Lord Morley,

however, one is bound to wonder, considering the times, the really passionate man that he was, and the powerful character of much of his work,—how Wordsworth could have kept still. The restraint which allows expression only in mental activity rather than in physical was Wordsworth's way. It was a lesson which, like Matthew Arnold in the following well-known lines, he had learned from Nature:

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity!
Of labor, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.

And Wordsworth in his lifetime wrote approximately one thousand poems that have been published.

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE. It may be regarded as a significant fact, too, that in Wordsworth's poetry the words *solitary* and *solitude*, according to the new Concordance, occur over two hundred times. Matthew Arnold, in his essay, moreover, applies to Wordsworth's poetry the adjective "austere," and in reading a life of the man himself, one cannot help feeling, even amidst the irrepressible gaiety of Charles Lamb and his friends at the "immortal dinner," that Wordsworth was a lonely man. The truth of the matter is that practically single-handed he was fighting a long campaign of his own, and that, in the beginning at least, the loneliness was not wholly voluntary. Quite unknown at first, then gradually conspicuous as an object for ridicule,

during eighteen years of poverty he had to battle to establish certain poetic principles which are commonplaces to-day. Through it all there was his remarkable sister Dorothy, then his young wife, and Coleridge—and that was about all. It was a small garrison and one typical of a pioneer household. But Wordsworth was a strong man, who seems to have been little troubled with the disease of doubt or discouragement.

His one great purpose was to emancipate poetry from its prevalent tone of artificiality, from the fashions of the school of Pope and his successors (Doctor Johnson and Gray conspicuously). "This hubbub of words" Wordsworth called it. His weapon from the start was double barreled: first, poems of his own of a simple and homely nature; second, a powerful series of prefaces and explanatory essays which still count as literary law. It was an uphill fight. Jeered at and parodied during all the earlier years when the young craftsman most needs encouragement from older men in the same profession, he got little or none. At length recognition did come, then growing popularity and fame, and as a final accolade the laureateship for the last seven years of his life. The independence of the poet as a young man in the face of opposition had, however, developed into serene indifference to praise or blame alike.

Now, although glimpses of the poet as a young man occur in the *Journals* of his sister Dorothy, by far the most graphic description we have is of

the great and aged Wordsworth by Carlyle in his *Reminiscences*. It is incidentally a curious fact that the likenesses of writers most commonly associated with their works are usually their latest or last portraits—craters after the volcanoes are extinct. Be that as it may, this is how Carlyle saw Wordsworth at breakfast with Henry Taylor and others in London in 1840. The company, as might have been expected, was discussing literature and its various phases and problems. “He talked well in his way; with veracity, easy brevity, and force; as a wise tradesman would of his tools and workshop, and as no unwise one could. His voice was good, frank, and sonorous, though practically clear, distinct, and forcible, rather than melodious; the tone of him business-like, sedately confident, no discourtesy, yet no anxiety about being courteous; a fine wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. . . . His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful meditation; the look of it not bland or benevolent, so much as close, impregnable, and hard. . . . The eyes were not very brilliant, but they had a quiet clearness; there was enough of brow, and well shaped; rather too much of cheek (‘horse-face’ I have heard satirists say), face of squarish shape and decidedly longish. . . . He was large-boned, lean, but still firm-knit, tall, and strong-looking when he stood; a right good old steel-gray figure.”

Carlyle remarks also at this time: "During the last seven or ten years of his life, Wordsworth felt himself to be a recognized lion, in certain considerable London circles. . . . He took his bit of lionism very quietly, with a smile sardonic rather than triumphant; and certainly got no harm by it, if he got or expected little good. . . . 'If you think me dull, be it just so!'" Then follows this sly glimpse, a masterpiece of restrained and subtle suggestion: "In one of these Wordsworthian lion-dinners, . . . I sat a long way from Wordsworth; dessert, I think, had come in; and certainly there reigned in all quarters a cackle as of Babel (only politer, perhaps),—which far up in Wordsworth's quarter (who was leftward on my side of the table), seemed to have taken a sententious, rather louder, logical, and quasi-scientific turn,—heartily unimportant to gods and men, so far as I could judge of it and of the other babble reigning. I looked upwards, leftwards, the coast being luckily for the moment clear; there, far off, beautifully screened in the shadow of his vertical green shade . . . sat Wordsworth, silent, in rock-like indifference, slowly but steadily gnawing some portion of what I judged to be raisins, with his eye and attention fixed on these and these alone. The sight of whom, and of his rock-like indifference to the babble, quasi-scientific and other, with attention turned on the small practical alone, was comfortable and amusing to me, who felt like him, but could not eat raisins. This little glimpse I could still paint,

so clear and bright is it, and this shall be symbolical of all."

Any life of William Wordsworth, any account of the man in the making, offers little enticement to the general reader. It is a record mainly of psychological change and progress and is quite devoid of physical adventure and enterprise—except for his numerous walking tours, and on these De Quincey, diligent by spasms, once computed that he had walked upwards of 175,000 miles. The simple career is rather surprising, however, when one looks at its proportions: twenty-eight years of preparation; ten years of achievement; and forty-two years of little or nothing of importance, although during this time Wordsworth was diligently at work, and eventually began to harvest the results of his earlier sowing. The periods are 1770-1798; 1798-1808; 1808-1850.

FIRST PERIOD, 1770-1798. The quality of self-reliance so characteristic of Wordsworth in later life was early forced on him through circumstance. His father was an attorney and agent for the first Earl of Lonsdale. Wordsworth's mother, whose maiden name was Anne Cookson, died in 1778. "My father," Wordsworth has written, "never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my fourteenth year, a school boy, just returned from Hawkshead, whither I had been sent with my elder brother Richard, in my ninth year." Lonely but not morbidly so, the boy was thus driven back upon himself for his own

amusement, and thus found at an early age that source of solace which became his lifelong delight—Nature, and Mankind viewed through the eyes, we might almost say, of a naturalist. Wordsworth indeed has much in common with Thoreau.

Wordsworth's career at St. John's College, Cambridge, which he entered in October, 1787, and from which he received his B. A. degree in January, 1791, was without incidents, unless, as Lowell says, "they were of that interior kind which rarely appear in biography, though they may be of controlling influence upon the life." The fact is that Cambridge at this time was languishing in a period of intellectual stagnation; and the principal gift which Wordsworth carried away was an abiding impression of the beauty of the place. Of this the sonnet on *King's College Chapel* supremely testifies. In the summer of 1790 he took a foot journey with a college friend, from Calais down through France and to Switzerland. The results of this venture were among the most significant in Wordsworth's life. Not only was he stirred with the grandeur of the Alps, but, in France he met numbers of the revolutionists, who aroused in the young Englishman a sympathy and partisanship for their cause. In members of the revolutionary party Wordsworth seemed to see peasants not so very unlike his own Westmoreland farmers, or "statesmen" as they are called, sternly asserting themselves against an overbearing and frivolous aristocracy. This was simple Man rising triumphant

over Convention. As late as October, 1792, Wordsworth was in Paris preparing to join forces with the Girondists, and only the good judgment of his relatives, who commanded him home, saved him from certain death in the massacres of '93. The excesses of the revolutionists in their hour of success, England's declaration of war on the new French Republic, and the egotistic tyranny of Napoleon were all tremendously difficult results to reconcile with the rather innocent beginning, and it nearly cost Wordsworth his reason. Eventually the explanation of it all came, with the help of his sister Dorothy, in discovering that Nature with her often cruel and unjust methods, was the underlying harmony.

One can see from this, perhaps, how wide of the mark is any attempt to associate Wordsworth with Browning's hero of the *Lost Leader*, who "just for a handful of silver" left the liberal cause, "just for a riband to stick in his coat," for which, if it had been the laureateship, he would have had to wait just fifty years. Now, however, he was settled at Racedown Cottage with his sister Dorothy, and had perhaps beaten out his vexation and despair in the *Borderers*, a drama in five acts of blank verse, which was rejected by the manager of Covent Garden Theater.

SECOND PERIOD, 1798-1808. The period of Wordsworth's life which followed is that single decade in which, as Arnold points out, all of Wordsworth's really first-rate work was produced. It was a time

principally of work, and to but slight degree of personal development. In this time, to be sure, came Wordsworth's friendship with Coleridge (June, 1795), his marriage to his cousin Mary Hutchinson (October, 1802), and the birth of his five children, but these are events which happen to mature mortals and do not assist particularly in the shaping of their characters.

Much has been said by persons who knew her, of the vivacity and mercurial charm of Dorothy Wordsworth, and no words have been so often quoted as Coleridge's early impression of her: "Wordsworth and his exquisite sister are with me. She is a woman indeed! in mind and heart; for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her rather ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty! but her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. . . . Her eye watchful in minutest observation of nature; and her taste a perfect electrometer." Of Coleridge, Wordsworth's other close companion at this time, the story of their joint plan to defray the cost of a foot journey with Dorothy along the Quantock Hills by composing a poem, afterwards Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, is eminently characteristic. Practically the only part in the work, however, which Wordsworth would admit as his own were the four lines

And listened like a three years child
The Mariner had his will,

And thou art long and lank and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

Mrs. Wordsworth, with her personal charm, wit, and tact, was a worthy fourth to this fastidious and idealistic group. Most can be said in fewest words, perhaps, by noting that the two finest lines in the *Daffodils* are hers:

They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.

If in eight years of daily associations with the three persons of his choice and in the places where he was happiest, Wordsworth did his best work and all of his best work, the explanation simply is that he wrote himself out, scaling at once all the peaks of achievement which would more naturally be interspersed throughout his lifetime.

HIS CREED. It was in the preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), which he and Coleridge had first brought out in September, 1798, that Wordsworth wrote his famous declaration on poetic diction. This statement of creed, enlarged and amplified in 1802 and in 1815, met with immediate and universal hostility, and the illustrative poems of the volume have been ridiculed and parodied for years. The fact nevertheless remains that among these poems were Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Wordsworth's *Lines Above Tintern Abbey*, *We are Seven*, *Lines Written in Early Spring*, and *The Old Cumberland Beggar*, among the best things that

Wordsworth ever wrote. Still, the volume did contain *An Anecdote for Fathers*, *Goody Blake and Harry Gill*, *The Idiot Boy*, and *Peter Bell*. In many cases, the truth is, Wordsworth preached better than he practiced. Wordsworth's explanation of his position, in the preface, is that he has written of rural scenes and characters in an exceedingly simple style in the hope that his pictures might seem absolutely true to life, his characters genuinely alive, and his whole work interesting because, not only accurate, but also a reflection of the workings of the primary laws of nature. His aim, in short, was to be natural.

Humble and rustic life, he says, was chosen as his subject for the following reasons: (1) The essential passions of man are naturally more vigorous in the country and are there really more highly developed. (2) There, accordingly, they are better understood and appreciated. (3) In the country, too, these emotions and feelings can be observed unmixed and uninfluenced by artificial influences. (4) It follows, also, that the language of country people is plainer, more descriptive, and less influenced by the changes of time and fashion. (5) For the foregoing reasons and because of their close communion with the beauty and the truths of nature, country people are really finer in their manners. (6) "There neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition." The last statement is Wordsworth's most important

dictum, and the ground on which long and bitter literary warfare has been waged.

With some of these contentions the reader will very likely disagree, simply because they are not so. The main idea, however, that natural nobility is found more readily in the country than in the city is one that has long appealed to English poets; and echoes of it can readily be found in Shakespeare, Milton, Goldsmith, Gray, Cowper, and Burns. Wordsworth's appeal resembles that of Milton for courtesy in his *Comus*:

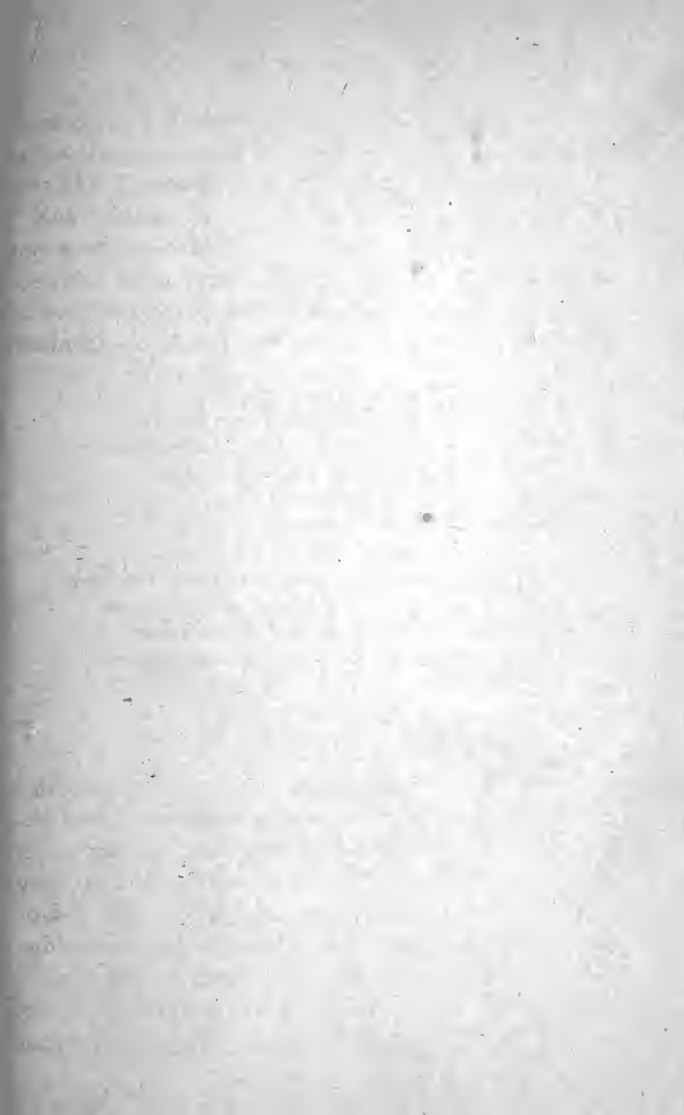
. . . courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named.

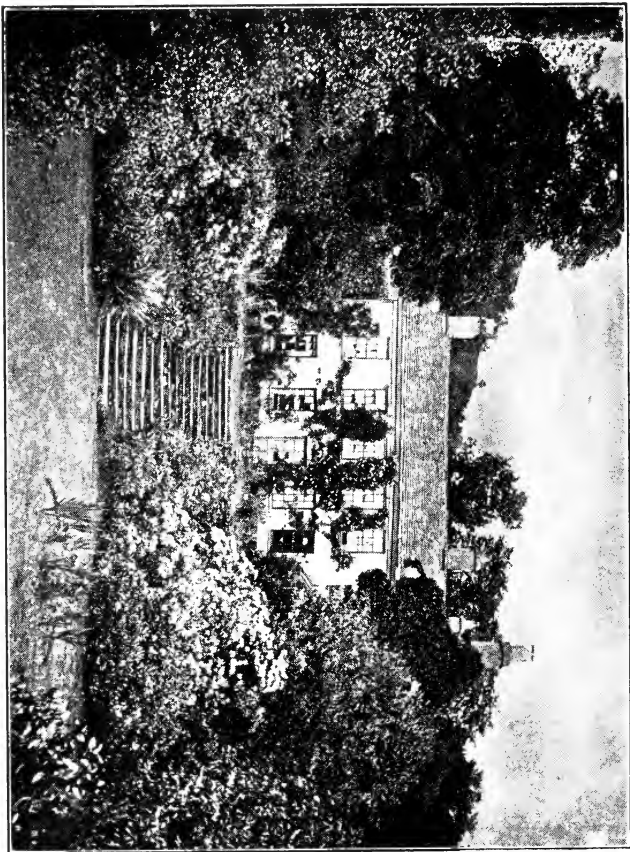
The truth of Wordsworth's final contention—that the language of poetry is in no way different from the language of prose—can be demonstrated by turning to the poems of some of the latest figures in the literary world to-day, to the subtly simple work of our own Robert Frost and Edwin Arlington Robinson. By "language," I take it, Wordsworth meant that the finest poetry should echo the ring of conversation, rather than be music in itself. With what measure of success he met we can discover by reading *We are Seven*, *The Leech Gatherer*, or *Michael*. From this early and rigid position Wordsworth himself indeed departed somewhat in his later work; and of this the rich organ tones of the *Ode to Duty* are a good example.

The serious danger in Wordsworth's cultivation of humble and rustic life is in knowing quite what is natural; for this word, like "simple," has two senses. It means "genuine," or it means "silly." And Wordsworth's taste, as Arnold hints, was not always infallible. Of this no better brief criticism exists, I believe, than the clever parody of two of Wordsworth's own sonnets by James K. Stephen:

Two voices are there: one is of the deep;
 It learns the storm clouds thunderous melody,
 Now roars, now murmurs, with the changing sea,
 Now bird-like pipes, now closes soft in sleep:
 And one is of an old half-witted sheep,
 Which bleats articulate monotony,
 And indicates that two and one are three,
 That grass is green, lakes damp, and mountains steep;
 And, Wordsworth, both are thine at certain times,
 Forth from the heart of thy melodious rhymes
 The form and pressure of high thoughts will burst:
 At other times—good Lord! I'd rather be
 Quite unacquainted with the A. B. C.
 Than write such hopeless rubbish as thy worst.

THIRD PERIOD, 1808-1850. In 1808 Wordsworth's growing family, now consisting of four children besides Mrs. Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, outgrew little Dove Cottage in Grasmere, and so they moved to Allan Bank across the lake. The end of the intimacy between Wordsworth and Coleridge came in the autumn, and ended, as it has been said, the creative season of both poets, although Coleridge, indeed, had written little poetry for the ten





Rydal Mount

Wordsworth's home from 1813-1850.

years past. Coleridge was at that time leaving Grasmere; and Wordsworth, believing that he was planning to stay with a certain Mr. Montagu in London, warned him of Coleridge's propensity to gin and opium. Wordsworth, it is clear, had Coleridge's interests as well as Mr. Montagu's at heart, but the latter's wholly uncalled-for and somewhat elaborated repetition of it to Coleridge had an ugly sound to his extremely sensitive ears. Although two years later Wordsworth had the opportunity of disclaiming any malice and the two were reconciled, the old intimacy was never quite restored.

The year 1813 marks the beginning of Wordsworth's long and peaceful residence of nearly forty years at Rydal Mount, which ended only with the poet's death. During this time Wordsworth was occupied mainly in piling up that poetical baggage of which Arnold, in his edition of the poems, proposed to relieve him. The two personalities in Wordsworth alluded to in Mr. Stephen's parody had both been diligent for years, the inspired and the uninspired working side by side; but now the artist abruptly makes off, and the artisan settles down comfortably for steady employment. There is no mystery about it. Wordsworth had simply said what he had had to say; and had he been less industrious by nature, he would have rested on his already abundant laurels.

With the growing salability of his writings, Wordsworth's financial difficulties were nearing an end.

His appointment in 1813 to the nearly sinecure position of distributor of stamps for the county of Westmoreland and later also for Cumberland, however, settled the matter. When in 1842 he resigned the post, to be succeeded by his son, Wordsworth was granted an annuity of £300 from the Civil List for distinguished work in the field of literature.

Honors followed success, with the honorary degrees of D. C. L. from Durham in 1838, and from Oxford in 1839. In 1843, on the death of his friend Southey, the former poet laureate, Wordsworth was tendered that office by Sir Robert Peel. Only after earnest insistence and the promise that "you shall have nothing *required* from you" was the venerable poet prevailed upon to accept for the last seven years of his life the poetic crown which he had so deservedly earned.

The small circle of the poet's closest friends and family had been gradually reduced by death until now there was left only Mrs. Wordsworth and their eldest and youngest sons. In 1834, "every mortal power of Coleridge was frozen at its marvelous source." Dorothy Wordsworth's long and distressing illness, which robbed her of her health and mind, began in 1832. The death of his friend Southey in 1843 was to Wordsworth a loss far greater than the indirect honor which was the outcome of it. But the most crushing blow of all was the death in 1847 of his daughter Dorothy, or Dora, who, although she had married Edward Quillinan, a neighbor and

friend of the Wordsworths, had long taken at her father's side as nearly as possible the place left by his sister Dorothy. From this tragedy Wordsworth never really recovered. On Tuesday, April 23, 1850, as it has frequently been written, just as his favorite cuckoo clock was striking twelve, he died. According to his wishes, his body was buried in the churchyard at Grasmere. In Westminster Abbey, however, a life-sized marble statue was set up in his memory.

That with Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, Wordsworth is forever to rank among the foremost English poets there now seems to be little doubt. And the manly words of James Russell Lowell, whose keen wit relished to the full all of Wordsworth's many foibles, can best stand as the final definition of Wordsworth and his place in the language of English-speaking peoples: "Of no other poet except Shakespeare have so many phrases become household words as of Wordsworth. . . . He has won for himself a secure immortality by a depth of intuition which makes only the best minds at their best hours worthy, or indeed capable, of his companionship, and by a homely sincerity of human sympathy which reaches the humblest heart. Our language owes him gratitude for the habitual purity and abstinence of his style, and we who speak it, for having emboldened us to take delight in simple things, and to trust ourselves to our own instincts."

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A revision of a bibliography originally prepared by
Professor Walter S. Hinchman

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Him by Professor C. T. Winchester (Bobbs Merrill); *Wordsworth* by F. W. H. Myers in the *English Men of Letters Series* (Macmillan); *Wordsworth in Literary Essays*, Vol. IV, by James Russell Lowell (Houghton Mifflin); the most admirable introduction by Lord Morley to *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (Crowell); the article on Wordsworth in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; *Life of William Wordsworth*, three volumes, by William Knight (Wm. Paterson, Edinburgh). These the present editor has made use of.

In addition are the following, in no way inferior to the preceding but not directly employed in preparing this edition: *William Wordsworth*, two volumes, by G. M. Harper (Scribner's); *Memoirs of Wordsworth* by his nephew, Bishop Christopher Wordsworth; De Quincey, *Works*, vols. II and V; *Miscellanies* by Algernon Charles Swinburne; *Matthew Arnold* by F. W. H. Myers; *Wordsworth's Ethics in Hours in a Library*, Vol. III, by Sir Leslie Stephen; *Wordsworth* by Sir Walter Raleigh; *Age of Wordsworth* by C. H. Herford; *Appreciations* by Walter Pater; *Wordsworth in Lives of Great Writers* by W. S. Hinchman.





Wordsworth

From a sketch from life by Alfred Croquis in Fraser's Magazine.

ARNOLD'S ESSAY ON WORDSWORTH

1. I REMEMBER hearing Lord Macaulay say, after Wordsworth's death, when subscriptions were being collected to found a memorial of him, that ten years earlier more money could have been raised in Cambridge alone, to do honor to Wordsworth, than was now raised all through the country. Lord Macaulay had, as we know, his own heightened and telling way of putting things, and we must always make allowance for it. But probably it is true that Wordsworth has never, either before or since, been so accepted and popular, so established in possession of the minds of all who profess to care for poetry, as he was between the years 1830 and 1840, and at Cambridge. From the very first, no doubt, he had his believers and witnesses. But I have myself heard him declare that, for he knew not how many years, his poetry had never brought him in enough to buy his shoe-strings. The poetry-reading public was very slow to recognize him, and was very easily drawn away from him. Scott effaced him with this public, Byron effaced him.

2. The death of Byron seemed, however, to make an opening for Wordsworth. Scott, who had for some time ceased to produce poetry himself, and stood before the public as a great novelist;

Scott, too genuine himself not to feel the profound genuineness of Wordsworth, and with an instinctive recognition of his firm hold on nature and of his local truth, always admired him sincerely, and praised him generously. The influence of Coleridge upon young men of ability was then powerful, and was still gathering strength; this influence told entirely in favor of Wordsworth's poetry. Cambridge was a place where Coleridge's influence had great action, and where Wordsworth's poetry, therefore flourished especially. But even amongst the general public its sale grew large, the eminence of its author was widely recognized, and Rydal Mount became an object of pilgrimage. I remember Wordsworth relating how one of the pilgrims, a clergyman, asked him if he had ever written anything besides the *Guide to the Lakes*. Yes, he answered modestly, he had written verses. Not every pilgrim was a reader, but the vogue was established, and the stream of pilgrims came.

3. Mr. Tennyson's decisive appearance dates from 1842. One cannot say that he effaced Wordsworth as Scott and Byron had effaced him. The poetry of Wordsworth had been so long before the public, the suffrage of good judges was so steady and so strong in its favor, that by 1842 the verdict of posterity, one may almost say, had been already pronounced, and Wordsworth's English fame was secure. But the vogue, the

ear and applause of the great body of poetry-readers, never quite thoroughly perhaps his, he gradually lost more and more, and Mr. Tennyson gained them. Mr. Tennyson drew to himself, and away from Wordsworth, the poetry-reading public, and the new generations. Even in 1850, when Wordsworth died, this diminution of popularity was visible, and occasioned the remark of Lord Macaulay which I quoted at starting.

4. The diminution has continued. The influence of Coleridge has waned, and Wordsworth's poetry can no longer draw succor from this ally. The poetry has not, however, wanted eulogists; and it may be said to have brought its eulogists luck, for almost every one who has praised Wordsworth's poetry has praised it well. But the public has remained cold, or, at least, undetermined. Even the abundance of Mr. Palgrave's fine and skilfully chosen specimens of Wordsworth, in the *Golden Treasury*, surprised many readers, and gave offence to not a few. To tenth-rate critics and compilers, for whom any violent shock to the public taste would be a temerity not to be risked, it is still quite permissible to speak of Wordsworth's poetry, not only with ignorance, but with impertinence. On the Continent he is almost unknown.

5. I cannot think, then, that Wordsworth has, up to this time, at all obtained his deserts. "Glory," said M. Renan the other day, "glory

after all is the thing which has the best chance of not being altogether vanity." Wordsworth was a homely man, and himself would certainly never have thought of talking of glory as that which, 5 after all, has the best chance of not being altogether vanity. Yet we may well allow that few things are less vain than *real* glory. Let us conceive of the whole group of civilized nations as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one 10 great confederation, bound to a joint action and working towards a common result; a confederation whose members have a due knowledge both of the past, out of which they all proceed, and of one another. This was the ideal of Goethe, and 15 it is an ideal which will impose itself upon the thoughts of our modern societies more and more. Then to be recognized by the verdict of such a confederation as a master, or even as a seriously and eminently worthy workman, in one's own line 20 of intellectual or spiritual activity, is indeed glory; a glory which it would be difficult to rate too highly. For what could be more beneficent, more salutary? The world is forwarded by having its attention fixed on the best things; and here is a 25 tribunal, free from all suspicion of national and provincial partiality, putting a stamp on the best things, and recommending them for general honor and acceptance. A nation, again, is furthered by recognition of its real gifts and successes; it is en- 30 couraged to develop them further. And here is an

honest verdict, telling us which of our supposed successes are really, in the judgment of the great impartial world, and not in our own private judgment only, successes, and which are not.

6. It is so easy to feel pride and satisfaction ⁵ in one's own things, so hard to make sure that one is right in feeling it! We have a great empire. But so had Nebuchadnezzar. We extol the "unrivalled happiness" of our national civilization. But then comes a candid friend, and remarks that ¹⁰ our upper class is materialized, our middle class vulgarized, and our lower class brutalized. We are proud of our painting, our music. But we find that in the judgment of other people our painting is questionable, and our music non-existent. We ¹⁵ are proud of our men of science. And here it turns out that the world is with us; we find that in the judgment of other people, too, Newton among the dead, and Mr. Darwin among the living, hold as high a place as they hold in our na- ²⁰ tional opinion.

7. Finally, we are proud of our poets and poetry. Now poetry is nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth. It is no small thing, ²⁵ therefore, to succeed eminently in poetry. And so much is required for duly estimating success here, that about poetry it is perhaps hardest to arrive at a sure general verdict, and takes longest. Meanwhile, our own conviction of the superiority ³⁰

of our national poets is not decisive, is almost certain to be mingled, as we see constantly in English eulogy of Shakespeare, with much of provincial infatuation. And we know what was the
5 opinion current amongst our neighbors the French, people of taste, acuteness, and quick literary tact, not a hundred years ago, about our great poets. The old *Biographie Universelle* notices the pretension of the English to a place for their poets
10 among the chief poets of the world, and says that this is a pretension which to no one but an Englishman can ever seem admissible. And the scornful, disparaging things said by foreigners about Shakespeare and Milton, and about our
15 national over-estimate of them, have been often quoted, and will be in every one's remembrance.

8. A great change has taken place, and Shakespeare is now generally recognized, even in France, as one of the greatest of poets. Yes, some anti-
20 Gallican cynic will say, the French rank him with Corneille and with Victor Hugo! But let me have the pleasure of quoting a sentence about Shakespeare, which I met with by accident not long ago in the *Correspondant*, a French review
25 which not a dozen English people, I suppose, look at. The writer is praising Shakespeare's prose. With Shakespeare, he says, "prose comes in whenever the subject, being more familiar, is unsuited to the majestic English iambic." And he goes on:
30 "Shakespeare is the king of poetic rhythm and

style, as well as the king of the realm of thought; along with his dazzling prose, Shakespeare has succeeded in giving us the most varied, the most harmonious verse which has ever sounded upon the human ear since the verse of the Greeks." 5
M. Henry Cochin, the writer of this sentence, deserves our gratitude for it; it would not be easy to praise Shakespeare, in a single sentence, more justly. And when a foreigner and a Frenchman writes thus of Shakespeare, and when Goethe 10 says of Milton, in whom there was so much to repel Goethe rather than to attract him, that "nothing has been ever done so entirely in the sense of the Greeks as *Samson Agonistes*," and that "Milton is in very truth a poet whom we 15 must treat with all reverence," then we understand what constitutes a European recognition of poets and poetry as contradistinguished from a merely national recognition, and that in favor both of Milton and of Shakespeare the judgment of the 20 high court of appeal has finally gone.

9. I come back to M. Renan's praise of glory, from which I started. Yes, real glory is a most serious thing, glory authenticated by the Amphictyonic Court of final appeal, definitive glory. 25
And even for poets and poetry, long and difficult as may be the process of arriving at the right award, the right award comes at last, the definitive glory rests where it is deserved. Every establishment of such a real glory is good and 30

wholesome for mankind at large, good and wholesome for the nation which produced the poet crowned with it. To the poet himself it can seldom do harm, for he, poor man, is in his grave, probably, long before his glory crowns him.

10. Wordsworth has been in his grave for some thirty years, and certainly his lovers and admirers cannot flatter themselves that this great and steady light of glory as yet shines over him. He is not fully recognized at home; he is not recognised at all abroad. Yet I firmly believe that the poetical performance of Wordsworth is, after that of Shakespeare and Milton, of which all the world now recognizes the worth, undoubtedly the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethan age to the present time. Chaucer is anterior; and on other grounds, too, he cannot well be brought into the comparison. But taking the roll of our chief poetical names, besides Shakespeare and Milton, from the age of Elizabeth downwards, and going through it,—Spenser, Dryden, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Coleridge, Scott, Campbell, Moore, Byron, Shelley, Keats (I mention those only who are dead),—I think it certain that Wordsworth's name deserves to stand, and will finally stand, above them all. Several of the poets named have gifts and excellences which Wordsworth has not. But taking the performance of each as a whole, I say that Wordsworth seems to me to have left a body

of poetical work superior in power, in interest, in the qualities which give enduring freshness, to that which any one of the others has left.

11. But this is not enough to say. I think it certain, further, that if we take the chief poetical 5 names of the Continent since the death of Molière, and, omitting Goethe, confront the remaining names with that of Wordsworth, the result is the same. Let us take Klopstock, Lessing, Schiller, Uhland, Rückert, and Heine for Ger- 10 many; Filicaia, Alfieri, Manzoni, and Leopardi for Italy; Racine, Boileau, Voltaire, André Chenier, Béranger, Lamartine, Musset, M. Victor Hugo (he has been so long celebrated that although he still lives I may be permitted to name him) 15 for France. Several of these, again, have evidently gifts and excellences to which Wordsworth can make no pretension. But in real poetical achievement it seems to me indubitable that to Wordsworth, here again, belongs the palm. 20 It seems to me that Wordsworth has left behind him a body of poetical work which wears, and will wear, better on the whole than the performance of any one of these personages, so far more brilliant and celebrated, most of them, than the 25 homely poet of Rydal. Wordsworth's performance in poetry is on the whole, in power, in interest, in the qualities which give enduring freshness, superior to theirs.

12. This is a high claim to make for Words- 30

worth. But if it is a just claim, if Wordsworth's place among the poets who have appeared in the last two or three centuries is after Shakespeare, Molière, Milton, Goethe, indeed, but before all
5 the rest, then in time Wordsworth will have his due. We shall recognize him in his place, as we recognize Shakespeare and Milton; and not only we ourselves shall recognize him, but he will be recognized by Europe also. Meanwhile, those
10 who recognize him already may do well, perhaps, to ask themselves whether there are not in the case of Wordsworth certain special obstacles which hinder or delay his due recognition by others, and whether these obstacles are not in
15 some measure removable.

13. The *Excursion* and the *Prelude*, his poems of greatest bulk, are by no means Wordsworth's best work. His best work is in his shorter pieces, and many indeed are there of these which are of
20 first-rate excellence. But in his seven volumes the pieces of high merit are mingled with a mass of pieces very inferior to them; so inferior to them that it seems wonderful how the same poet should have produced both. Shakespeare frequently
25 has lines and passages in a strain quite false, and which are entirely unworthy of him. But one can imagine his smiling if one could meet him in the Elysian Fields and tell him so; smiling and replying that he knew it perfectly well himself,
30 and what did it matter? But with Wordsworth

the case is different. Work altogether inferior, work quite uninspired, flat and dull, is produced by him with evident unconsciousness of its defects, and he presents it to us with the same faith and seriousness as his best work. Now a drama 5 or an epic fill the mind, and one does not look beyond them; but in a collection of short pieces the impression made by one piece requires to be continued and sustained by the piece following. In reading Wordsworth the impression made 10 by one of his fine pieces is too often dulled and spoiled by a very inferior piece coming after it.

14. Wordsworth composed verses during a space of some sixty years; and it is no exaggera-15 tion to say that within one single decade of those years, between 1798 and 1808, almost all his really first-rate work was produced. A mass of inferior work remains, work done before and after this golden prime, imbedding the first-rate 20 work and clogging it, obstructing our approach to it, chilling, not unfrequently, the high-wrought mood with which we leave it. To be recognized far and wide as a great poet, to be possible and receivable as a classic, Wordsworth needs to be 25 relieved of a great deal of the poetical baggage which now encumbers him. To administer this relief is indispensable, unless he is to continue to be a poet for the few only, a poet valued far below his real worth by the world. 30

15. There is another thing. Wordsworth classified his poems not according to any commonly received plan of arrangement, but according to a scheme of mental physiology. He has 5 poems of the fancy, poems of the imagination, poems of sentiment and reflexion, and so on. His categories are ingenious but far-fetched, and the result of his employment of them is unsatisfactory. Poems are separated one from another 10 which possess a kinship of subject or of treatment far more vital and deep than the supposed unity of mental origin which was Wordsworth's reason for joining them with others.

16. The tact of the Greeks in matters of this 15 kind was infallible. We may rely upon it that we shall not improve upon the classification adopted by the Greeks for kinds of poetry; that their categories of epic, dramatic, lyric, and so forth, have a natural propriety, and should be 20 adhered to. It may sometimes seem doubtful to which of two categories a poem belongs; whether this or that poem is to be called, for instance, narrative or lyric, lyric or elegiac. But there is to be found in every good poem a strain, a pre- 25 dominant note, which determines the poem as belonging to one of these kinds rather than the other; and here is the best proof of the value of the classification, and of the advantage of adhering to it. Wordsworth's poems will never pro- 30 duce their due effect until they are freed from

their present artificial arrangement, and grouped more naturally.

17. Disengaged from the quantity of inferior work which now obscures them, the best poems of Wordsworth, I hear many people say, would indeed stand out in great beauty, but they would prove to be very few in number, scarcely more than half-a-dozen. I maintain, on the other hand, that what strikes me with admiration, what establishes in my opinion Wordsworth's superiority, is the great and ample body of powerful work which remains to him, even after all his inferior work has been cleared away. He gives us so much to rest upon, so much which communicates his spirit and engages ours!

18. This is of very great importance. If it were a comparison of single pieces, or of three or four pieces, by each poet, I do not say that Wordsworth would stand decisively above Gray, or Burns, or Coleridge, or Keats, or Manzoni, or Heine. It is in his ampler body of powerful work that I find his superiority. His good work itself, his work which counts, is not all of it, of course, of equal value. Some kinds of poetry are in themselves lower kinds than others. The ballad kind is a lower kind; the didactic kind, still more, is a lower kind. Poetry of this latter sort, counts, too, sometimes, by its biographical interest partly, not by its poetical interest pure and simple; but then this can only be when the poet producing it

has the power and importance of Wordsworth, a power and importance which he assuredly did not establish by such didactic poetry alone. Altogether, it is, I say, by the great body of powerful
5 and significant work which remains to him, after every reduction and deduction has been made, that Wordsworth's superiority is proved.

19. To exhibit this body of Wordsworth's best work, to clear away obstructions from around it,
10 and to let it speak for itself, is what every lover of Wordsworth should desire. Until this has been done, Wordsworth, whom we, to whom he is dear, all of us know and feel to be so great a poet, has not had a fair chance before the world. When
15 once it has been done, he will make his way best not by our advocacy of him, but by his own worth and power. We may safely leave him to make his way thus, we who believe that a superior worth and power in poetry finds in mankind a
20 sense responsive to it and disposed at last to recognize it. Yet at the outset, before he has been duly known and recognized, we may do Wordsworth a service, perhaps, by indicating in what his superior power and worth will be found to
25 consist, and in what it will not.

20. Long ago, in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. I said that a great poet receives his distinctive
30 character of superiority from his application,

under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, from his application, I say, to his subject, whatever it may be, of the ideas

On man, on nature, and on human life,

5

which he has acquired for himself. The line quoted is Wordsworth's own; and his superiority arises from his powerful use, in his best pieces, his powerful application to his subject, of ideas "on man, on nature, and on human life." 10

21. Voltaire, with his signal acuteness, most truly remarked that "no nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation." And he adds: "There, it seems to me, is the great merit of the English 15 poets." Voltaire does not mean, by "treating in poetry moral ideas," the composing moral and didactic poems;—that brings us but a very little way in poetry. He means just the same thing as was meant when I spoke above "of the noble 20 and profound application of ideas to life"; and he means the application of these ideas under the conditions fixed for us by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth. If it is said that to call these ideas *moral* ideas is to introduce a strong 25 and injurious limitation, I answer that it is to do nothing of the kind, because moral ideas are really so main a part of human life. The question, *how to live*, is itself a moral idea; and it is the

question which most interests every man, and with which, in some way or other, he is perpetually occupied. A large sense is of course to be given to the term *moral*. Whatever bears upon the question, "how to live," comes under it.

Nor love thy life, nor hate; but, what thou liv'st,
Live well; how long or short, permit to heaven.

In those fine lines, Milton utters, as every one at once perceives, a moral idea. Yes, but so too, when Keats consoles the forward-bending lover on the Grecian Urn, the lover arrested and presented in immortal relief by the sculptor's hand before he can kiss, with the line,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair—

he utters a moral idea. When Shakespeare says, that

We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep,

he utters a moral idea.

22. Voltaire was right in thinking that the energetic and profound treatment of moral ideas, in this large sense, is what distinguishes the English poetry. He sincerely meant praise, not dis-
praise or hint of limitation; and they err who suppose that poetic limitation is a necessary consequence of the fact, the fact being granted as Voltaire states it. If what distinguishes the greatest poets is their powerful and profound appli-

cation of ideas to life, which surely no good critic will deny, then to prefix to the term ideas here the term moral makes hardly any difference, because human life itself is in so preponderating a
5 degree moral.

23. It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,—to the
10 question: How to live. Morals are often treated in a narrow and false fashion, they are bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their day, they are fallen into the hands of pedants and professional dealers, they grow tire-
15 some to some of us. We find attraction, at times, even in a poetry of revolt against them; in a poetry which might take for its motto Omar Khayyam's words: "Let us make up in the tavern for the time which we have wasted in the
20 mosque." Or we find attractions in a poetry indifferent to them, in a poetry where the contents may be what they will, but where the form is studied and exquisite. We delude ourselves in either case; and the best cure for our delusion is
25 to let our minds rest upon that great and inexhaustible word *life*, until we learn to enter into its meaning. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life*; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry
30 of indifference towards *life*.

24. Epictetus had a happy figure for things like the play of the senses, or literary form and finish, or argumentative ingenuity, in comparison with "the best and master thing" for us, as he called it, the concern, how to live. Some people were 5 afraid of them, he said, or they disliked and undervalued them. Such people were wrong; they were unthankful or cowardly. But the things might also be over-prized, and treated as final when they are not. They bear to life the relation which inns 10 bear to home. "As if a man, journeying home, and finding a nice inn on the road, and liking it, were to stay for ever at the inn! Man, thou hast forgotten thine object; thy journey was not *to* this, but *through* this. 'But this inn is taking.' 15 And how many other inns, too, are taking, and how many fields and meadows! but as places of passage merely. You have an object, which is this: to get home, to do your duty to your family, friends, and fellow-countrymen, to attain inward 20 freedom, serenity, happiness, contentment. Style takes your fancy, arguing takes your fancy, and you forget your home and want to make your abode with them and to stay with them, on the plea that they are taking. Who denies that they 25 are taking? but as places of passage, as inns. And when I say this, you suppose me to be attacking the care for style, the care for argument. I am not; I attack the resting in them, the not looking to the end which is beyond them." 30

25. Now, when we come across a poet like Theophile Gautier, we have a poet who has taken up his abode at an inn, and never got farther. There may be inducements to this or that one of us, at this or that moment, to find delight in him, to cleave to him; but after all, we do not change the truth about him,—we only stay ourselves in his inn along with him. And when we come across a poet like Wordsworth, who sings,

10 Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love and hope.
 And melancholy fear subdued by faith,
 Of blessed consolations in distress,
 Of moral strength and intellectual power,
 Of joy in widest commonalty spread—

15 then we have a poet intent on “the best and master thing,” and who prosecutes his journey home. We say, for brevity’s sake, that he deals with *life*, because he deals with that in which life really consists. This is what Voltaire means to praise in the English poets,—this dealing with what is really life. But always it is the mark of the greatest poets that they deal with it; and to say that the English poets are remarkable for dealing with it, is only another way of saying, 20 what is true, that in poetry the English genius has especially shown its power.

26. Wordsworth deals with it, and his greatness lies in his dealing with it so powerfully. I have named a number of celebrated poets, above all 30 of whom he, in my opinion, deserves to be placed.

He is to be placed above poets like Voltaire, Dryden, Pope, Lessing, Schiller, because these famous personages, with a thousand gifts and merits, never, or scarcely ever, attain the distinctive accent and utterance of the high and genuine 5 poets—

Quique pii vates et Phœbo digna locuti,

at all. Burns, Keats, Heine, not to speak of others in our list, have this accent;—who can doubt it? And at the same time they have treasures of 10 humor, felicity, passion, for which in Wordsworth we shall look in vain. Where, then, is Wordsworth's superiority? It is here; he deals with more of *life* than they do; he deals with *life*, as a whole, more powerfully. 15

27. No Wordsworthian will doubt this. Nay, the fervent Wordsworthian will add, as Mr. Leslie Stephen does, that Wordsworth's poetry is precious because his philosophy is sound; that his "ethical system is as distinctive and capable of 20 exposition as Bishop Butler's"; that his poetry is informed by ideas which "fall spontaneously into a scientific system of thought." But we must be on our guard against the Wordsworthians, if we want to secure for Wordsworth his due rank 25 as a poet. The Wordsworthians are apt to praise him for the wrong things, and to lay far too much stress upon what they call his philosophy. His poetry is the reality, his philosophy,—so far, at

least, as it may put on the form and habit of "a scientific system of thought," and the more that it puts them on,—is the illusion. Perhaps we shall one day learn to make this proposition general, and to say: Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion. But in Wordsworth's case, at any rate, we cannot do him justice until we dismiss his formal philosophy.

28. The *Excursion* abounds with philosophy, and therefore the *Excursion* is to the Wordsworthian what it never can be to the disinterested lover of poetry,—a satisfactory work. "Duty exists," says Wordsworth, in the *Excursion*; and then he proceeds thus:—

15 Immutably survive,
 For our support, the measures and the forms,
 Which an abstract Intelligence supplies,
 Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.

And the Wordsworthian is delighted, and thinks that here is a sweet union of philosophy and poetry. But the disinterested lover of poetry will feel that the lines carry us really not a step farther than the proposition which they would interpret; that they are a tissue of elevated but abstract verbiage, alien to the very nature of poetry.

29. Or let us come direct to the center of Wordsworth's philosophy, as "an ethical system, as distinctive and capable of systematical exposition as Bishop Butler's":—

. . . . One adequate support
 For the calamities of mortal life
 Exists, one only;—an assured belief
 That the procession of our fate, howe'er
 Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
 Of infinite benevolence and power;
 Whose everlasting purposes embrace
 All accidents, converting them to good.

5

That is doctrine such as we hear in church too, religious and philosophic doctrine; and the at-¹⁰ attached Wordsworthian loves passages of such doctrine, and brings them forward in proof of his poet's excellence. But however true the doctrine may be, it has, as here presented, none of the characters of *poetic* truth, the kind of truth¹⁵ which we require from a poet, and in which Wordsworth is really strong.

30. Even the "intimations" of the famous Ode, those corner-stones of the supposed philosophic system of Wordsworth,—the idea of the high in-²⁰ stincts and affections coming out in childhood, testifying of a divine home recently left, and fading away as our life proceeds,—this idea, of undeniable beauty as a play of fancy, has itself not the character of poetic truth of the best kind; it²⁵ has no real solidity. The instinct of delight in Nature and her beauty had no doubt extraordinary strength in Wordsworth himself as a child. But to say that universally this instinct is mighty in childhood, and tends to die away afterwards,³⁰ is to say what is extremely doubtful. In many

people, perhaps with the majority of educated persons, the love of nature is nearly imperceptible at ten years old, but strong and operative at thirty. In general we may say of these high instincts of
 5 early childhood, the base of the alleged systematic philosophy of Wordsworth, what Thucydides says of the early achievements of the Greek race —
 “It is impossible to speak with certainty of what is so remote; but from all that we can really in-
 10 vestigate, I should say that they were no very great things.”

31. Finally the “scientific system of thought” in Wordsworth gives us at last such poetry as this, which the devout Wordsworthian accepts:—

15 O for the coming of that glorious time
 When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
 And best protection, this Imperial Realm,
 While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
 An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
 20 Them who are born to serve her and obey;
 Binding herself by statute to secure,
 For all the children whom her soil maintains,
 The rudiments of letters, and inform
 The mind with moral and religious truth.

25 Wordsworth calls Voltaire dull, and surely the production of these un-Voltairian lines must have been imposed on him as a judgment! One can hear them being quoted at a Social Science Congress; one can call up the whole scene. A great
 30 room in one of our dismal provincial towns; dusty

air and jaded afternoon daylight; benches full of men with bald heads and women in spectacles; an orator lifting up his face from a manuscript written within and without to declaim these lines of Wordsworth; and in the soul of any poor child of nature who may have wandered in thither, an unutterable sense of lamentation, and mourning, and woe!

32. "But turn we," as Wordsworth says, "from these bold, bad men," the haunters of Social Science Congresses. And let us be on our guard, too, against the exhibitors and extollers of a "scientific system of thought" in Wordsworth's poetry. The poetry will never be seen aright while they thus exhibit it. The cause of its greatness is simple, and may be told quite simply. Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it.

33. The source of joy from which he thus draws is the truest and most unfailing source of joy accessible to man. It is also accessible universally. Wordsworth brings us word, therefore, according to his own strong and characteristic line, he brings us word

Of joy in widest commonalty spread.

Here is an immense advantage for a poet. Wordsworth tells of what all seek, and tells of it at its truest and best source, and yet a source where all may go and draw for it.

5 34. Nevertheless, we are not to suppose that everything is precious which Wordsworth, standing even at this perennial and beautiful source, may give us. Wordsworthians are apt to talk as if it must be. They will speak with the same
10 reverence of *The Sailor's Mother*, for example, as of *Lucy Gray*. They do their master harm by such lack of discrimination. *Lucy Gray* is a beautiful success; *The Sailor's Mother* is a failure. To give aright what he wishes to give, to interpret and
15 render successfully, is not always within Wordsworth's own command. It is within no poet's command; here is the part of the Muse, the inspiration, the God, the "not ourselves." In Wordsworth's case, the accident, for so it may almost be
20 called, of inspiration, is of peculiar importance. No poet, perhaps, is so evidently filled with a new and sacred energy when the inspiration is upon him; no poet, when it fails him, is so left "weak as is a breaking wave." I remember hearing him
25 say that "Goethe's poetry was not inevitable enough." The remark is striking and true; no line in Goethe, as Goethe said himself, but its maker knew well how it came there. Wordsworth is right, Goethe's poetry is not inevitable; not
30 inevitable enough. But Wordsworth's poetry,

when he is at his best, is inevitable, as inevitable as Nature herself. It might seem that Nature not only gave him the matter for his poem, but wrote his poem for him. He has no style. He was too conversant with Milton not to catch at 5 times his master's manner, and he has fine Miltonic lines; but he has no assured poetic style of his own, like Milton. When he seeks to have a style he falls into ponderosity and pomposity. In the *Excursion* we have his style, as an artistic 10 product of his own creation; and although Jeffrey completely failed to recognize Wordsworth's real greatness, he was yet not wrong in saying of the *Excursion*, as a work of poetic style: "This will never do." And yet magical as is that power, 15 which Wordsworth has not, of assured and possessed poetic style, he has something which is an equivalent for it.

35. Every one who has any sense for these things feels the subtle turn, the heightening, 20 which is given to a poet's verse by his genius for style. We can feel it in the

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well—

of Shakespeare; in the

. though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues—

25

of Milton. It is the incomparable charm of Milton's power of poetic style which gives such worth

to *Paradise Regained*, and makes a great poem of a work in which Milton's imagination does not soar high. Wordsworth has in constant possession, and at command, no style of this kind; but he
 5 had too poetic a nature, and had read the great poets too well, not to catch, as I have already remarked, something of it occasionally. We find it not only in his Miltonic lines; we find it in such a phrase as this, where the manner is his
 10 own, not Milton's—

. . . . the fierce confederate storm
 Of sorrow barricadoed evermore
 Within the walls of cities;

although even here, perhaps, the power of style,
 15 which is undeniable, is more properly that of eloquent prose than the subtle heightening and change wrought by genuine poetic style. It is style, again, and the elevation given by style, which chiefly makes the effectiveness of *Laoda-*
 20 *meia*. Still the right sort of verse to choose from Wordsworth, if we are to seize his true and characteristic form of expression, is a line like this from *Michael*:—

And never lifted up a single stone.

25 There is nothing subtle in it, no heightening, no study of poetic style, strictly so called, at all; yet it is expression of the highest and most truly expressive kind.

36. Wordsworth owed much to Burns, and a style of perfect plainness, relying for effect solely on the weight and force of that which with entire fidelity it utters, Burns could show him.

The poor inhabitant below 5
 Was quick to learn and wise to know,
 And keenly felt the friendly glow
 And softer flame;
 But thoughtless follies laid him low
 And stain'd his name. 10

Every one will be conscious of a likeness here to Wordsworth; and if Wordsworth did great things with this nobly plain manner, we must remember, what indeed he himself would always have been forward to acknowledge, that Burns used it before him. 15

37. Still Wordsworth's use of it has something unique and unmatchable. Nature herself seems, I say, to take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes: from the 20
 profound sincereness with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of his subject itself. He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain, first-hand, almost austere 25
 naturalness. His expression may often be called bald, as, for instance, in the poem of *Resolution and Independence*; but it is bald as the bare mountain tops are bald, with a baldness which is full of grandeur. 30

38. Wherever we meet with the successful balance in Wordsworth, of profound truth of subject with profound truth of execution, he is unique. His best poems are those which most perfectly exhibit this balance. I have a warm admiration for *Laodameia* and for the great *Ode*; but if I am to tell the very truth, I find *Laodameia* not wholly free from something artificial, and the great *Ode* not wholly free from something declamatory. If I had to pick out poems of a kind most perfectly to show Wordsworth's unique power, I should rather choose poems such as *Michael*, *The Fountain*, *The Highland Reaper*. And poems with the peculiar and unique beauty which distinguishes these, Wordsworth produced in considerable number; besides very many other poems of which the worth, although not so rare as the worth of these, is still exceedingly high.

39. On the whole, then, as I said at the beginning, not only is Wordsworth eminent by reason of the goodness of his best work, but he is eminent also by reason of the great body of good work which he has left to us. With the ancients I will not compare him. In many respects the ancients are far above us, and yet there is something that we demand which they can never give. Leaving the ancients, let us come to the poets and poetry of Christendom. Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Milton, Goethe, are altogether larger and more splendid luminaries in the poetical heaven than

Wordsworth. But I know not where else, among the moderns, we are to find his superiors.

40. To disengage the poems which show his power, and to present them to the English-speaking public and to the world, is the object of this volume. I by no means say that it contains all which in Wordsworth's poems is interesting. Except in the case of *Margaret*, a story composed separately from the rest of the *Excursion*, and which belongs to a different part of England, I have not ventured on detaching portions of poems, or on giving any piece otherwise than as Wordsworth himself gave it. But, under the conditions imposed by this reserve, the volume contains, I think, everything, or nearly everything, which may best serve him with the majority of lovers of poetry, nothing which may disserve him.

41. I have spoken lightly of Wordsworthians: and if we are to get Wordsworth recognized by the public and by the world, we must recommend him not in the spirit of a clique, but in the spirit of disinterested lovers of poetry. But I am a Wordsworthian myself. I can read with pleasure and edification *Peter Bell*, and the whole series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, and the address to Mr. Wilkinson's spade, and even the *Thanksgiving Ode*;—everything of Wordsworth, I think, except *Vaudracour and Julia*. It is not for nothing that one has been brought up in the veneration of a man so truly worthy of homage; that one has

seen him and heard him, lived in his neighborhood and been familiar with his country. No Wordsworthian has a tenderer affection for this pure and sage master than I, or is less really
5 offended by his defects. But Wordsworth is something more than the pure and sage master of a small band of devoted followers, and we ought not to rest satisfied until he is seen to be what he is. He is one of the very chief glories of
10 English Poetry; and by nothing is England so glorious as by her poetry. Let us lay aside every weight which hinders our getting him recognized as this, and let our one study be to bring to pass, as widely as possible and as truly as possible, his
15 own word concerning his poems:—"They will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, and will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier."

The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the world, from the beginning of time to the present day. The author discusses the various ages of the world, the different nations, and the progress of civilization. He also touches upon the political and social changes that have shaped the world over the centuries.

The second part of the book is a detailed account of the history of the British Empire. It begins with the early voyages of discovery and the establishment of colonies in North America, the West Indies, and Africa. The author describes the growth of the empire, the various wars fought, and the political and administrative changes that have taken place. He also discusses the economic and social development of the empire, and the role of the British people in its history.

The third part of the book is a history of the world from the beginning of the Christian era to the present day. It covers the history of the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the modern world. The author discusses the various nations and peoples of the world, and the progress of civilization. He also touches upon the political and social changes that have shaped the world over the centuries.

SELECTED POEMS OF
WORDSWORTH



Lake Windermere



I

POEMS IN BALLAD FORM

WE ARE SEVEN

—A simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

5 I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
10 And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

“Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?”

15 “How many? Seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“And where are they? I pray you tell.”

She answered, “Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
20 And two are gone to sea.

“Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

25 “You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
30 “Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree.”

“You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
35 If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five.”

“Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little Maid replied,
“Twelve steps or more from my mother’s door,
40 And they are side by side.

“My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit—
I sit and sing to them,

45 “And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

“The first that died was little Jane;
50 In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

“So in the churchyard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
55 Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

“And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
60 And he lies by her side.”

“How many are you, then,” said I,
“If they two are in Heaven?”
The little Maiden did reply,
“O Master! we are seven.”

65 “But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in Heaven!”
’Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

LUCY GRAY;

OR, SOLITUDE

OFt I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary Child.

5 No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
10 The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

“To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
15 And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow.”

“That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The Minster-clock has just struck two,
20 And yonder is the Moon.”

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

25 Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The snow came on before its time:
30 She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb;
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
35 But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
40 A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
“In Heaven we all shall meet;”
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy’s feet.

45 Half breathless from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn-hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
50 The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the Bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
55 Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
60 Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

STAR-GAZERS

WHAT crowd is this? what have we here! we must
not pass it by;

A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the
sky:

Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's
waters float.

5 The Showman chooses well his place, 'tis Leices-
ter's busy Square;

And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are
blue and fair;

Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each
stands ready with the fee,

Impatient till his moment comes—what an in-
sight must it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall
thy implement have blame,

10 A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put
to shame?

Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in
fault?

Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent
Vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we
have here?

Or gives a thing but small delight that never can
be dear?

15 The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of
mightiest fame,

Doth she betray us when they're seen? or are they
but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to
do her wrong?

Or is it, that when human souls a journey long
have had

20 And are returned into themselves, they cannot
but be sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these
spectators rude,

Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the
multitude,

Have souls which never yet have risen, and
therefore prostrate lie?

No, no, this cannot be—Men thirst for power
and majesty!

25 Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the
blissful mind employ

Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and
steady joy,

That doth reject all show of pride, admits no
outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and
divine!

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who
pry and pore
30 Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy
than before:
One after one they take their turn, nor have I
one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight
appears,

Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for
three years:

Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

5 'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She
sees

A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapor through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheap-
side.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
10 Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small Cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they
fade,

The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
15 The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colors have all passed away from her eyes.

II

NARRATIVE POEMS

THE LEECH-GATHERER;

OR,

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
5 Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of
waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
10 The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
The Hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

15 I was a traveler then upon the moor;
I saw the Hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:

The pleasant season did my heart employ:
20 My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy!

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
25 In our dejection do we sink as low,
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears and fancies thick upon me came;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not,
nor could name.

I heard the Sky-lark warbling in the sky;
30 And I bethought me of the playful Hare:
Even such a happy child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me—
35 Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood:
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good:
40 But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;

45 Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified;
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof comes in the end despondency and
madness.

50 Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befel, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
55 I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
60 By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a Sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun itself;

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
65 Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
70 A more than human weight upon his frame had
cast.

Himself he propped, his body, limbs, and face,
 Upon a long grey Staff of shaven wood:
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
 Upon the margin of that moorish flood
 75 Motionless as a Cloud the Old-man stood;
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
 And moveth all together, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the Pond
 Stirred with his Staff, and fixedly did look
 80 Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
 As if he had been reading in a book:
 And now a stranger's privilege I took;
 And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
 "This morning gives us promise of a glorious
 day."

85 A gentle answer did the Old-man make,
 In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
 And him with further words I thus bespake,
 "What occupation do you there pursue?
 This is a lonesome place for one like you."
 90 He answered, while a flash of mild surprise
 Broke from the sable orbs of his yet vivid eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
 But each in solemn order followed each,
 With something of a lofty utterance drest—
 95 Choice word and measured phrase, above the
 reach

Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their
dues.

He told, that to these waters he had come
100 To gather Leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure;
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to
moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or
chance;
105 And in this way he gained an honest mainte-
nance.

The Old-man still stood talking by my side:
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I
divide:

And the whole Body of the Man did seem
110 Like one whom I had met with in a dream:
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonish-
ment.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
115 Cold, pain, and labor, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.

—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
 My question eagerly did I renew,
 “How is it that you live, and what is it you do?”

120 He with a smile did then his words repeat;
 And said, that, gathering Leeches, far and wide
 He traveled; stirring thus about his feet
 The waters of the Pools where they abide.
 “Once I could meet with them on every side;
 125 But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
 Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.”

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
 The Old-man’s shape, and speech, all troubled me:
 In my mind’s eye I seemed to see him pace
 About the weary moors continually,
 130 Wandering about alone and silently.
 While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
 He, having made a pause, the same discourse
 renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
 135 Cheerfully uttered, with demeanor kind,
 But stately in the main; and when he ended,
 I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
 In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
 “God,” said I, “be my help and stay secure;
 140 I’ll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely
 moor!”

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
5 The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous Brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
10 Who journey hither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and
kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
15 But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that place a story appertains,
Which, though it be ungarnished with events,
20 Is not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men

Whom I already loved;—not verily
25 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
30 Of natural objects led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
35 Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these Hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

40 UPON the Forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
45 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his Shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
50 When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of Bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,

55 "The winds are now devising work for me!"

And, truly, at all times, the storm—that drives
The traveler to a shelter—summoned him

Up to the mountains: he had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists,

60 That came to him and left him on the heights.

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.

And grossly that man errs, who should suppose

That the green Valleys, and the Streams and
Rocks,

Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's
thoughts.

65 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
breathed

The common air; the hills, which he so oft

Had climbed with vigorous steps; which had
impressed

So many incidents upon his mind

Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;

70 Which, like a book, preserved the memory

Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,

Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,

The certainty of honorable gain,

Those fields, those hills—what could they less?
had laid

75 Strong hold on his affections, were to him

A pleasurable feeling of blind love,

The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely Matron, old—
80 Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
85 It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in Shepherd's phrase,
90 With one foot in the grave. This only Son
With two brave Sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
95 For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then
Their labor did not cease; unless when all
Turned to their cleanly supper-board, and there,
100 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round their basket piled with oaten cakes
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when
their meal
Was ended, LUKE (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
105 To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card

Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

110 Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
Did with a huge projection overbrow
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a Lamp;
115 An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted Hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
120 And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when LUKE had reached his eighteenth
year
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
125 Father and Son, while late into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This Light was famous in its neighborhood,
130 And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their Cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, North and
South,

High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
 135 And westward to the village near the Lake;
 And from this constant light, so regular
 And so far seen, the House itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named THE EVENING
 STAR.

140 Thus living on through such a length of years,
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
 Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
 This Son of his old age was yet more dear—
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
 145 Blind spirit, which is in the blood of all—
 Than that a child more than all other gifts,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail.
 150 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
 His Heart and his Heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use
 155 Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
 His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
 160 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,

To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Had work by his own door, or when he sat
With sheep before him on his Shepherd's stool,
Beneath that large old Oak, which near their door
165 Stood,—and, from its enormous breadth of shade
Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,¹ a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
170 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
175 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the
shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy
grew up

A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
180 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect Shepherd's Staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
185 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;

¹Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the Urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
190 Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or
voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
195 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
200 Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the Old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his Father's sight the boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth
year,
205 He was his comfort and his daily hope.

WHILE in this sort the simple Household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
210 In surety for his Brother's Son, a man

Of an industrious life, and ample means,—
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him,—and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
215 A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
220 As soon as he had gathered so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seemed that his sole refuge was to sell
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
225 And his heart failed him. “Isabel,” said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
“I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God’s love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
230 Should pass into a stranger’s hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
235 To my own family. An evil Man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
240 ’Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies, and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
245 He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another Kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
250 And with his Kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?" At this the Old Man
 paused,
255 And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a Parish-boy—at the Church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
260 And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the Lad
Went up to London, found a Master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty Boy
265 To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas: where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a Chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.

270 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The Old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme,
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
275 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger,—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
280 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
285 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the two last nights
290 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
295 We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,

300 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
305 As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their Kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
310 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
315 Had to her house returned, the Old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
320 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head
Ghyll,
In that deep Valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
325 For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the Streamlet's edge

Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped
330 And thus the Old Man spake to him:—"My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
335 I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should speak
Of things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First camest into the world—as oft befalls
340 To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
345 Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed
month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
350 And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
355 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."

Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The Old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
360 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
365 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
370 I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived.
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to
me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
375 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
380 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go." At this the Old Man
paused;
Then, pointing to the Stones near which they
stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:

‘This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
385 It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands,
Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
390 I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
395 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes.—It should be so—Yes—yes—
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke; thou hast been bound to me
400 Only by links of love: when thou art gone
What will be left to us!—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
405 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
410 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou returnest, thou in this place wilt see

A work which is not here: a covenant
 'Twill be between us——But, whatever fate
 415 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave.”

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped
 down,
 And, as his Father had requested, laid
 The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
 420 The Old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
 He pressed his son, he kissèd him and wept;
 And to the house together they returned.
 —Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming
 peace,
 Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
 425 Began his journey, and when he had reached
 The public way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
 Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
 That followed him till he was out of sight.

430 A good report did from their Kinsman come,
 Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
 Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were through-
 out

“The prettiest letters that were ever seen.”
 435 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
 So, many months passed on: and once again
 The Shepherd went about his daily work

With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
440 He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke
began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
445 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
450 I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the Old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
455 He went, and still looked up towards the sun,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his Sheep,
And for the land his small inheritance.
And to that hollow Dell from time to time
460 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the Old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
465 And never lifted up a single stone,

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he
seen

Sitting alone, with that his faithful Dog,

Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.

The length of full seven years, from time to time,

470 He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,

And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel

Survive her Husband: at her death the estate

Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.

475 The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR

Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the
ground

On which it stood; great changes have been
wrought

In all the neighborhood:—yet the Oak is left

That grew beside their door; and the remains

480 Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen

Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

III

LYRICAL POEMS

“MY HEART LEAPS UP”

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A Rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a Man;
5 So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die!
The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

TO A BUTTERFLY

- STAY near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in Thee,
Historian of my Infancy!
- 5 Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay Creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My Father's Family!
- 10 Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My Sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the Butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
- 15 Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

WRITTEN IN MARCH

WHILE RESTING ON THE BRIDGE AT THE FOOT OF
BROTHER'S WATER

THE cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
~~The small birds twitter,~~
The lake doth glitter,
5 The green field sleeps in the sun;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising;
10 There are forty feeding like one!

Like an army defeated
The Snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill;
15 The Ploughboy is whooping—anon—anon:
There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
20 The rain is over and gone!

TO THE DAISY

IN youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
 Most pleased when most uneasy;
5 But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake
 Of thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
10 That thinly decks his few grey hairs;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
 That she may sun thee;
Whole summer-fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy wight!
15 Doth in thy crimson head delight
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveler in the lane,
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
20 Yet nothing daunted,

Nor grieved, if thou be set at nought:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

25 Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
Her head impearling.
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
30 Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
35 Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scare
40 His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain crouched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension;
45 Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
50 And one chance look to Thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
 A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life our nature breeds;
55 A wisdom fitted to the needs
 Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
60 With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
 Of careful sadness.

65 And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
 To thee am owing;
An instinct call it, a blind sense;
70 A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
 Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy course, bold lover of the sun,
75 And cheerful when the day's begun
 As lark or leveret,

Thy long-lost praise ¹ thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time;—thou not in vain
80 Art Nature's favorite.

"¹ See in Chaucer and the older poets, the honors formerly paid to the daisy.—Wordsworth.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE ¹

PANSIES, Lilies, Kingcups, Daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
5 Long as there are Violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
10 For the finding of a star;
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout!
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
15 Little flower!—I'll make a stir,
Like a great astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;
Since we needs must first have met
20 I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

¹ Common pilewort.—Wordsworth.

25 Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the Thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
30 Like a careless prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood!
Travel with the multitude:
35 Never heed them; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers;
But the thrifty Cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home;
40 Spring is coming, Thou art come!

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighborhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
45 On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane—there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow Flowers,
50 Children of the flaring hours!

Buttercups, that will be seen,
Whether we will see or no;
Others, too, of lofty mien;
They have done as worldings do,
55 Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine!

“I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD”

I WANDERED lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils;
5 Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
10 Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
15 A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
20 In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.

TO A SKYLARK

UP with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
5 With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
10 Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There's madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
15 To thy banqueting-place in the sky.

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
20 Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveler as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain River
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
25 Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
30 I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when Life's day is
done.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

“WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

5 “Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

“You look round on your mother Earth,
10 As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!”

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
15 To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

“The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
20 Against, or with our will.

“Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

25 “Think you, ’mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

“—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
30 Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away.”

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

UP! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
UP! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

5 The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening luster mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
10 Come, hear the woodland Linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the Thristle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
15 Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
20 Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

25 Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:
—We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
30 Close up these barren leaves:
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

TO HARTLEY COLERIDGE

SIX YEARS OLD

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
5 Thou faery Voyager! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthy stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
10 Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed Vision! happy Child!
That art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

15 I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality;
And Grief, uneasy Lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
O too industrious folly!
20 O vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young Lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.

25 What hast Thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?
Thou art a Dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks;
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
30 A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

“O NIGHTINGALE, THOU SURELY ART”

O NIGHTINGALE! thou surely art
A Creature of a fiery heart;—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
5 Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
10 Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
15 He did not cease; but cooed—and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
20 That was the Song—the Song for me!

“STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I
KNOWN”

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befel.

5 When she I loved was strong and gay,
And like a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath the evening Moon.

Upon the Moon I fixed my eye,
10 All over the wide lea;
My Horse trudged on—and we drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
15 Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
The Moon descended still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
20 On the descending Moon.

My Horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright Moon dropped.

- 25 What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!—
“O mercy!” to myself I cried,
“If Lucy should be dead!”

“THREE YEARS SHE GREW”

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, “A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take;
5 She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

“Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
10 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

“She shall be sportive as the Fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
15 Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

“The floating Clouds their state shall lend
20 To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden’s form
By silent sympathy.

25 "The Stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where Rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
30 Shall pass into her face.

And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
35 While she and I together live
Here in this happy Dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
40 This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

“SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN
WAYS”

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

5 A Violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
10 When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

“A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL”

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

- 5 No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees,
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

“I TRAVELED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN”

I TRAVELED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

5 'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
10 The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
15 And thine is too the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

TO THE CUCKOO

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.

O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

5 While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only, to the Vale,
10 Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
15 No Bird: but an invisible Thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my School-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
20 In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

25 And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again. .

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
30 Again appears to be
An unsubstantial faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

TO A SKYLARK

ETHEREAL Minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
5 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring Warbler! that love-prompted strain,
(’Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
10 Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might’st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the Nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
15 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

“SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT”

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
5 Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
10 To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
15 A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
20 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveler between life and death;

- 25 The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
30 With something of an angel light.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
5 Alone she cuts, and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chant
10 So sweetly to reposing bands
Of Travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
15 Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
20 And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

25 Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened till I had my fill,
30 And when I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

YARROW UNVISITED

(See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the Banks of the Yarrow ; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton, beginning

“Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow !”—)

FROM Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unraveled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had traveled;
5 And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my “*winsome Marrow,*”
“Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow.”

“Let Yarrow Folk, *frae* Selkirk Town,
10 Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, ’tis their own;
Each Maiden to her Dwelling!
On Yarrow’s banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
15 But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

“There’s Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
20 The Lintwhites sing in chorus;

There's pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
 Made blithe with plough and harrow:
 Why throw away a needful day
 To go in search of Yarrow?

- 25 "What's Yarrow but a River bare,
 That glides the dark hills under?
 There are a thousand such elsewhere
 As worthy of your wonder."
 —Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
 30 My True-love sighed for sorrow;
 And looked me in the face, to think
 I thus could speak of Yarrow!

- "Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's Holms,
 And sweet is Yarrow's flowing!
 35 Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,¹
 But we will leave it growing.
 O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
 We'll wander Scotland thorough;
 But, though so near, we will not turn
 40 Into the Dale of Yarrow.

- "Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
 The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
 The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
 Float double, swan and shadow!
 45 We will not see them; will not go,

¹ See Hamiltons's Ballad as above.

To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

“Be Yarrow Stream unseen, unknown!
50 It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
55 For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow.

“If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
60 And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny Holms of Yarrow!”

YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER, 1814

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
5 O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—a silvery current flows
10 With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
15 For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
20 A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

25 Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And happy from this crystal pool,
30 Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
35 The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
40 Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
45 Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That Region left, the Vale unfolds
50 Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature;

And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!

55 The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;

For manhood to enjoy his strength;
60 And age to wear away in!

Yon Cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection

Of tender thoughts that nestle there,
The brood of chaste affection.

65 How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!

And what if I enwreathed my own!

70 Twere no offence to reason;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;

75 A ray of Fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee!

Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;

And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,

80 Accordant to the measure.

The vapors linger around the Heights,
They melt—and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
85 But that I know, wher'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

YARROW REVISITED

[The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day spent with Sir Walter Scott, and other Friends visiting the Banks of the Yarrow under his guidance, immediately before his departure from Abbotsford for Naples.]

THE gallant Youth, who may have gained,
Or seeks, a "winsome Marrow,"
Was but an infant in the lap
When first I looked on Yarrow;
5 Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border!

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
10 Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling;
But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
15 Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
In foamy agitation;
And slept in many a crystal pool
20 For quiet contemplation:

No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

25 Brisk Youth appeared, the Morn of youth,
With freaks of graceful folly—
Life's Temperate Noon, her sober Eve,
Her Night not melancholy;
Past, present, future, all appeared
30 In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
35 Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing;
If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
40 Its brightness to recover.

Eternal blessings on the Muse,
And her divine employment!
The blameless Muse, who trains her Sons
For hope and calm enjoyment;
45 Albeit sickness, lingering yet,
Has o'er their pillow brooded;
And Care waylays their steps—a Sprite
Not easily eluded.

For thee, O SCOTT! compelled to change
 50 Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
 For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes,
 And leave thy Tweed and Teviot
 For mild Sorrento's breezy waves;
 May classic Fancy, linking
 55 With native Fancy her fresh aid,
 Preserve thy heart from sinking!

O! while they minister to thee,
 Each vying with the other,
 May Health return to mellow Age
 60 With Strength her venturous brother;
 And Tiber, and each brook and rill
 Renowned in song and story,
 With unimagined beauty shine,
 Nor lose one ray of glory!

65 For Thou, upon a hundred streams,
 By tales of love and sorrow,
 Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
 Hast shed the power of Yarrow;
 And streams unknown, hills yet unseen,
 70 Wherever they invite Thee,
 At parent Nature's grateful call,
 With gladness must requite Thee.

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
 Such looks of love and honor
 75 As thy own Yarrow gave to me
 When first I gazed upon her;

Beheld what I had feared to see,
Unwilling to surrender
Dreams treasured up from early days,
80 The holy and the tender.

And what, for this frail world, were all
That mortals do or suffer,
Did no responsive harp, no pen,
Memorial tribute offer?
85 Yea, what were mighty Nature's self?
Her features, could they win us,
Unhelped by the poetic voice
That hourly speaks within us?

Nor deem that localized Romance
90 Plays false with our affections;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
For fanciful dejections:
Oh, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
95 Life as she is—our changeful Life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, Ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centered;
Who through the silent portal arch
100 Of mouldering Newark enter'd;
And clomb the winding stair that once
Too timidly was mounted
By the "last Minstrel," (not the last!)
Ere he his Tale recounted.

105 Flow on for ever, Yarrow Stream!
Fulfil thy pensive duty,
Well pleased that future Bards should chant
For simple hearts thy beauty;
To dream-light dear while yet unseen,
110 Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine!

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

I SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapors breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
5 So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here
10 I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight!—away
Dark thoughts!—they came, but not to stay;
15 With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower, whose modest worth
20 He sang, his genius "glinted" forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

25 The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
 The stuggling heart, where be they now?—
 Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
 The prompt, the brave,
 Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
 30 And silent grave.

Well might I mourn that He was gone,
 Whose light I hail'd when first it shone
 When, breaking forth as nature's own,
 It showed my youth
 35 How Verse may build a princely throne
 On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
 Regret pursues and with it blends,—
 Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
 40 By Skiddaw seen,—
 Neighbors we were, and loving friends
 We might have been:

True friends though diversely inclined;
 But heart with heart and mind with mind,
 45 Where the main fibers are entwined,
 Through Nature's skill,
 May even by contraries be joined
 More closely still.

The tear will start, and let it flow;
 50 Thou "poor Inhabitant below,"

At this dread moment—even so—
 Might we together
 Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
 Or on wild heather.

55 What treasures would have then been placed
 Within my reach; of knowledge graced
 By fancy what a rich repast!
 But why go on?—
 Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
 60 His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
 (Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
 Lies gathered to his Father's side,
 Soul-moving sight!
 65 Yet one to which is not denied
 Some sad delight.

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
 Hath early found among the dead,
 Harbored where none can be misled,
 70 Wronged, or distress;
 And surely here it may be said
 That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
 Checked oft-times in a devious race,

75 May He, who halloweth the place
Where Man is laid,
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
80 Night fell, I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chaunted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.

IV

POEMS AKIN TO THE ANTIQUE AND ODES

LAODAMEIA

“WITH sacrifice, before the rising morn
Performed, my slaughtered Lord have I required;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal Gods have I desired:
5 Celestial pity I again implore:—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!”

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her
hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
10 Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
15 Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—’tis He!
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his
wand

20 That calms all fear: “Such grace hath crowned
thy prayer,

Laodameia! that at Jove’s command

Thy husband walks the paths of upper air:

He comes to tarry with thee three hours’ space:

Accept the gift, behold him face to face!”

25 Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord
to clasp:

Again that consummation she essayed:

But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp

As often as that eager grasp was made.

The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,

30 And re-assume his place before her sight.

“Protesilaos, lo! thy guide is gone!

Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:

This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne;

Speak, and the floor thou tread’st on will rejoice.

35 Not to appal me have the Gods bestowed

This precious boon; and blest a sad abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodameia! doth not leave

His gifts imperfect:—Specter though I be,

I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;

40 But in reward of thy fidelity.

And something also did my worth obtain;

For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

“Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan
strand

45 Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

“Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best!

50 Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found’st—and I forgive thee—here thou
art—

A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

55 “But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou should’st cheat the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
60 As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

“No Specter greets me—no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!”

65 Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ
threw

Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
 Know, virtue were not virtue, if the joys
 Of sense were able to return as fast
 70 And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
 Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
 Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
 Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
 75 The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
 A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
 Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
 When I depart, for brief is my sojourn——"

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
 80 Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
 Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
 Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
 Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
 And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

85 "The Gods to us are merciful—and they
 Yet further may relent: for mightier far
 Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the
 sway
 Of magic potent over sun and star,
 Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
 90 And though his favorite seat be feeble woman's
 breast.

“But if thou goest, I follow——” “Peace!” he
said.—

She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly color from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
95 Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
100 The past unsigh'd for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty: more pellucid streams,
105 An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
110 That privilege by virtue.—“Ill,” said he,
“The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

115 “And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)

Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
 By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
 Chieftains and kings in counsel were detained;
 120 What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

“The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
 The oracle, upon the silent sea;
 And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
 That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
 125 The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
 Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

“Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
 When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!
 On thee too fondly did my memory hang.
 130 And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
 The paths which we have trod—these fountains,
 flowers;
 My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

“But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
 ‘Behold they tremble!—haughty their array
 135 Yet of their number no one dares to die’?
 In soul I swept the indignity away:
 Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
 In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

“And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak;
 140 In reason, in self-government too slow;
 I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
 Our blest re-union in the shades below.

The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

145 Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Towards a higher object.—Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
150 The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”——

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-appears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—
'tis vain

The hours are past—too brief had they been
years—

And him no mortal effort can detain:

155 Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly
day,

He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,

160 Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
Delivered from the galling yoke of time
And these frail elements—to gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;

165 And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown

Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew

170 From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight:
A constant interchange of growth and blight!

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
5 Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
10 Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
15 In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
20 Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
25 As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.

—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
 Upon that law as on the best of friends;
 Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
 30 To evil for a guard against worse ill,
 And what in quality or act is best
 Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
 He fixes good on good alone, and owes
 To virtue every triumph that he knows:
 35 —Who, if he rise to station of command,
 Rises by open means; and there will stand
 On honorable terms, or else retire,
 And in himself possess his own desire;
 Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
 40 Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
 And therefore does not stop, nor lie in wait
 For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
 Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
 Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
 45 Whose powers shed round him in the common
 strife,
 Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
 A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
 But who, if he be called upon to face
 Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
 50 Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
 Is happy as a lover; and attired
 With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
 And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
 In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
 55 Or if an unexpected call succeed,

Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
60 To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
65 'Tis, finally, the man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
70 Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
75 Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpass:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must go to dust without his fame,
80 And leave a dead unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist in gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is he
85 Whom every man in arms should wish to be.

ODE TO DUTY

“Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eò perductus, ut non tantum
rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim.”

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
5 Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
10 Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
15 Long may the kindly impulse last!
But Thou, if they should totter, teach them to
stand fast!

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
20 And joy its own security.

And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their
 need.

25 I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust;
And oft, when in my heart was heard
30 Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
35 I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
40 I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
45 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;

Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee,
are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
50 I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
55 The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live!

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY
FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and
stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
5 The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no
more.

II

10 The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose;
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
15 Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the
earth.

III

Now, while the Birds thus sing a joyous song,
20 And while the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
25 The Cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
30 Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou child of joy,
35 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou
happy Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see,
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
40 My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
O evil day! if I were sullen
While the Earth herself is adorning
This sweet May-morning,

45 And the children are pulling
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
 50 And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
 —But there's a Tree, of many one,
 A single Field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone;
 55 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat:
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 60 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 65 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 70 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the East

Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 75 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 80 And even with something of a mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 85 And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his Mother's kisses,
 90 With light upon him from his Father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 95 A mourning or a funeral,
 And this hath now his heart,
 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 100 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
 The little Actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
 105 With all the persons, down to palsied age,
 That Life brings with her in her equipage;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 110 Thy soul's immensity;
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 115 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest,
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy immortality
 120 Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
 A presence which is not to be put by;
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 125 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,

Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy soul shall have her earthy freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

- 130 O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!
- The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 135 Perpetual benediction: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest;
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his
 breast:—
- 140 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 145 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realised,
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
 But for those first affections,
 150 Those shadowy recollections,
 Which, be they what they may,

Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing;

Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make

155 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,

To perish never;

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,

Nor Man nor Boy,

160 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,

Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence, in a season of calm weather,

Though inland far we be,

Our souls have sight of that immortal sea

165 Which brought us hither,

Can in a moment travel thither,

And see the children sport upon the shore,

And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!

170 And let the young Lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound!

We in thought will join your throng,

Ye that pipe and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts to-day

175 Feel the gladness of the May!

What though the radiance which was once so bright

Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour

Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;

180 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be,
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 185 Out of human suffering,
 In the faith that looks through death,
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
 Think not of any severing of our loves!
 190 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
 I only have relinquished one delight
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
 195 The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
 Is lovely yet;
 The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
 Do take a sober coloring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
 200 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

V

SONNETS

I

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honors; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
5 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
Camöens soothed with it an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
10 It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

II

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room,
And Hermits are contented with their cells,
And Students with their pensive citadels:
Maids at the wheel, the Weaver at his loom,
5 Sit blithe and happy; Bees that soar for bloom,

High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,
 Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
 In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
 10 In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
 Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground:
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must
 be)
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
 Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

III

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS,
 AUGUST, 1802

FAIR Star of Evening, Splendor of the West,
 Star of my country!—on the horizon's brink
 Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
 On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
 5 Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
 Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
 Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st
 wink,
 Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
 In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
 10 Beneath thee, it is England; there it lies.
 Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
 One life, one glory! I with many a fear
 For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
 Among Men who do not love her, linger here.

IV

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;
 And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
 Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.

5 She was a Maiden City, bright and free;
 No guile seduced, no force could violate;
 And, when She took unto herself a Mate,
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
 And what if she had seen those glories fade,
 10 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
 When her long life hath reached its final day:
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
 Of that which once was great, is passed away.

V

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy Man of Men!
 Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
 Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
 Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
 5 O miserable Chieftain! where and when
 Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
 Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
 Though fallen Thyself, never to rise again,
 Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind

10 Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and
skies;

There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and Man's unconquerable mind.

VI

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF
SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age Thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen Music, Liberty!

5 There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against Him; but hast vainly
striven:

Thou from the Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:

10 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That mountain Floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

VII

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our Life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
5 Or groom!—We must run glittering like a Brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
10 This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

VIII

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
5 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
10 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

IX

London, 1802

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 5 Have forfeited their ancient English dower
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
 10 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

X

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
 Of British freedom, which to the open Sea
 Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
 Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
 5 Roused though it be full often to a mood
 Which spurns the check of salutary bands,

That this most famous Stream in Bogs and Sands
 Should perish; and to evil and to good
 Be lost for ever. In our Halls is hung
 10 Armory of the invincible Knights of old:
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals
 hold
 Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

XI

TO THE MEN OF KENT, OCTOBER, 1803

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye Men of Kent,
 Ye children of a soil that doth advance
 Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
 Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
 5 To France be words of invitation sent!
 They from their fields can see the countenance
 Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
 And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
 Left single, in bold parley, Ye, of yore,
 10 Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
 Confirmed the charters that were yours before;—
 No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
 We all are with you now from shore to shore:—
 Ye Men of Kent, 'tis Victory or Death!

XII

IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY, AN INVASION
BEING EXPECTED, OCTOBER, 1803

SIX thousand Veterans practised in War's game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and Herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind
came

5 The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the
load

Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry

10 Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.

O for a single hour of that Dundee,

Who on that day the word of onset gave!

Like conquest would the Men of England see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

XIII

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou should'st
wean

Thy heart from its emasculating food;

The truth should now be better understood;

Old things have been unsettled; we have seen

5 Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,

If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, Thou would'st step
 between.

England! all nations in this charge agree:

10 But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,

Far, far more abject is thine Enemy:

Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the
 freight

Of thy offences be a heavy weight;

Oh grief, that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee!

XIV

NOVEMBER, 1806

ANOTHER year!—another deadly blow!

Another mighty Empire overthrown!

And We are left, or shall be left, alone;

The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.

5 'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know

That in ourselves our safety must be sought;

That by our own right hands it must be wrought,

That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.

O Dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!

10 We shall exult, if they who rule the land

Be men who hold its many blessings dear,

Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,

Who are to judge of danger which they fear,

And honor which they do not understand.

XV

CATHERINE WORDSWORTH

(DIED JUNE 4, 1812)

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
 I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom
 But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
 That spot which no vicissitude can find?
 5 Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
 But how could I forget thee? Through what
 power,
 Even for the least division of an hour,
 Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
 To my most grievous loss?—That thought's
 return
 10 Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
 Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
 Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
 That neither present time, nor years unborn
 Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

XVI

PERSONAL TALK

I AM not One who much or oft delight
 To season my fireside with personal talk,—
 Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
 Or neighbors, daily, weekly, in my sight:
 5 And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,

Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
10 Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

XVII

CONTINUED

WINGS have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
5 Dreams, books, are each a world; and books,
we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and
blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
10 Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

XVIII

CONCLUDED

NOR can I not believe but that hereby
 Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
 From evil-speaking; rancor, never sought,
 Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
 5 Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
 Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous
 thought:
 And thus from day to day my little boat
 Rocks in its harbor, lodging peaceably.
 Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
 10 Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
 The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
 Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
 Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
 Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

XIX

TO SLEEP

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
 One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
 Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
 Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky
 5 By turns have all been thought of, yet I lie
 Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
 Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;

And the first Cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,

10 And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:

So do not let me wear to-night away:

Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?

Come, blessed barrier between day and day,

Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

XX

COMPOSED UPON THE BEACH NEAR CALAIS, 1802

It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free;

The holy time is quiet as a Nun

Breathless with adoration; the broad sun

Is sinking down in its tranquillity;

5 The gentleness of heaven is on the sea:

Listen! the mighty Being is awake,

And doth with his eternal motion make

A sound like thunder—everlastingly.

Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,

10 If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,

Thy nature is not therefore less divine:

Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;

And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,

God being with thee when we know it not.

XXI

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE
SEPT. 3, 1803

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
5 The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
10 In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

XXII

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm
regret
Yon slowly-sinking star—immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire!
Blue ether still surrounds him—yet—and yet;
5 But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns—transmuted to a sullen fire,

That droops and dwindles—and the appointed
debt

To the flying moments paid, is seen no more.

10 Angels and gods! *we* struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, pitiably decline,
Depressed and then extinguished: and our state
In this how different, lost star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!

XXIII

WANSFELL!¹ this Household has a favored lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her
rays,

Or when along thy breast serenely float

5 Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.

Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone

10 From every object dear to mortal sight,
As soon we shall be, may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

¹ The hill that rises to the south-east, above Ambleside.

XXIV

AFTER-THOUGHT

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
 As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
 For backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
 I see what was, and is, and will abide;
 5 Still glides the Stream, and shall not cease to
 glide;
 The Form remains, the Function never dies;
 While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
 We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
 The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
 10 Enough, if something from our hands have power
 To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
 And if, as tow'rd the silent tomb we go,
 Through love, through hope, and faith's trans-
 cendent dower,
 We feel that we are greater than we know.

XXV

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,
 With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned,
 Albeit laboring for a scanty band
 Of white robed Scholars only, this immense
 5 And glorious work of fine intelligence!
 Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore

Of nicely-calculated less or more;
 So deemed the Man who fashioned for the sense
 These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
 10 Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
 Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
 Lingerin—and wandering on as loth to die;
 Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth
 proof
 That they were born for immortality.

XXVI

CONTINUED

THEY dreamt not of a perishable home
 Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
 Or groveling thought, to seek a refuge here;
 Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
 5 Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
 Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
 Of awe-struck wisdom droops:—or let my path
 Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
 Hath typified by reach of daring art
 10 Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
 The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
 As now, when She hath also seen her breast
 Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
 Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

XXVII

MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, LANDING AT THE MOUTH
OF THE DERWENT, WORKINGTON

DEAR to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed,
The Queen drew back the wimple that she wore;
And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian shore
Her landing hailed, how touchingly she bowed!
5 And like a Star (that, from a heavy cloud
Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth darts
When a soft summer gale at evening parts
The gloom that did its loveliness enshroud)
She smiled: but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
10 Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
With step prelusive to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay!

XXVIII

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM
ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
5 For kindred Power departing from their sight;

While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe
strain,

Saddens his voice again and yet again.

Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;

10 Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptered king or laureled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

XXIX

THE pibroch's note, discountenanced or mute;
The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy

Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy;

The target mouldering like ungathered fruit;

5 The smoking steam-boat eager in pursuit,

As eagerly pursued; the umbrella spread

To weather-fend the Celtic herdsmen's head—

All speak of manners withering to the root,

And of old honors, too, and passions high:

10 Then may we ask, though pleased that thought
should range

Among the conquests of civility,

Survives imagination—to the change

Superior? Help to virtue does she give?

If not, O Mortals, better cease to live!

XXX

A POET!—He hath put his heart to school,
 Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
 Which Art hath lodged within his hand—must
 laugh

By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
 5 Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
 And let the groveler sip his stagnant pool,
 In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
 Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
 How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
 10 Because the lovely little flower is free
 Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
 And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
 Comes not by casting in a formal mould
 But from its *own* divine vitality.

XXXI

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT

CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
 Who may respect my name, that I to thee
 Owed many years of early liberty.
 This care was thine when sickness did condemn
 5 Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem—
 That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
 Where'er I liked; and finally array
 My temples with the Muse's diadem.
 Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;

10 If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
 In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
 Of higher mood which now I meditate;—
 It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
 To think how much of this will be thy praise.

XXXII

TO LADY FITZGERALD, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR

SUCH age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
 Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
 By favoring Nature and a saintly Mind
 To something purer and more exquisite
 5 Than flesh and blood; whene'er thou meet'st
 my sight,
 When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
 Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
 And head that droops because the soul is meek,
 Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
 10 That child of winter, prompting thoughts that
 climb
 From desolation toward the genial prime;
 Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
 And filling more and more with crystal light
 As pensive Evening deepens into night.

XXXIII

“THERE!” said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
 Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
 “Is Mosgiel Farm; and that’s the very field
 Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy.” Far and
 wide

- 5 A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
 Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
 And, by that simple notice, the repose
 Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
 Beneath “the random *biold* of clod or stone”
 10 Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
 Near the lark’s nest, and in their natural hour
 Have passed away; less happy than the One
 That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
 The tender charm of poetry and love.

XXXIV

IN SIGHT OF THE TOWN OF COCKERMOUTH

Where the Author was born, and his Father’s remains are laid.

A POINT of life between my Parents’ dust,
 And yours, my buried Little-ones! am I;
 And to those graves looking habitually
 In kindred quiet I repose my trust.

- 5 Death to the innocent is more than just,
 And, to the sinner, mercifully bent;
 So may I hope, if truly I repent
 And meekly bear the ill’s which bear I must:

And You, my Offspring! that do still remain,
10 Yet may outstrip me in the appointed race,
If e'er, through fault of mine, in mutual pain
We breathed together for a moment's space,
The wrong, by love provoked, let love arraign,
And only love keep in your hearts a place

XXXV

DEATH

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapors from mine eyes did
shroud—

Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
5 With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on: a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that
cloud,

“Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan.”

I seem'd to mount those steps; the vapors gave
10 Smooth way: and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

REFLECTIVE AND ELEGIAC POEMS

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IM-
AGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

WISDOM and Spirit of the Universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
5 By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things,
10 With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
15 Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon; and mid the calm of summer nights,
20 When, by the margin of the trembling Lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, I homeward went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;

'Twas mine among the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
25 And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons:—happy time
It was indeed for all of us; for me
30 It was a time of rapture!—Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
35 Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
40 Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
45 Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay,—or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
50 To cut across the reflex of a Star;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed

Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
55 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning
still

The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
60 With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

YEW-TREES

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore,
Not loth to furnish weapons for the Bands
5 Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the
sea

And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.

Of vast circumference and gloom profound

10 This solitary Tree!—a living thing

Produced too slowly ever to decay;

Of form and aspect too magnificent

To be destroyed. But worthier still of note

Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,

15 Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;

Huge trunks!—and each particular trunk a
growth

Of intertwined fibers serpentine

Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved,—

Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks

20 That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,

Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,

By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged

Perennially—beneath whose sable roof

Of boughs as if for festal purpose decked

- 25 With unrejoicing berries—ghostly shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight, Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
- 30 With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY,
ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING
A TOUR, JULY 13, 1798

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the
length

Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a sweet inland murmur.—Once again

5 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose
10 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-
tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
Among the woods and copses, nor disturb

15 The wild green landscape. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

20 With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,

Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beautiful Forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
 25 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 30 And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
 35 His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
 40 In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 45 And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 50 We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
55 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished
thought,

60 With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
65 That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when
first

I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
70 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
75 And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
80 Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
85 And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
90 To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
95 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
100 A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I
still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
105 And mountains; and of all that we behold

From this green earth; of all the mighty world
 Of eye and ear, both what they half create,¹
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 110 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
 115 For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 120 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
 125 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 130 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all

¹“This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young, the exact expression of which I do not recollect.”—

Wordsworth

The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
135 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee: and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
140 Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
145 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these
gleams
150 Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
155 With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
160 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

FRENCH REVOLUTION

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS COMMENCEMENT

OH! pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars, which then stood
Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
5 But to be young was very heaven!—Oh! times,
In which the meager, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in Romance!
When Reason seemed the most to assert her
rights

10 When most intent on making of herself
A prime enchantress—to assist the work,
Which then was going forward in her name!
Not favored spots alone, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise—that which sets
15 (As at some moment might not be unfelt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of? The inert
20 Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty and strength

Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirred
25 Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right
To wield it; they, too, who, of gentle mood,
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
30 Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more
mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves;—
Now was it that *both* found, the Meek and Lofty
Did both find helpers to their heart's desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish;
35 Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia, subterranean Fields,
Or some secreted Island, Heaven knows where!
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where in the end
40 We find our happiness, or not at all!

FRAGMENT FROM *THE RECLUSE*

ON Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
5 Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
10 —To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself,
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope—
15 And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
20 Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all;
I sing:—"fit audience let me find though few!"

So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard,
25 Holiest of Men.—Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such

Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
30 To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form;
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
35 I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
40 Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man,
My haunt, and the main region of my song.
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
45 From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbor. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
50 A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
55 A simple produce of the common day.
I, long before the blissful hour arrives,

Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation:—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
60 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
65 Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too,
Theme this but little heard of among Men,
The external World is fitted to the Mind;
And the creation (by no lower name
70 Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish:—this is our high argument.
—Such grateful haunts forgoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
75 Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
80 Within the walls of Cities; may these sounds
Have their authentic comment,—that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!
—Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspirest
The human Soul of universal earth,
85 Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan Temple in the hearts

Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
90 Shedding benignant influence,—and secure,
Itself, from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with
this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
95 Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating, and who, and what he was,
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision,—when and where, and how he
lived;—
Be not this labor useless. If such theme
100 May sort with highest objects, then, dread Power,
Whose gracious favor is the primal source
Of all illumination, may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
105 My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR

“The class of Beggars, to which the Old Man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighborhood, and had certain fixed days on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.”—
Wordsworth

I SAW an aged Beggar in my walk;
And he was seated, by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
5 Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged Man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
That overlays the pile; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
10 He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one;
And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
15 He sat, and ate his food in solitude:
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds,
20 Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known; and
then

He was so old, he seems not older now;

He travels on, a solitary Man,

25 So helpless in appearance, that for him

The sauntering horseman-traveler does not throw
With careless hand his alms upon the ground,

But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,

30 But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Watches the aged Beggar with a look

Sidelong—and half-reverted. She who tends

The toll-gate, when in summer at her door

She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees

35 The aged Beggar coming, quits her work,

And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.

The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,

Shouts to him from behind; and, if thus warned

40 The old Man does not change his course, the boy

Turns with less noisy wheels to the roadside,

And passes gently by—without a curse

Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man;

45 His age has no companion. On the ground

His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,

They move along the ground; and, evermore,

Instead of common and habitual sight

Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,

50 And the blue sky, one little span of earth

Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,
55 Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveler!
His staff trails with him; scarcely do his feet
60 Disturb the summer dust; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he have passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
65 And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by;
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
70 To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contem-
plate
Your talents, power, and wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth! 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
75 Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being

Inseparably linked. While thus he creeps
80 From door to door, the Villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years
85 And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
90 Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
95 By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness. Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
100 And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds
In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
105 Or the solitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man

Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
110 That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in him
115 A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and perchance,
120 Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he at least—
And 'tis no vulgar service—makes them felt.

125 Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
130 Are strict observers; and not negligent,
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor;
135 Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,

Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?

No—Man is dear to Man; the poorest poor

140 Long for some moments in a weary life

When they can know and feel that they have been,

Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out

Of some small blessings; have been kind to such

As needed kindness, for this single cause,

145 That we have all of us one human heart.

—Such pleasure is to one kind being known,

My neighbor, when with punctual care, each week

Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself

By her own wants, she from her store of meal

150 Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip

Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door

Returning with exhilarated heart,

Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!

155 And while in that vast solitude to which

The tide of things has borne him, he appears

To breathe and live but for himself alone,

Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about

The good which the benignant law of Heaven

160 Has hung around him: and, while life is his,

Still let him prompt the unlettered Villagers

To tender offices and pensive thoughts.

—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!

And, long as he can wander, let him breathe

165 The freshness of the valleys; let his blood

Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;

And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his gray locks against his withered face.

Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness

170 Gives the last human interest to his heart!

May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,

Make him a captive! for that pent-up din,

Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,

Be his the natural silence of old age!

175 Let him be free of mountain solitudes;

And have around him, whether heard or not,

The pleasant melody of woodland birds.

Few are his pleasures: if his eyes have now

Been doomed so long to settle on the earth

180 That not without some effort they behold

The countenance of the horizontal sun,

Rising or setting, let the light at least

Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.

And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down

185 Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank

Of highway side, and with the little birds

Share his chance-gathered meal; and, finally,

As in the eye of Nature he has lived,

So in the eye of Nature let him die!

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY

A SKETCH

THE little hedgerow birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression; every limb,
5 His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
Long patience hath such mild composure given,
10 That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect, that the young behold
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.

NUTTING

IT seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days which cannot die;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
5 I left our Cottage-threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,
A nutting-crook in hand, and turned my steps
Toward the distant woods, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
10 Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame;
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth,
More ragged than need was! Among the woods,
15 And o'er the pathless rocks, I forced my way
Until, at length, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation, but the hazels rose
20 Tall and erect, with milk-white clusters hung,
A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
25 The banquet,—or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
A temper known to those, who, after long

And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.—
30 Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever,—and I saw the sparkling foam,
35 And with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, beneath the shady trees,
Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep,
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
40 Tribute to ease; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough,
with crash
45 And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being: and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past,
50 Even then, when from the bower I turned away
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees and the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden! move along these shades
55 In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S
CASTLE OF INDOLENCE

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One¹
Whom without blame I may not overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
5 Here on his hours he hung as on a book;
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;
But go to-morrow—or belike the day—
Seek for him,—he is fled; and whither none can
say.

10 Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam:
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighboring height:
15 Oft did we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah! piteous sight it was to see this Man
20 When he came back to us, a withered flower,—

¹ S. T. Coleridge.

Or, like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit; and without strength or power
Look at the common grass from hour to hour:
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
25 Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay;
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle Tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew;
30 For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo:
Some thought far worse of him, and judged him
wrong:
But Verse was what he had been wedded to;
35 And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight
along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable man with large gray eyes,
40 And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear
Deprest by weight of musing Phantasy;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe;
45 Yet some did think that he had little business
here:

Sweet heaven forefend! his was a lawful right;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy;
His limbs would toss about him with delight
Like branches when strong winds the trees annoy.

50 Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care;
He would have taught you how you might employ
Yourself; and many did to him repair,—
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

55 Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried:
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as he lay,
Made—to his ear attentively applied—
A Pipe on which the wind would deftly play;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
60 A mailèd angel on a battle day;
The mysteries that cups of flowers enfold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do behold.

He would entice that other Man to hear
65 His music, and to view his imagery:
And, sooth, these two did love each other dear,
As far as love in such a place could be;
There did they dwell—from earthly labor free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen;
70 If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden
Queen.

THE FOUNTAIN

A CONVERSATION

WE talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of Friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

5 We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

“Now, Matthew!” said I, “let us match
10 This water’s pleasant tune
With some old Border-song, or Catch,
That suits a summer’s noon;

“Or of the Church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
15 That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!”

In Silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old man replied,
20 The gray-haired man of glee:

“Down to the vale this water steers,
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

25 And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this Fountain's brink.

“My eyes are dim with childish tears,
30 My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

“Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
35 Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

“The Blackbird in the summer trees,
The Lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
40 Are quiet when they will.

“With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

45 "But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
50 His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
55 And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
60 Upon these happy plains,

"And, Matthew, for thy Children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

65 We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's-rock,
70 He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

A POET'S EPITAPH

ART thou a Statesman, in the van
Of public business trained and bred?
—First learn to love one living man;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

5 A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh!
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer?
10 A rosy Man, right plump to see?
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier, and no man of chaff?
15 Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? One, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
20 Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
That abject thing, thy soul, away!

25 A Moralist perchance appears;
Lad, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod:
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling,
30 Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
35 Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
40 A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove:
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

45 The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
50 Some random truths he can impart;—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
55 Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

—Come hither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
60 Or build thy house upon this grave!

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH
OF JAMES HOGG

NOVEMBER, 1835

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

5 When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
10 Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its stedfast course,
15 Since every mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
20 Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
 Or waves that own no curbing hand,
 How fast has brother followed brother,
 From sunshine to the sunless land!

25 Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
 Were earlier raised, remain to hear
 A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
 "Who next will drop and disappear?"

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
 30 Like London with its own black wreath,
 On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking
 I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
 Thou too art gone before; but why,
 35 O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
 Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
 Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
 For Her¹ who, ere her summer faded,
 40 Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
 For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid!
 With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
 And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

¹ Mrs. Hemans.

NOTES AND COMMENT ON ARNOLD'S ESSAY ON WORDSWORTH

(Heavy numerals refer to page; light ones to line)

1, 1. Lord Macaulay. Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859), although educated for the bar and for many years a member of the House of Commons, divided his labors between history, literature, and practical politics. His best known poems are the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, his greatest prose work a *History of England*. Master of a powerful and vivid style, he is said to have exerted more influence on the prose of the latter half of the nineteenth century than any other writer. His besetting sin, however, is positiveness and exaggeration; and elsewhere Arnold speaks of the "confident shallowness which makes him so admired by public speakers and leading-article writers, and so intolerable to all searchers for truth."

1, 18. To buy his shoe-strings. It is interesting to note that in 1835 Wordsworth, in commenting on the limited sale of his works, judged that he had up to then received not more than a total of £1000. **Scott.** The literary career of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) began as a poet; and practically all of his poetry (*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805, *Marmion*, 1808, *The Lady of the Lake*, 1810) was written before he was forty. His great novels began with *Waverley* (1814). As the creator of the historical novel, Scott's place in literature is secure. As a poet, however, the very interest in plot, setting, and character which makes the novelist supreme, lowers the poet to a permanently second rank. Although he and Wordsworth were devoted friends to the day of Scott's death, the former thought but little of his friend's poetry.

1, 22. Byron. It was when he was twenty-one that George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824) awoke one morning, as he says, to find himself famous. The occasion was the publication of two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1809). A genuine lover of beauty but often

injudicious in the pursuit of it, ostracized from England on account of society's disapproval of his conduct, Byron nursed his grievance in Italy for the last eight years of his life, and died fighting for Greek independence. "The bad boy of literature" has been posterity's label for this handsome young rebel, and "Byronic gloom" is proverbial. Although not wholly approving, Wordsworth was interested in Byron's poetry and in his revolutionary views. Byron's flippant opinion of Wordsworth's works was "Words-words."

2, 6. Coleridge. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), for thirteen years Wordsworth's most intimate friend, wrote in a little more than a year (1797-1798) practically all the poems on which his fame now rests, among them *The Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*. The unreal and fantastic spirit which inspired most of his poetry led him at length into the bog of German philosophy and metaphysics, from which the poet never really extricated himself. As critic and essayist his reputation was nearly as high as that of poet.

2, 9. Cambridge. Cambridge and Oxford are the two principal English universities. Consisting, as Cambridge does, of eighteen colleges for graduates and undergraduates alike, each having its separate building, its composition is quite different from an American university or college. Its oldest college, Peterhouse, was founded in 1284. Saint John's college, which Wordsworth attended, was founded in 1511. Among the alumni of Cambridge are the poets Spenser, Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Herrick, Dryden, Milton, Gray, Byron, Coleridge and Tennyson. Oliver Cromwell and John Harvard were also graduates.

2, 15. I remember Wordsworth relating, etc. In 1832 Dr. Thomas Arnold, distressed at the country around Rugby as "among the dullest and ugliest in England," bought a house at Fox How on the river Rotha, not far from Grasmere, and here he spent a large part of his holidays with his wife and children. At Rydal Mount a Library Book was kept containing the names of the borrowers of books from Wordsworth's library, and Matthew Arnold's name is recorded as having borrowed *Sir Charles Grandison* in 1834-5, which shows, among other things, that at ten the boy was a frequenter of the Wordsworth house.

2, 18. Guide to the Lakes. This descriptive prose account of the Lake Country (in Westmoreland, Lancaster,

and Cumberland, in the northwest of England, with the Lakes of Windermere, Coniston, Derwent, *etc.*) was first published by Wordsworth in 1820 as an appendix to "The River Duddon, a Series of Sonnets." Later it was amplified and published separately—in 1822 and in 1835.

2, 22. Tennyson. It was the two volumes of poems published in 1842 that first attracted the favorable attention of critics to the writings of Alfred, later Lord, Tennyson (1809–1892). Previous to these had come two volumes in 1830 and 1832, which were variously designated as "drivel" and as "lollipop." But the volume of 1842 contained among others *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Lotus Eaters*, *Ulysses*, *Locksley Hall*, and *Sir Galahad*. It is said that the line from *Ulysses*, "I am a part of all that I have met," so pleased the prime-minister, Sir Robert Peel, that he recommended Tennyson for an annual pension of £200. In 1850 *In Memoriam*, his masterpiece, was published, and he was chosen to succeed Wordsworth as laureate.

3, 18. Mr. Palgrave. Francis Turner Palgrave (1824–1897), poet, critic and Professor of poetry, combined remarkable sweetness of character with erudition and fine poetic sensitiveness. He was the son of Sir Francis Palgrave, a lawyer and historian, who began life as the son of a Jewish stockbroker named Cohen. In the *Golden Treasury*, his priceless collection of British verse, the selection of forty-four poems by Wordsworth gives him pre-eminence over all other poets in the number of poems chosen. The list, as far as it goes, contains few exceptions to Arnold's own. **M. Renan.** Joseph Ernest Renan's (1823–1892) brilliant and skeptical *Life of Jesus* in 1863 caused such a furor that he was removed from his chair as Professor of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac in the College of France. This position the College was glad to restore to him in 1871, and he continued to wage his iconoclastic warfare until his death. He became a member of the French Academy in 1878.

4, 14. Goethe. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1831), author of *Faust*, is the great philosophical poet whom Germany has given to the world, and is the foremost German poet of all times. He has written many beautiful lyrics, in addition to many dramas and several novels.

5, 8. Nebuchadnezzar. The second of that name (about 604–561 B. C.) was the great king of the Neo-Baby-

lonian Empire to which the Prophets and particularly the Book of Daniel refers. It was he who after its revolt captured Jerusalem and razed it to the ground (586 B. C.), an event of such memorable calamity to the Jews. He was succeeded by a weak son who was assassinated after a reign of but two years, and thus the ancient Semitic Empire abruptly collapsed.

5, 18. **Newton.** Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), the great English philosopher, made many contributions to the sciences of mathematics and physics, notably in optics, before making his revolutionizing discovery of the law of gravitation. The familiar story of Newton and the apple comes from Voltaire, who was said to have heard it from a niece of the scientist.

5, 19. **Darwin.** Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882), the naturalist, as powerfully affected the literature, philosophical and religious thought of his time, as he did the study of biology. His *Origin of Species* (1859) first announced the theory of evolution: that the species and varieties of plants and animals came into being by a process of natural selection from lower forms. What was a revolutionizing idea for his times is, of course, a commonplace of to-day.

5, 22. **Poetry.** This definition of poetry of Arnold's has frequently been quoted. In substance it suggests Wordsworth's belief in regard to "poetic diction." Compare it with other definitions of poetry: "Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity," Wordsworth; "Prose is words in their best order, poetry is the best words in the best order," Coleridge; "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds," Shelley; "Poetry is musical thought," Carlyle.

6, 8. **Biographie Universelle.** The "Biographie Universelle, Ancienne et Moderne," published in a new edition in Paris (1843-1863) in forty-five volumes, superseded the one to which Matthew Arnold referred and is still the authoritative French dictionary of biography.

6, 14. **Shakespeare** (1564-1616) and **Milton** (1608-1674). It was none other than Voltaire who called Shakespeare "an ugly ape," and said that "he was the Corneille of London, but a great fool anywhere else." And again: "Shakespeare is a savage with some imagination, whose plays can please only in London and Canada."

The antipathy to Milton shown by the Catholic French of the Bourbon period is largely accounted for by his

part, as Cromwell's secretary, in the overthrow of the Catholic House of Stuart. In his *Life of Cromwell*, Villemain speaks of Milton's career as "one of the most deplorable prostitutions of genius," and of the poet as "animated by a fiery democratic zeal."

Needless to say, these two opinions, in the one instance personal and in the other partisan, have long since been forgotten in the generous appreciation of Shakespeare and Milton by the French people.

6, 21. Corneille. Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), was one of the greatest tragic poets and dramatists of France. Modern French drama dates from *Le Cid* (1636), a romantic drama founded on the exploits of Ruy Diaz, the Spanish hero. Most of his works, however, are on classic themes. "Corneille is to Shakespeare as a clipt hedge is to a forest," was Doctor Johnson's patriotic retort when the remarks of Voltaire, cited above, were quoted to him.

6, 21. Victor Hugo (1802-1885): the greatest French poet of his time, besides being a distinguished dramatist, essayist, and novelist. He was also something of a politician, serving for a time in the French senate. In literature he was the leader of the Romantic movement during his time. His novel *Les Miserables* appeared in 1862, simultaneously in ten different languages.

7, 14. Samson Agonistes (Samson the Wrestler): a drama in the Greek style, and the last great work of Milton. It represents the Old Testament hero, blinded and bound, triumphant over the Philistines, his captors who had sent for him to make sport by feats of strength on the feast of Dagon. Finally pulling down two of the supporting pillars, he died himself in the general devastation. Although the theme is Hebraic, the form and spirit are Greek. Although he accepts his fate valiantly throughout, the blind old hero is baffled in quite Greek fashion by the inscrutable ways of God.

7, 24. Amphictyonic Court. This was a court or council of the confederated tribes or states of ancient Greece, whose duties were primarily to safeguard the temple of Apollo at Delphi and other holy property. Indirectly from this came the judicial powers of the congress, and the regulation of matters of peace and war among its members. By this term Arnold means hardly more than a "supreme court."

8, 16. Chaucer. In addition to the antiquity of Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400), Arnold doubtless had in

mind the fact that he was largely an adapter into English of French and Italian models. There is his translation of part of the *Romaunt of the Rose* from the French; his indebtedness to the Italian Boccaccio is shown in the story of *Troilus and Criseyde*, etc.; and even in *The Canterbury Tales* it is probable that Boccaccio's *Decameron* was his model. In spite of this, however, there would seem to be little doubt or difficulty in regarding Chaucer, with Shakespeare and Milton, as one of the three greatest English poets. Certainly he was the first great English poet.

8, 21. Spenser. The name of Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) emerges from "the dark backward and abysm of time" as the next poet of any importance after Chaucer. The *Faerie Queen*, with its allegorical imagery, and the melodious pastoral strain of the *Shepherd's Calendar* and other poems, have given him the name of "the poet's poet."

8, 22. Dryden. John Dryden (1631-1700), most famous as a writer of vigorous satiric and didactic verse, was the chief poet of the Restoration Period. He was also the author of numerous plays and critical essays. The satire *Mac Flecknoe*, and the lyrics *Alexander's Feast* and *A Song on St. Cecilia's Day* are among his best known shorter poems. Besides these, he has left a spirited translation of Virgil's *Æneid*.

8, 22. Pope. Like Dryden, Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was a satirist, although a less kindly one, for his physical ills and deformity seemed to sharpen his wit into the most piercing and stinging instrument in the language. Representative poems are *The Rape of the Lock*, *Essay on Man*, *The Dunciad*, and translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Pope is second only to Shakespeare in the number of his lines and phrases which have become a part of daily speech.

8, 22. Gray. Thomas Gray (1716-1771), the author of the *Elegy in a Country Church-yard*, was one of the early poets of the Romantic Movement in English literature, which later attracted Shelley, Keats, Byron, and even Wordsworth. "And melancholy marked him for her own," no less than she did the hero of his own *Elegy*.

8, 22. Goldsmith. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) was one of the many Irish men of letters who have added glory to English literature. He was a member of Doctor

Johnson's famous Literary Club, and the author of poems, of which *The Deserted Village* is the best known; plays, among them *The Good-natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*; and an immortal novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*. With Gray, his interest in his fellow men makes him a forerunner of the later Romantic school.

8, 22. Cowper. The poems of William Cowper (1731-1800), picturing the simple charms of nature and the pleasures of country life, contrasted sharply with the sophisticated poetry of Pope. *John Gilpin* is a rollicking rural ballad quite unlike the serious, earnest character of most of his verse. "God made the Country, and man made the Town" is one of his finest and most characteristic lines.

8, 22. Burns. Robert Burns (1759-1796), the national poet of Scotland, was a common farm laborer until he was twenty-eight years old. Actually as well as in spirit, this peasant-poet was a poet of the people and belongs in the forefront of the revolutionary Romanticists.

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The Man's the Gowd (gold) for a' that"

shows the democratic creed of the author of *Auld Lang Syne* and *John Anderson*.

8, 23. Campbell. Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), a Scotsman by birth, has added chiefly patriotic lyrics to English literature. Among the best known are *Ye Mariners of England* and *The Battle of the Baltic*. His poem *Hohenlinden*, celebrating the victory of the French over the Austrians at Hohenlinden, will long remain popular for the characteristic but rather commonplace grace and power of it.

8, 23. Moore. Thomas Moore (1779-1852) is to Ireland largely what Burns is to Scotland, although a poet of more limited powers and popularity. His fame now rests chiefly on his *Irish Melodies* and *National Airs* (among them *The Harp that once thro Tara's Halls*), although in his day he was as popular as Byron or Scott.

8, 23. Shelley. The unhappy domestic career of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), so similar in its results to Byron's, provoked Arnold's scandalized "What a set! what a world!" But those who knew him well idealized this greatest of English lyric poets. Before he was drowned off the coast of Italy in his twenty-ninth year,

he had left a considerable body of poems, full of the fire of revolutionary and romantic zeal. *Adonais*, an elegy on the death of his friend Keats, *Ode to the West Wind*, and *Prometheus Unbound* are among his best known poems.

8, 24. **Keats.** Of John Keats (1795-1821), Arnold has written "No one else in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has in expression quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness." Romantic in spirit but with also a love at heart for the poetry of Greece, Keats was too soon cut short from a career of singular promise and interest. On his gravestone in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome was placed, at his own wish, the epitaph "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Among his most familiar poems are *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, and *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

9, 6. **Molière.** Under this name wrote Jean Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673), certainly the greatest dramatist and possibly the greatest writer of France. His persistent attacks and satires on hypocrisy in medicine, in religion, and in society in general were presented in dramas and farces characterized by consummately clever dialogue. Among these *L'Avare*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and *Le Malade Imaginaire* are perhaps the best known.

9, 9. **Klopstock.** Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724-1803), "was a true liberator. He was the first among modern German poets who drew his inspiration from the depths of a heart beating for all humanity" (Francke). Like the English Romanticists he was stirred and inspired by the French revolution, and his work is permeated with an exalted idealism. His *Messias*, a religious oratorio, has gained him the somewhat inaccurate title of the "German Milton."

9, 9. **Lessing.** Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), the great dramatist of the reign of Frederick the Great, was even more important as a literary and particularly a dramatic critic. In the *Laokoon* he distinguished the separate provinces of the different arts. His best known dramas are *Minna von Barnhelm*, *Emilia Galotti*, and *Nathan der Weise*.

9, 10. **Schiller.** Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller's (1759-1805) friendship with Goethe was of mutual benefit, and in their years together at Weimar he wrote his best plays: *Wallenstein*, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, *Maria Stuart*, and *Wilhelm Tell*. As a German dramatist he is second only to Goethe; his poems are the

possession of every German schoolboy; and he is a historian of distinction.

9, 10. Uhland. Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862), author of many familiar songs, among them *Der gute Kamerad*, helped with Kleist, though in a quieter fashion, to continue the great Romantic spirit of Goethe and Schiller in Germany. On this account he has been called "the classic of Romanticism."

9, 10. Rückert. Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) was a German lyric poet, professor of Oriental languages, and an extraordinarily successful translator into German of Oriental and Greek tales and verses. The lyrics on which his fame depends are political verses against Napoleon, and others of a philosophical and contemplative nature.

9, 10. Heine. Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), the most interesting lyric poet of modern Germany, called himself "the last of the Romantics." Blended with a lyric love of life are a mocking spirit of irony like Voltaire's and his own native Hebrew earnestness. With this equipment he applied a wholesome caustic to the many shams and artificialities which he saw about him. Like Stevenson, he fought a brave but futile fight against ill health and disease.

9, 11. Filicaia. Vincenzio da Filicaia (1642-1707) was a patient student and the writer of patriotic odes, which in his best flights place him on a level with the foremost of Italian poets. For the most part, however, his writings seem tame and academic.

9, 11. Alfieri. Count Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803), Matthew Arnold has elsewhere called "a noble-minded, deeply-interested man, but a monotonous poet." This reflects the classical correctness of his poetic dramas. He is, however, the most important of Italian dramatic poets and he exerted a powerful influence on the literature and the unity of Italy in his own and later times. Among his works are *Cleopatra*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Saul*, his masterpiece.

9, 11. Manzoni. Alessandro Manzoni (1785-1873) author of the famous Italian historical novel *I Promessi Sposi*, wrote also many poems and dramas, the last with the least success of all. His literary efforts were mainly directed in the interests of the greater freedom of the artist from the conventional rules of his art, and to establish Tuscan as the truly literary Italian.

9, 11. Leopardi. Count Giacomo Leopardi (1798-

1837), the son of an impoverished but noble family, was an Italian lyric poet of pessimistic verses which echo his years of privation. Learned in Latin and Greek, he leaned upon the literature of these languages for a background for much of his work.

9, 12. **Racine.** Jean Racine (1639-1699) was pre-eminent as a tragic poet and dramatist, a contemporary of Boileau, Molière and Corneille. His early classical education among the Jansenist clergy at Port-royal developed a stern puritanical strain in his work which a curiously contradictory later life did not eradicate. Among his plays are *Phédre*, *Andromaque*, and *Iphigénie*.

9, 12. **Boileau.** Nicholas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711), a critic and poet of the court of Louis XIV, excelled in sensible criticism rather than in his poetry, which was ambitiously classic and for the most part commonplace. The satirical and merciless spirit of his writings is viewed to better advantage in the work of his distinguished English pupil, Alexander Pope.

9, 12. **Voltaire.** Jean F. M. Arouet (1694-1778) who wrote under the assumed name of Voltaire, led one of the most interesting lives on record. As a dramatist and philosopher, he fought sham and superstition; and against despotism and the curtailment of personal liberties his keen wit and sharp tongue were ever busy. He is doubtfully celebrated as a great atheist. If on his death bed he did murmur, "God will forgive me; that is his business," it must not be forgotten that the blessing he had publicly given the young Benjamin Franklin was, "God and Liberty."

9, 12. **André Chénier** (1762-1794): a French poet who revived old literary forms and sympathized, in theory at least, with the unfortunate Bourbon monarchy. For this latter he was, and quite unreasonably, guillotined. He was the author of classical idylls, and most famous for his later satires.

9, 13. **Béranger.** Pierre Jean de Béranger (1780-1857) was a popular French lyric poet of "love, wine, politics, sentiment, and Napoleon, whose mighty legend he did much to establish."

9, 13. **Lamartine.** Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869) was a French lyric poet, historian and statesman, his temperament fitting him far better for the first than the last two of these rôles. As a poet he has written "some of the vaguest, sweetest verse in French literature."

9, 13. **Musset.** Alfred de Musset (1810-1857) was a popular French poet, dramatist, novelist, and essayist whose fame abroad and in the present day rests principally on his lyrics. His friendship with, and later estrangement from, the woman novelist, George Sand, have filled many pages of literary history.

10, 16. **The Excursion and the Prelude.** These two poems, (first the *Prelude*, then the *Excursion*, together with a third book) were to constitute an epic unity under the title of *The Recluse*—a name ultimately given to the unfinished third part alone. These poems are autobiographic. The subject was chosen, Wordsworth says, "out of diffidence," meaning sincerely that he distrusted his own powers to write on any theme except himself. Although they are long (the *Prelude*, in fourteen books of 7893 lines), these contain some of the finest and most valuable passages in Wordsworth's poetry, and many of his best known lines. For example, "A man he seems of cheerful yesterdays, and confident to-morrows," is from the *Excursion*.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven,"

in which Wordsworth is speaking of the young French Republic, is from the *Prelude*.

10, 24. **Shakespeare frequently has lines . . . which are quite unworthy of him.** Arnold has elsewhere pointed out what he calls Shakespeare's "over-curiousness of expression," citing the lines from *Macbeth*.

"Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapped in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,"

which as writing he calls "detestable." How much of this elaborate rhetoric is Shakespeare's and how much the Sergeant's who is speaking, could, however, raise a question.

10, 28. **Elysian Fields:** the home of happy souls after death. In Homeric mythology the Elysian Fields were placed on the western margin of the earth, on the banks of the stream Oceanus. Later they became the Islands of the Blessed in the Western Ocean. As a knowledge of geography expanded, so the situation of the Fields, in order to remain inaccessible to mortals, retreated; until in Virgil's time they had safely descended to the lower

world. Wherever they were, the fields were a region of unalloyed pleasures for the fortunate heroes who were entitled to enter them.

12, 16. The classification adopted by the Greeks. In the preface to his poems in 1815 Wordsworth elaborately enumerates the five great classic divisions of poetry. This he does mainly to demonstrate how unsatisfactory they are for his purposes. They are here repeated for what they may be worth as a memorandum: I. Narrative (epic, historical poems, tale, romance, mock-heroic, and the more modern metrical novel). II. Dramatic (tragedy, historical drama, comedy, and masque, with the later addition of the opera and the epistle—the last used with such great effect by Pope). III. Lyric (hymn, ode, elegy, song, and ballad). IV. Idyll (epitaph, inscription, and sonnet). V. Didactic (philosophical satire, personal or occasional satire). This classification is one that has been universally accepted from time immemorial.

13, 26. Didactic: "Pertaining to or of the nature of teaching; intended to instruct or edify; . . . as, a didactic poem." *Standard Dictionary*.

14, 26. In speaking of Homer: *On translating Homer* by Matthew Arnold, 1862.

15. 5. "On man, on nature, and on human life": from *The Recluse* line 753.

15, 13. Moral ideas. Arnold's use of this term is in the derivative sense "of or pertaining to rules of right conduct" (from Lat. *mores*: manners, customs, morals). *Ethical* is approximately the meaning, if that word laid a little more emphasis on the non-physical or *mental* side. Notice Arnold's warning in this and succeeding paragraphs against a narrow or false view of morality. His notion of how to live would be nearer the Greek standard of beauty and simplicity than to some of our own stifled obedience to unattractive codes of so-called Christian behavior.

16, 6. "Nor love thy life nor hate it: Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, line 553.

16, 11. Grecian Urn. The theme of this poem by Keats is given in the lines—

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on."

These refer to the instruments of the musicians in one of the scenes painted on the old Greek urn which the

poet is contemplating. Just as these inaudible tunes are imagined to be sweeter than any that can be heard, so the lover will always think his lady fair because he is never able to win her and weary of her. From these instances Keats suggests how the charm of Greek life and the works of art are fixed as unalterably perfect for all times—safely removed from the hands of critics by the magic of antiquity.

16, 17. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of": Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Act IV, Scene i, lines 156-158. In John Drinkwater's play, *Abraham Lincoln*, this passage, mentioned as a favorite of the President's, is read to him by his Secretary, John Hay. The "of" should, of course, be "on."

17, 7. Poetry is . . . a criticism of life. This has been called Arnold's most famous critical dictum. The meaning is simply that a man's poetry is a reflection of his experiences and the result of the conclusions which he has come to concerning life. Since a poet puts into his poetry the best that is in his mind, his poetry will be an indication or "criticism" of his own life. A really inferior man cannot write superior poetry. As Keats has it, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."

17, 17. Omar Khayyam's words,

"Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the wing."

Thus the idea is carried on in the well known stanza of Edward FitzGerald's superb translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. The poem is on the Epicurean theme "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," and is the work of the Persian poet Omar, who may have lived from 1018 A. D. to 1123, but who certainly loved the years of his life, whenever he may have spent them.

18, 1. Epictetus: a far-famed Stoic philosopher who lived about 50 A. D. Born in Phrygia, he was brought to Rome as a slave to one Epaphroditus, but was later freed and became a great teacher. Among his disciples was the emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius. In his simple love of the good and hatred of the bad there is a close resemblance to the teachings of Christ, although there is no evidence that he ever came under Christian influence. He himself left behind no written records,

but his utterances were noted down by his pupil Arrian, and have been published in various translations as *Discourses of Epictetus*.

19, 2. **Theophile Gautier** (1811-1872): a French poet, critic, and novelist of distinction. A dilettante in many forms of literature, he was one of the most picturesque figures of the Romantic movement under Victor Hugo, and the red waistcoat which he flaunted on all occasions has come to be almost the historical banner of the young literary revolutionist of his time.

19, 10. **Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love, and hope:** from *The Recluse*, line 767.

20, 7. **Quique pii vates et Phœbo digna locuti:** "Each of them god-fearing poets, who sang strains worthy of Apollo."—Vergil's *Æneid*, Book VI, line 662.

20, 17. **Mr. Leslie Stephen**, afterward Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904). He was for many years the editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, for which he wrote over 400 articles. He was besides the author of numerous literary and critical studies. Arnold quotes here from an *Essay on Wordsworth* in the third series of Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, (1874-1876-1879).

20, 21. **Bishop Butler**. The Rev. Joseph Butler (1692-1752), later bishop of Durham, was in his time a most influential preacher and argumentative supporter of the orthodox Church of England system of religion, which he believed to have been revealed to men by a special act of divine providence. To his logical mind black was perfectly black, and white absolutely white—which would be satisfactory if we could all agree as to how these colors shall be distributed in the world about us.

21, 15. **Immutably survive etc.**, is from *The Excursion*, Book IV, lines 73-76.

22, 1. **"One adequate support," etc.**, is from *The Excursion*, Book IV, lines, 10-17.

22, 18. **The famous Ode**. This is, of course, the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, with particular reference to the lines—

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath elsewhere had its setting,

.....
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

23, 6. Thucydides (about 399-454 B. C): Greek historian of the Peloponnesian War and the greatest historian of ancient times. The fact that he himself participated in many of the events which he narrates gives added vividness to his words. He is the first historian to analyze and judge the events which he recounts, and thus he is the first critical historian.

23, 15. O for the coming of that glorious time, etc., is from the *Excursion*, Book IX, lines 295 ff.

23, 28. Social Science Congress. This refers, no doubt, to one of the many local meetings throughout England at that time, in which the ideas of Robert Owen, the social reformer (1771-1858), and his followers were expounded. It is indirectly to Owen that we are indebted for the term "socialist." The free and easy ideas of Owen in regard to religion and marriage might easily have won from Wordsworth the phrase "bold, bad men," and it is clear that Arnold himself is jocosely horrified.

24, 9. "But turn we from these bold, bad men." The original, "This bold, bad man," is from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, Act II, Scene 2. This is quoted from Wordsworth's verses *To the Lady Fleming*, line 81.

25, 10. "The Sailor's Mother," written in 1802, is an account of the poet's meeting with the mother of a sailor lad who had died far from home, and of the singing bird which his mother had rescued from his effects and carried about in a cage, because "he took so much delight in it." Even under the somewhat stilted language of Wordsworth's narrative, there is a good deal of haunting pathos in the poem.

25, 25. Goethe's poetry was not inevitable enough. An interesting light is thrown on this comment by an entry in the journal of Wordsworth's close friend of his later years, Henry Crabbe Robinson: "Jan. 3d, 1836. . . . I dined with Wordsworth at Dr. Arnold's; an agreeable afternoon, though the main subject of conversation was one in which I have no pleasure—in hearing Wordsworth talk of Goethe, whom he depreciates in utter ignorance." Wordsworth himself is reported to have said, "I have tried to read Goethe. I never could succeed." His criticism, if correct, was rather one of jaunty impression.

26, 11. Jeffrey. Francis Jeffrey (1773-1850), later Lord Jeffrey, was a prominent critic, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, member of parliament, and judge. As a critic he wrote rapidly an incisive, energetic style, more distinguished by shrewd common sense than a special

knowledge of the multitude of subjects on which he wrote. When a duel between Jeffrey and the poet Tom Moore was stopped by the police, Jeffrey's pistol was found to have been empty! "*This will never do*" (lines 14-15) is the opening sentence of Jeffrey's review of *The Excursion*, which appeared in *The Edinburgh Review*, November 1814. The article as a whole, while not quite so ferocious as Jeffrey's review of another of Wordsworth's poems, *The White Doe of Rylstone* which came out the next year, is in the vein of annihilating amusement tempered with irony which has long been the professional tone of the reviewer. "The case of Mr. Wordsworth, we perceive, is now manifestly hopeless; and we give him up as altogether incurable, and beyond the power of criticism." Jeffrey's horror at the unbelievable length of the poem is diverting, unless one thinks of Wordsworth. It must not be forgotten, however, that Jeffrey later became convinced that his judgment had been too severe, and generously apologized.

26, 23. "After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well," is from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Act III, Scene 2, line 23.

26, 25. "Though fall'n on evil days," etc., from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book VII, line 26.

27, 11. "The fierce confederate storm," etc., from *The Recluse*, lines 831-833.

27, 24. "And never lifted up a single stone." This line from *Michael* (line 467) "focuses in itself the stark simplicity of the rustic tragedy," as Professor Lowes in his *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* points out. "The very greatest effects of poetry," he says, "are often produced without the use of a single word which might not be used in common speech." This, which is quite the last word in this country in poetic criticism, is a most reassuring corroboration of Wordsworth's own theory.

28, 1. Wordsworth owed much to Burns. Wordsworth's own lines in reference to Burns show pretty clearly the extent of his debt, which was in reality rather slight. Burns had shown how success might be attained in treating such simple subjects as Wordsworth would wish himself to choose, and the lines in question are

"Whose light I hailed when first it shone
And taught my youth
How verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth."

Burns' whole attitude toward the subjects of his verse, that of personal sympathy, is vastly different from Wordsworth's abstract use of the lives of the common people to illustrate his artistic theories. "The poor inhabitant below," etc., is from Burns' own poem, *A Bard's Epitaph*, which Andrew Lang has called "Burns' most sincere and touching self-criticism."

29, 13. "The Highland Reaper": obviously a slip for *The Solitary Reaper*.

29, 22. The great body of good work. It must be remembered that only half the poems which Arnold selected are included in this volume.

29, 28. Dante. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) was the greatest poet that Italy has ever produced, and ranks with Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe among the four foremost poets of the modern world. His work of most importance is the *Divine Comedy* (*Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*). His earliest work of moment is the exquisite *Vita Nuova*, a composition in prose and verse celebrating his love for the lady Beatrice.

30, 8. "Margaret" is not included in this volume.

30, 24. "Peter Bell." This metrical tale of Wordsworth's, not in Arnold's collection, is the rather lengthy narrative of an itinerant peddler and his donkey. Although it contains the famous lines—

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

It has also the notorious passage—

"Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear."

30, 25. Ecclesiastical Sonnets. These, 47 in number, and composed in the year 1821, give glimpses in historical sequence of the growth and development of the Church of England. Two of them, on the *Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge*, are included in this volume. The best of the series, they are indeed among the finest in the language.

30, 25. Mr. Wilkinson's spade. This is a poetical address to the spade of Thomas Wilkinson, a friend and neighboring farmer—remarkable chiefly for showing

the poet's sublime absence of a sense of humor. The poem congratulates the tool upon its happy lot, and prophesies an illustrious future for it as an "heirloom," hung high on the chimney to commemorate the simple goodness of its former owner. This was written in 1804.

30, 26. Thanksgiving Ode. This is a declamatory song of praise, composed, Wordsworth tells us, on the morning of the day appointed for a general thanksgiving, January 18, 1816, and rather tediously sets forth "the pernicious and degrading tendency of those views and doctrines that led to the idolatry of power, as power." It is, of course, directed against Napoleon.

30, 28. "Vaudracour and Julia." This is a metrical tale of a French Romeo and Juliet, conspicuously different from Shakespeare's theme in its course and conclusion, however. What provokes Arnold's reasonable despair is, doubtless, the disconcerting vagueness of parts of the poem, as well as the equally astonishing precision of others. One thinks of the Wilkinsonian spade!

31, 15. They will co-operate . . . better, and happier is a paraphrase of a sentence in a letter from Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont, dated May 21, 1807. The sentence runs: "I doubt not that you will share with me an invincible confidence that my writings (and among them these little poems) will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society, wherever found; and that they will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier." For the printed letter, see *Letters of the Wordsworth Family*, collected and edited by William Knight (Boston, 1907), Vol. I, pp. 301-310.

NOTES AND COMMENT ON THE POEMS OF WORDSWORTH

(After each poem in the headings are given in order the dates of composition and of publication. The lines of the poems are numbered continuously, and the numerals refer to lines.)

WE ARE SEVEN, 1798:1798

In this poem the interest comes from one little girl's insistence that her dead brothers are still members of the family. In the child's flat refusal to grant what she cannot understand, Wordsworth sees the intuitive wisdom to which he alludes in "the great ode." The studied simplicity of this and the following poem illustrates well the theory which Wordsworth had then recently conceived: that poetry should echo much of the plainness of common speech. In this poem it seems even to approach the nursery of the young subject, and not unintentionally.

47. **Porringer:** the small basin from which porridge is eaten.

64. **Master:** the term by which an English rustic would naturally address a social superior.

LUCY GRAY, 1799:1800

This poem suggests the odds against a dreamy imaginative child in a practical workaday world.

6. **Moor:** an open space of country probably covered with heather.

19. **Minster-clock:** the clock in the tower of the most important church in town, frequently the cathedral.

21-22. **Hook . . . faggot-band.** With his hook the father was tying and tightening up bound bundles of sticks to be sold in town for fire wood.

STAR-GAZERS, 1806:1807

The itinerant astronomer, who sets up his instrument on the sidewalk and acts as showman to the stars, was a

not uncommon sight in London, nor until recently on Boston Common. What is the main contrast which runs through the poem?

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN, 1797:1800

F. W. H. Myers says of this poem, written probably while Wordsworth was in London preparing to engage in journalistic work: "He became, as one may say, the poet not of London considered as London, but of London considered as a part of the country." And the fancied effect on Poor Susan of this singing of the thrush is none other than its actual effect on Wordsworth. Why was this rapid meter chosen for the poem? The impression which the poem leaves is curiously like Walter de la Mare's *Old Susan*.

THE LEECH-GATHERER, 1807:1807

"I describe myself," says Wordsworth of this poem, "as having been exalted to the highest pitch of delight by the joyousness and beauty of Nature; and then depressed, even in the midst of those beautiful objects to the lowest dejection and despair. . . . What is brought forward? A lonely place, 'a pond, by which an old man *was*, far from all house or home': not *stood*, nor *sat*, but *was*—the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible. . . . I cannot conceive a figure more impressive than that of an old man like this, the survivor of a wife and ten children, traveling alone among the mountains and all lonely places, carrying with him his own fortitude."

"It is only the story of his accidental meeting with a feeble old man who was poking about for leeches in the muddy pools; yet the poem Wordsworth made of it," says Prof. Winchester, "will take rank with the noblest verse of the century, and the old beggar who gathered the leeches is one of the august figures in the gallery of our imagination."

(Title.) **Leech-gatherer.** Surgeons used to employ persons to gather these leeches (blood suckers), which were used for bleeding patients, the old-fashioned cure-all for all diseases.

33. This description of a bracing spring morning reminds us, among others, of Laurence Housman's in *A Shropshire Lad*,

ideal of the actual

"Twas in the wind of morning, I ranged the thymy wold,
The sky above was azure and all the brooks ran gold."

43. This description of Chatterton is one of Wordsworth's most frequently quoted lines.

The case of Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), the starving young poet who took poison at the age of seventeen, is perhaps the best known instance of the cruel indifference of the world to unbefriended young poets and authors.

45. The reference is, of course, to Robert Burns, the plowboy-poet of Scotland.

MICHAEL, 1800:1800

Wordsworth wrote to a gentleman to whom he presented a volume which contained *Michael* that it "was written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply" and that Michael was typical of the Cumberland "statesmen"; that is "small independent proprietors of land." Repression and restraint give this poem tremendous power, and in it we see Wordsworth at his best. The dumb misery of devastated old age is here seen with cruel clearness, and the dignity of Michael through it all is heart-breaking.

139. Farms and estates in the country in England frequently have names, and *The Evening Star* is taken from a house in Grasmere.

179. **Coppice:** a thicket or copse; here it means a winter wood lot.

214. Michael had gone bail or security for his nephew, who had been apprenticed and who had been obliged, as the custom was, to furnish a bond for good behavior. The small fortune of Wordsworth's friend and neighbor Thomas Wilkinson had been almost wholly lost in this same manner.

386. This simple covenant reminds one of the Old Testament days. It is also an act that reaches far down into human nature for a father and a son to do a thing like this together.

465. See note p. 27, line 24 (to *Essay on Wordsworth*).

MY HEART LEAPS UP, 1802:1807

Few lines of Wordsworth are better known than the first two and the seventh of this little lyric. The theme is the same as in the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*.

TO A BUTTERFLY, 1802:1807

In a lyric much is suggested, little said. Why does he call the butterfly "historian"? "My sister Emmeline" is his sister Dorothy. Notice the effect of the last two lines, apparently added as an afterthought.

WRITTEN IN MARCH, 1802:1807

Written extemporaneously under the circumstances mentioned at the beginning of the poem, the lines have a wholly impromptu sound which is most appropriate to the freshness and cheer of the motley scene described.

10. The vivid picture in this line has long made it a favorite.

TO THE DAISY, 1802: 1807

This is one of the many poems which Wordsworth has written on flowers, and one of four on the daisy. Notice as Wordsworth himself replied to a critic, that it is written on *the*, not on *a* daisy. Not novelty but familiarity is the source of much of our pleasure in life. The origin of the name daisy (day's eye) echoes this same feeling.

15. The common English daisy has a yellow center and white or pinkish petals. It is a low growing plant and is a close kin to what is known in this country as the garden or greenhouse daisy.

17. Usually written *morris*. This was an outdoor dance common at pageants and May games, where the dancers were grotesquely garbed and often took the part of Robin Hood and members of his company. The word comes from *Moorish*.

25. *Mews*: a place of shelter or confinement.

76. *Leveret*: a young hare. See the opening lines of "The Leech-gatherer."

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE, 1802:1807

The theme of this is similar to that of "To the Daisy." Of the small celandine Wordsworth has written, "It is remarkable that this flower, coming out so early in the spring as it does, and so bright and beautiful, and in such profusion, should not have been noticed earlier in English

verse." The opening of the poem may remind one of Keats' explosive beginning of "A Draught of Sunshine":

"Hence Burgundy, Claret, and Port,
Away with old Hock and Madeira."

1. **Kingcups:** buttercups.

16. The reference is, of course, to lines 9 and 10.

31-32. This refers, Wordsworth tells us, to "its habit of shutting itself up and opening out according to the degree of light and temperature of the air."

"I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD," 1804:1807

This is perhaps the most frequently quoted poem of Wordsworth's; and its sprightly, musical movement will long make it a favorite. Here is reflected Wordsworth's regular habit of thought, where a charming view suggests "something more." The daffodils mean more to him than the primrose did to Peter Bell. Daffodils still grow wild on the banks of Ullswater as they did in the poet's day.

21. **That inward eye:** memory, especially the power of visualizing bygone scenes.

21-22. These, the two finest lines in the poem, Wordsworth tells us were contributed by his wife.

TO A SKYLARK, 1805:1807

In this poem Wordsworth takes us up with the ascending flight of the bird to its highest point, at which the skylark bursts into song. Adventurous joy is the keynote. Twenty years later Wordsworth, in writing again on the skylark, thinks more of the return of the bird to her nest:

"Type of the wise who soar but never roam;
True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

See *To a Skylark*, page 98.

Compare these two poems with Shelley's *To a Skylark*.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY, 1798:1798

This poem, we have been told, is a favorite among the Quakers. The "wise passiveness" describes better than pages possibly could Wordsworth's patient waiting on the moods of nature.

THE TABLES TURNED, 1798:1798

In this poem, William carries the warfare into the enemy's camp, and like Duke Frederick in *As You Like It*, finds "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones."

10. **Linnet:** a European song-bird allied to the finch and red poll.

13. **Throstle:** the thrush.

21-24. These lines sum up Wordsworth's whole article of faith in nature. To deny this truth is to be blind to a good half of Wordsworth, although such denial puts one in the respectable company of Lord Morley who says that "such a proposition cannot be seriously taken as more than a half playful sally for the benefit of some too bookish friend. No impulse from a vernal wood can teach us anything at all of moral evil and good."

32. This idea is echoed in Walt Whitman's "I loaf and invite my soul."

TO HARTLEY COLERIDGE, 1802:1807

This is one of the finest descriptions of a child in the language. Universal testimony, from peasant to poet, tells of the charm of Coleridge's son as a child and his winning nature as an older man. Although he lived to be fifty-three and wrote some verses of great beauty, his character was unstable and his life failed to fulfill Wordsworth's prophecy. Through his life, however, he certainly did preserve "a young lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks." He was known in the Grasmere Vale as "the children's laureate."

"O NIGHTINGALE, THOU SURELY ART," 1807:1807

Wordsworth's attitude toward the nightingale, though vastly different from that of most poets who have written about it—especially Keats,—is wholly characteristic. See note on *To a Skylark*.

6. "It was a very old notion, alluded to by Shakespeare, that on this day [Valentine's day] birds begin to mate."—Webster.

11. **Stock-dove.** This is the common European wild pigeon, so named from its habit of nesting in the stocks, or trunks, of trees.

"STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I KNOWN," 1799:1800

This poem and the four poems that follow, all composed in 1799, are known as "the Lucy poems." Concerning them Wordsworth has left no word, nor is it known that he ever alluded to them. There is a general belief that, written some time after the events themselves, they preserve the memory of a period of powerful emotion. Who Lucy really was we do not know and cannot do better than to respect Wordsworth's reticence. The eerie spell of moonlit spaces of English countryside, the isolation of the scene, the haunting beauty of the girl, and the memory of her that the poet cannot get out of his mind form five memorable lyrics. Needless to say, they are in a style and spirit which Wordsworth never repeated.

TO THE CUCKOO, 1804:1807

So full of music is the poem, in meter and choice of words, that it is difficult to believe the author so destitute of a musical ear as tradition says. It is, however, easy to imagine Wordsworth chanting the words aloud to himself as he did all of his work. "And he would start a bumming," said a Westmoreland peasant of the poet, "and it was bum, bum, bum, stop; then bum, bum, bum reet down till t'other end, and then he'd set down and git a bit o'paper out and write a bit." Wordsworth was also very fond of cuckoos; his devotion, indeed, extended even to cuckoo clocks, of which there was an unusual number at Rydal Mount.

6. **Thy twofold shout.** This line, like many in the poem, suggests with its plenitude of vowels the cuckoo call of the bird.

16. Anyone who has tried to locate the cuckoo or the whip-poor-will from its call knows its ventriloquistic quality.

TO A SKYLARK, 1825:1827

Compare with the poem on the same subject on page 80 and read the note.

"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT," 1804:1807

This is the poet's portrait of Mrs. Wordsworth—a "steel true and blade straight," like Stevenson's characterization of his wife.

22. The choice of the word *machine* has been criticized as unpoetic. The design is obviously to emphasize the contrast between the ethereal first impression and the later reassuringly practical one; and a homely word does this best.

THE SOLITARY REAPER, 1803:1807

In this poem one feels the lyric charm of a young poet, with passages in it which might have come from Shelley. It was not until later that Wordsworth turned to that style of pomp and splendor which echoes through the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" and many of the sonnets, such as the one on Milton.

16. **Hebrides:** a group of islands off the northwestern coast of Scotland, chosen here on account of their remote and cheerless character.

19-20. For the suggestion of almost infinitely much in few words these two lines are unrivaled.

YARROW UNVISITED, 1803:1807

This is one of several poems which were the outcome of a walking tour in Scotland with his sister Dorothy, who is the "winsome Marrow." The thought, or possibly the fear, that expectation is fairer than realization is a poetic one, although Wordsworth later wrote: "We declined going in search of this celebrated stream, not altogether, I will frankly confess, for the reasons assigned in the poem on the occasion,"—which does not diminish the charm of the fancy.

(Title.) **Yarrow:** a stream celebrated by Scott as well as by Wordsworth. The loch of the Lowes and St. Mary's Loch take their waters near the source of Yarrow Cleugh, and from the latter lake the Yarrow flows for 16 miles and then empties into the Ettrick near Selkirk.

6. **Marrow:** a companion. (Scot.)

8. **Braes:** slopes. (Scot.)

20. **Lintwhite:** thistle finch, or linnet. (chiefly Scot.)

33. **Holms:** oaks.

35. **Frae:** from. (Scot.)

40. **Dale:** a vale, or valley.

41. **Kine:** cattle.

64. **Bonny:** fair, charming.

YARROW VISITED, 1814:1815

This first visit of Wordsworth's to Yarrow was made in company with the shepherd-poet James Hogg, known as the Ettrick Shepherd. The vale of Yarrow is richer in associations with the tender, poetic, or thrilling histories of the old Border warfare than any other place in the Lowlands. Wordsworth's allusions are to the tales of Border Minstrelsy in Sir Walter Scott's collection of ballads.

55. **Newark's Towers.** This was the old castle of Newark in which King John died in 1216. It was built early in the twelfth century, and its ruins are now part of a public park.

YARROW REVISITED, 1831:1835

The spirit of Wordsworth's second visit to the Yarrow was far more sober than the first, seventeen years before. With Wordsworth, his daughter Dora, and others on this occasion, was Sir Walter Scott, who accompanied the party as far as Newark Castle on this his last visit to his favorite haunts along the Yarrow before his departure for Italy in a vain search for health. From Italy Scott returned desperately ill and died at Abbotsford, the following year. See Sonnet XXVIII and the note.

8. **Great Minstrel of the Border** is Scott.

50. **Eildon-hill.** The Eildon Hills consist of three peaks in the same group and are in Roxburghshire, Scotland. The tallest, 1385 feet, commands a superb prospect, and all are rich in history and legend.

50. **Cheviot.** The culminating point of the Cheviot Hills is known as The Cheviot, a peak of 2676 feet in height, covered with rich green sward, on which are pastured a celebrated breed of sheep.

52. **Tweed.** The Tweed is the principal river of Scotland. Rising at Tweed's Well in Peebleshire, it flows for ninety-seven miles and empties into the North Sea at Berwick. Among its chief tributaries are Ettrick Waters, the Leader, and Teviot. It passes the towns of Melrose and Abbotsford.

53. **Sorrento:** now a famous summer resort in Italy in the province of Naples and on the southeastern side of the famous Bay.

61. **Tiber.** The "yellow Tiber" of Vergil is the largest river in Italy. Flowing from the Apennines in Tuscany to the Mediterranean, its course is 260 miles. Rome and Perugia are on the Tiber. Wordsworth would naturally turn from the Tweed, the foremost river in Scotland, to the Tiber—both rivers famed in song and story.

89. **Localized Romance:** that is, romantic scenes recounted in the ballads and here brought to mind by the sight of their settings.

103. "**Last Minstrel.**" The reference is to Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. This is both a tribute and a prophecy, in that Scott's own success as minstrel has belied the title of his own poem; and in line 107 follows the belief that the Yarrow will inspire future bards or minstrels.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS, 1803:1845

"Burns has been cruelly used, both dead and alive," Wordsworth wrote to his friend Robinson. "He asked for bread—no, he did not *ask* it, he endured the want of it with silent fortitude—and ye gave him a stone. It is worse than ridiculous to see the people of Dumfries coming forward with their pompous mausoleum, they who persecuted and reviled him with such low-minded malignity. Burns might have said to that town when he was dying, *Ingrata—non possidebis ossa mea!*" The meter of this poem was a favorite of Burns' and thus echoes the sound of *To a Mouse* or *To a Mountain Daisy*.

39. **Criffel:** a hill in Kirkcudbright, in the south of Scotland, 1867 feet high. This one can see from Skiddaw, across the Solway Firth.

40. **Skiddaw:** a mountain in Cumberland, three miles north of Keswick, distinguished for its fine scenery and for the lakes in its different hollows and near its base. It is 3022 feet high.

42. Just as Criffel, although near neighbor to Skiddaw, has never met it, a kindred spirit, so Wordsworth had never met Burns—and regrets it. Of other poets of his time with whom Wordsworth would have had much in common—Shelley, Byron, Keats—he knew only the last, and him but slightly.

50. "**Poor Inhabitant below**" is quoted from Burns' *A Bard's Epitaph*, and refers to himself. See Arnold's "Essay," page 8, and the note.

53. **Gowans:** daisies. (Scot.) "And pu'd the gowans fine," *Auld Lang Syne*.

84. **Seraphim.** These were one of the higher order of angels. This word, it should be remembered, is the Hebraic plural for "seraph."

LAODAMEIA, 1814:1815

It was the incident of the trees withering periodically, Wordsworth tells us, that first put the subject of the poem into his mind, "and I wrote it with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has ever been given to it by any of the ancients who have treated it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written."

The original story is that when Laodameia heard of the death of Protesilaos, her husband, she caused an image to be made of him, which she refused to allow out of her sight. Thereupon her father, Acastus, in the hope of distracting her mind, had the image burned. Laodameia, in her grief, threw herself into the flames and perished. Ovid, in his telling of the story, introduces the return to earth of Protesilaos for three hours. When his time is up, he begs Laodameia to accompany him back to Hades, which she very willingly does. Protesilaos was the first Greek warrior killed before Troy, falling in accordance with the prophecy that the first of the invaders to leap from the ships on the Trojan coast must die.

Wordsworth constructs the character of Protesilaos anew, and alters the occasion of Laodameia's entrance to Hades. Why? Underneath the close copy of the classic style of the sixth book of the *Æneid*, is the great theme of the poem—"fervent, not ungovernable love," a condition which Wordsworth himself was better able to meet than most persons on this earth.

6. **Jove:** ruler of gods and men.

18. **Mercury.** Among the duties of the messenger of the gods was to act as guide to mortals—after death as well as living. In this former rôle he conducted the souls of the departed to the lower-world, sacrifices were made to him on the occasion of deaths, and in general he acted as intermediary between the two worlds.

19. **Hermes:** Mercury.

43. **Delphic oracle.** The most celebrated of the Gre-

cian oracles was that of Apollo at Delphi, on the slopes of Parnassus in Phocis.

48. **Hector**: the son of Priam, king of Troy.

59. **Redundant**: luxuriant.

65. **Parcæ**: the three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who respectively spun, measured, and cut the thread of a mortal's life.

66. **Stygian**: characteristic of the river Styx, a river in Hades; hence, "deathly."

71. **Erebus**: properly the dark, gloomy passage-way from the lower to the upper world, but here used for the lower world itself.

74-75. These lines have been quoted to describe Wordsworth's temperament, and to show, for example, his aversion to such parade of passions as Byron's.

81. Alcestis was the wife of Admetus, king of Pheræ. Apollo persuaded the Parcæ to grant Admetus deliverance from death if his father, mother, or wife would die in his place. Only his wife was willing to make the sacrifice. Hercules, however, lay in wait at the chamber of the dying queen and forced Death to give up his victim.

83-84. One of the kindly acts of the sorceress Medea was restoring youth to Æson, father of her husband Jason, on their return to Iolcus from her home in Colchis. The story is variously told, and the commonest version is that Æson had really been killed in the absence of his son on the Argonautic expedition. What Medea did, in this account, was to slay Peleas, the uncle of Jason who had usurped the throne, under pretext of a plan for restoring his youth.

95. **Elysian**: "like that of the Elysian fields"; hence "heavenly."

120. **Aulis**: the harbor in Bœotia, where the Grecian ships congregated before sailing for Troy.

168. **Hellespont**: now the Dardanelles, a long strait which joins the Propontis (Sea of Marmora) with the Ægean Sea.

169-174. A magnificent temple was erected to Protesilaos, celebrated in antiquity for the historic love between his wife and himself, around which the nymphs planted elm trees which died down as soon as they had grown up sufficiently to catch a glimpse of Ilium, or Troy. From the roots fresh branches then sprang up, and the process was repeated.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR, 1806:1807

Wordsworth has told us that the career of Lord Nelson, the great admiral, suggested the main theme of this poem, and that in such few details as Lord Nelson fell short, the character of the poet's brother John supplied the deficiency. Capt. John Wordsworth was drowned in 1805, while commanding the East India Company's merchantman "Abergavenny," which was wrecked on the Shambles off the Bill of Portland. Myers says, "This short poem is in itself a manual of greatness; there is a Roman majesty in its simple and weighty speech."

12-20. These lines recall Nelson's "womanly tenderness, the almost exaggerated feeling for others' pain, which showed itself memorably in face of the blazing *Orient*, and in the harbor at Teneriffe, and in the cockpit at Trafalgar."—Myers.

45-52. These lines bring to mind that famous final hour of the great admiral at Trafalgar.

71. This reminds one rather of Nelson's cry at the battle of Cape St. Vincent, "Westminster Abbey or victory!"

75-76. Here is an echo, perhaps unconscious, of Nelson's "England expects every man to do his duty."

To the preceding quotations, the grim spirit of another of Nelson's utterances might well be added: "In case signals cannot be seen or clearly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy."

ODE TO DUTY, 1805:1807

This noble ode reveals the ruling spirit of Wordsworth—moderation and restraint. A democrat he permitted himself to be called, but insisted that he stood only for democracy governed by wisdom and order. No one can help feeling the power of the deep-toned cadences of the organ-like peals of these verses. It is modeled, Wordsworth tells us, on Gray's *Ode to Adversity*, which in turn is patterned on Horace's *Ode to Fortune*.

The Latin motto, "Jam . . . possim," is taken from Seneca, Letter 120 in *Epistulae Morales*. In the original the verbs are in the third instead of the first person. The passage may be thus translated: "I have now reached the point where I am righteous, not by taking thought, but brought by habit to such a state that I not only

am able to act righteously but am not able to act otherwise."

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY, 1803-6:1807

Matthew Arnold, it will be recalled, denied the truth of the central idea of this poem, maintaining that the memories of childhood were "no great things." Professor Winchester, on the other hand, reports that Emerson "found in it the highest water mark of modern poetry, and declared it to be the best essay on personal immortality." While this does seem a good deal to claim, great and quite ample tribute is paid to it by Dr. William Knight, who, in his collection of Wordsworth's works, places it at the end as "the greatest of Wordsworth's poems, and that to which all the others lead up." Whatever the theology of the matter (and the poem is as much Buddhistic as Christian), it is an undeniably beautiful piece of work and fancy. More than that it is completely Wordsworth, almost Wordsworth complete. In it we feel *We Are Seven, My Heart Leaps Up*, and currents from other tributaries already familiar to us. It is indeed the great river of what Lowell calls Wordsworthshire, "of which the poet is the great historian." At any rate, the waters are clear enough, and we can but concur with the author in saying, "To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself,"—and therein spells its own greatness.

THE SONNETS

For nearly seven hundred years the sonnet has been the common metrical mold into which many of the best poets have been contented to cast their thought. On account of those restrictions to which Wordsworth alludes the form of the sonnet will not serve all purposes equally well,—only when the single thought or "wave of emotion," as one poet calls it, can be expressed in a single metrical flow and return. The structure of the sonnet makes this clear. It is a poem of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter: the statement of thought, or the emotional wave (as the case may be) comprising the first eight lines; the conclusion of the thought, or the breaking of the emotional wave, constituting the last six lines. The division between the first eight lines (octave) and the

last six lines (sestet) is always clearly indicated by the rhyme scheme; sometimes additional emphasis is given by spacing. The pleasure obtained in writing or in reading a sonnet is in following the solution of an artistic problem, which gratifies the ear; and in following the thought, which at the same time engages the mind. The narrower the channel, the swifter the current; the smaller the vent, the higher the stream. To this principle the sonnet owes its supremacy.

(1) The classic form of the sonnet is that of the Italian Petrarch, an octave of two rhymes, and a sestet of either two or three rhymes. (2) Shakespeare's sonnets may be said, roughly, to consist of three quatrains of six rhymes, terminated by a couplet in a seventh rhyme. These are the two commonest sonnet forms in English, although there are sufficient accepted variations to make a third, or miscellaneous, group really necessary.

Sonnets on the sonnet have formed pleasant exercises for poets for years, and among the later, and most delightful are those of Theodore Watts-Dunton and of John Addington Symonds, to be found in *A Victorian Anthology*.

SONNET I, 1827:1827

"This was composed almost extempore in a short walk on the western side of Rydal Lake."—Wordsworth.

4. **Petrarch** (1304-1374). The greater portion of the work of this mediæval Italian poet consisted of sonnets and canzoni addressed to his lady Laura.

5. **Tasso** (1544-1595). The author of *Jerusalem Delivered* was a most prolific Italian poet who died just before he was to be crowned with the laurel.

6. **Camões** (1524-1579). This Portuguese poet was banished to Macao for a satire on the abuses of his government in India.

8. **Dante** (1265-1321), was the greatest Italian poet of all times. (See note, page 29.)

SONNET II, 1806:1807

"In the cottage, Town-end Grasmere, one afternoon in 1801 my sister read to me the sonnets of Milton. I had long been well acquainted with them, but I was particularly struck on that occasion with the dignified simplicity and majestic harmony that runs through most of

them,—in character so totally different from the Italian, and still more so from Shakespeare's fine sonnets. I took fire, if I may be allowed to say so, and produced three sonnets in the same afternoon, the first I ever wrote except an irregular one at school."—Wordsworth.

6. *Furness Fells*: hills to the west of Windermere.

SONNET III, 1802:1807

SONNET IV, 1802:1807

In 1797 the armies of Napoleon put an end to the Venetian Republic, after a life of 1300 years. Not until 1866 did Austria yield Venice to Italy.

SONNET V, 1802:1807

Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743-1803) was a Haitian revolutionist. Born a negro slave, made deputy governor of the island under the French, and finally proclaiming himself president for life, he was defeated by Napoleon, who eventually had him brought to France, where he died in prison.

SONNET VI, 1807:1807

In 1798 Switzerland was occupied by the French, but in 1803 their independence was largely restored.

SONNET VII, 1802:1807

The thought of this and the following seven sonnets reflects the feeling of Wordsworth at the Peace of Amiens (1802) and towards events which led up to the Convention of Cintra (1808), diplomatic maneuvers which were particularly galling to an idealist. By the Treaty of Amiens Great Britain abandoned all her conquests beyond the seas except Ceylon and Trinidad. "It was a peace," said Sheridan, "which everybody would be glad of, but which nobody would be proud of." This was the beginning of Napoleon's career of ten years as emperor.

SONNET VIII, 1806:1807 (See preceding note)

SONNET IX, 1802:1807 (" " ")

SONNET X, 1802:1807 (" " ")

SONNET XI, 1803:1807 (" " ")

SONNET XII, 1803:1807

Reference is to the battle of Killiecranky (1689) in which 6000 veterans under Mackay were defeated by the impetuous Highlanders under Dundee. The difficulty was that the English veterans were hampered no more by "the pedantry of cold mechanic battle" than by their awkward use of bayonets, an innovation, which effectively jammed their own muskets.

SONNET XIII, 1803:1807 (See note on Sonnet VII)
SONNET XIV, 1806:1807 (" " " " ")

SONNET XV, 1810-15:1815

"This was, in fact, suggested by my daughter Catherine long after her death."—Wordsworth.

SONNETS XVI, XVII, XVIII, 1806:1807

Lines 13-14 of Sonnet XVI are some of the most sudden and most natural bits of imagery one can find.

Line 13 in Sonnet XVII refers to Desdemona's marriage to Othello, in Shakespeare's *Othello*.

Line 14 in the same sonnet is a reference to Una (Truth), in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*.

Lines 9-12 of Sonnet XVIII are inscribed on the base of Wordsworth's statue in Westminster Abbey.

SONNET XIX, 1806:1807

This is evidently a translation or imitation of a sonnet on the same subject by Michelangelo.

SONNET XX, 1802:1807

SONNET XXI, 1802:1807

"Written on the roof of a coach, on my way to France."—Wordsworth.

SONNET XXII, 1819:1819

"Suggested in front of Rydal Mount, the rocky parapet being the summit of Loughrigg Fell opposite."—Wordsworth.

SONNET XXIII, 1842:1845

SONNET XXIV, 1820:1820

This is the concluding sonnet to a series of thirty-four written to the river Duddon, published in a volume to which the *Guide to the Lakes* was originally an appendix.

14. This line, most characteristically Wordsworth's, is a paraphrase of Milton's "And feel that I am happier than I know." *Paradise Lost*, Bk. VIII, line 282.

SONNET XXV, 1821:1822

George has called this chapel "the noblest and most inspiring structure ever erected for collegiate worship . . . the last of the thoroughly medieval structures erected at Cambridge."

SONNET XXVI, 1821:1822

This and the preceding are numbers XLIII and XLIV in the series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, and are by far the best of the group.

SONNETS XXVII, 1833:1835

"The fears and impatience of Mary were so great that she got into a fisher-boat, and with about twenty attendants landed at Workington, in Cumberland; and thence she was conducted with many marks of respect to Carlisle."—Robertson quoted by George.

SONNET XXVIII, 1831:1835

See "Yarrow Revisited" and note. It was on Wordsworth's return with Scott from Newark Castle when, says Wordsworth, "in the afternoon we had to cross the Tweed, directly opposite Abbotsford. The wheels of our carriage grated upon the pebbles in the bed of the stream, that there flows somewhat rapidly; a rich but sad light of rather a purple than a golden hue was spread over Eildon hills at that moment; and, thinking it probable that it might be the last time Sir Walter would cross the stream, I was not a little moved, and expressed some of my feelings in the sonnet beginning, 'A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain.'" Wordsworth's fears were well founded. Scott died the following year.

SONNET XXIX, 1831:1835

1. **The pibroch:** a highland battle tune, usually played on the bag-pipe.

SONNET XXX, 1842:1842

“I was compelled to write this sonnet,” says Wordsworth, “by the disgusting frequency with which the word *artistical*, imported with other impertinences from the Germans, is employed by writers of the present day; for *artistical* let them substitute *artificial*, and the poetry written on this system, both at home and abroad, will be for the most part much better characterized.”

SONNET XXXI, 1806:1807

Raisley Calvert, who died in 1795, left Wordsworth £900, on the proceeds from which the poet was enabled to settle down at Racedown Lodge with his sister Dorothy and begin his poetic career.

SONNET XXXII, 1827:1827

Cf. Walt Whitman’s “The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful than the young.”

SONNET XXXIII, 1833:1835

Mosgiel Farm Robert Burns hired with his brother, and here he wrote his early verses before going to Edinburgh. See Burns’ *To a Daisy*.

SONNET XXXIV, 1833:1835

There is a curious similarity between this and a poem of Daniel Webster’s on the death of his son, given in Stedman’s *American Anthology*.

SONNET XXXV, 1806:1807

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS, 1799:1809

These lines, written the winter that the poet was in Goslar, Germany, and later incorporated, with a few

minor changes, in *The Prelude*, give vivid glimpses describing the schoolboy life of Wordsworth at Hawkshead. They form lines 401-463 in the first book of *The Prelude*.

58-61. As the skater stopped suddenly and turned on the heels of his skates, the landscape seemed to continue to move past.

YEW-TREES, 1803:1815

The English yew is an evergreen tree allied to the pine and growing to vast proportions, commonly seen in churchyards in England. Our American yew is only a bushy variety. A trunk which Wordsworth has said that he also had in mind at the time, he calculated to be as old as the Christian era. The autobiographies of trees, needless to say, would often make remarkable history.

5. This was probably Sir Robert de Umfraville, one of a warring family which became extinct on his death in 1436. His even more distinguished nephew Gilbert (who died in 1421) also fought at Agincourt.

Sir Henry Percy, called "Hotspur" (1364-1403), participated in the battle of Otterburn, in which the Scotch were victorious, and Hotspur taken prisoner. He was later killed in a revolt against the king, making common cause with the Scots.

7. **Azincourt** (commonly Agincourt) was the scene of an English victory over the French, October 25, 1415.

8. At Crecy, August 26, 1346, the English defeated the French. Poitiers, on September 19, 1356, was the scene of another English victory.

LINES COMPOSED ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, 1798:1798

Just as the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* sets forth one of the foundations of Wordsworth's faith and works, so these lines announce a second. They show the origin and the result of Wordsworth's faith in Nature, and merely carry further the idea suggested in the *Influence of Natural Objects*. Nature meant to Wordsworth the spirit that lies in the landscape and reacts on the beholder.

"It is absurd," says Professor Winchester, "to say that quartz can generate quietude of soul, or H₂O can calm the mind. What is it but Spirit that can stir the spirit that is in us?" This closely resembles the "Pan-

theism" of the Greeks; and there is essentially a strong pagan strain in all poetry which worships beauty—whether mental, moral, or physical beauty.

Myers says that these lines "have become, as it were, the *locus classicus*, or consecrated formulary of the Wordsworthian faith. They say in brief what it is the work of the poet's biographer to say in detail."

1. **Five years, etc.** The poem, it is evident, is a song of praise on recovering his mental poise after the unbalancing influences of the Revolutionary Period.

26-30. This same idea will be recognized in lines 19-24 of *The Daffodils*.

34-36. These are among the poet's most frequently quoted lines.

57. **Wye:** a river which flows through central Wales from Plinlimmon mountain in Cardigan for 130 miles to the Severn estuary. Wales was the scene of various vacation trips which Wordsworth made with his college friend Robert Jones, and Dorothy.

92. "The still, sad music of humanity" is a daring, and certainly a successful attempt to express an abstract idea by a concrete figure.

98. This line has a power like that of line 92. Tennyson is said to have called this almost the grandest line in the English language.

FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1805:1810

This extract from Book XI of Wordsworth's autobiographic epic, *The Prelude* (lines 105-144) gives a view in pleasant retrospective glow of all that appeared enchanting to Wordsworth's young enthusiasm in the ideals and theories of the French revolutionaries.

4-5. We may be able to quote, of our own time, these famous lines.

7-8. The reference is undoubtedly to the really excellent political and social reforms which the Girondist party wished to introduce with the new republic, and which were so absurdly travestied by the Jacobins, when they came into power, in their worship of the Goddess of Reason.

17. This graceful tribute to the budding French republic sounds like an echo of line 24 in the poem to Hartley Coleridge.

36. **Utopia.** This was the name given to an imaginary

island in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, which was represented as having attained approximate perfection in its laws and customs; hence *Utopia* or *Utopian* is a term frequently applied to a visionary scheme for government.

FRAGMENT FROM "THE RECLUSE," 1800?:1888

In this poem Wordsworth again considers what the poet's proper field should be. His attitude cannot at any time be called complacent; and the normal and wholesome view of life which Wordsworth was almost always capable of taking reminds us rather of the "golden mean" of the Roman Horace: "How exquisitely the individual mind to the external world is fitted; and how exquisitely, too, the external world is fitted to the mind." This fragment comprises lines 753-860, the concluding portion of *The Recluse*, the title given the third section of the proposed epic of which *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* form the first two parts.

1. This is the line so frequently alluded to in these pages as embodying Wordsworth's great poetic purpose.

14-18. See Paragraph XXV of Arnold's *Essay on Wordsworth*.

25. **Urania.** In Greek Mythology she was the muse of Astronomy.

33. **Jehovah.** This sacred name of God was never pronounced by the Jews.

34. **Empyrean.** The origin of the word from the Greek (*ἐμπύριος*, *ἐμπυρος* "in fire, fiery") adds expressiveness to the meaning "heavenly"; that is, refined to fire, even beyond aerial substances.

35. **Chaos:** the confused and shapeless mass before creation "in which slumbered the seeds of things."

36. **Erebus.** See note to line 71 on *Laodameia*.

47-48. **Paradise; and groves Elysian, Fortunate Fields:** the Christian and classic terms for the hereafter. Paradise, originally meaning "an enclosure" and referring to the Garden of Eden, has come generally to mean heaven.

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR, 1798:1800

This poem, Wordsworth tells us, was written as a protest against the warfare of political economists on beggars and almsgiving. To the poet's mind the beggar

was between a poor-house, on the one hand, and "alms robbed of their Christian grace and spirit, as being *forced* rather from the benevolent than given by them; while the avaricious and selfish, and all in fact but the humane and charitable, are at liberty to keep all they possess from their distressed brethren." Whatever can or cannot be said for Wordsworth's point of view, he has drawn a most effective picture of pure spirit, disembodied from the physical, which has been pretty thoroughly beaten out under the hand of nature and the foot of time. "Wordsworth's is the poetry of intellect and of feeling—of humanity in abstracts chiefly; and yet what is more human than *The Old Cumberland Beggar?*"—Dr. John Brown.

73-79. This passage echoes the moral of his friend Coleridge's poem *The Ancient Mariner*:

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all."

85. Compare—"Till old experience do attain
To something like poetic strain."
—*Il Penseroso*, lines 173-4.

92-93. This keen discovery of mere habit in what is so frequently accounted reason in man and animals will bear further consideration.

148. Friday was apparently the appointed day for the beggar to call upon the housewife whom Wordsworth here had in mind.

171. That is, the work-house or poor-house.

ANIMAL TRANQUILITY AND DECAY, 1798:1819

In an epigrammatic style this priceless little sketch rapidly shows us a figure much like that in *The Old Cumberland Beggar*.

NUTTING, 1799:1800

"The four months spent at Goslar," writes F. W. H. Myers, "were the very bloom of Wordsworth's poetic career. Through none of his poems has the peculiar loveliness of English scenery and English girlhood shone

more delicately than through those which came to him as he paced the frozen garden of that desolate city. Here it was that he wrote *Lucy Gray* and *Ruth*, and *Nutting*, and *The Poet's Epitaph*, and other poems known now to most men as possessing in its full fragrance his especial charm."

STANZAS ON THOMSON'S CASTLE OF INDOLENCE,
1802:1815

Hartley Coleridge remarked of this poem that his father's "character and habits are here preserved in a livelier way than in anything that has been written about him." Coleridge was then living much of the time with the Wordsworths in Grasmere. Wordsworth's sister Dorothy said that the two characters here were Wordsworth and Coleridge, and that the first four stanzas probably refer to the former; the last three to Coleridge.

THE FOUNTAIN, 1799:1800

This piece was chosen by Arnold doubtless for "its young inimitable charm," which contrasts markedly with the majesty of many of Wordsworth's later poems. Again, as in the earlier poems, is evident a studied simplicity—somewhat more *simpleesse* than *simplicité*,—as Matthew Arnold might have said; that is, a little more elaborated and artificial appearance of it rather than the genuine quality itself.

A POET'S EPITAPH, 1799:1800

This will be recognized as Wordsworth's "ideal of the poet's high office"—and, incidentally, a pretty faithful portrait of the poet's own life as he consistently lived it.

UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG, 1835:1836

At sixty-six Wordsworth had survived most of his friends and companion poets: Hogg, Scott, Coleridge, Lamb, Crabbe, and Mrs. Hemans. This poem, though occasioned by the death of one with whom Wordsworth had less in common than with the others, reveals the poet in a mood of genuine loneliness which can easily be appreciated. It was the Ettrick Shepherd, it will be remembered, with whom Wordsworth first visited Yarrow; Scott he

loved, although not caring for his poetry; Coleridge, "the rapt one, of the godlike forehead" had been nearer to him than anyone except his sister Dorothy; to know Lamb, the witty, whimsical essayist was to be fascinated by him; the poetry of Crabbe, so much more realistic and pungent than his own, had more nearly resembled Wordsworth's than that of any other poet of his day; and of Mrs. Hemans, who had visited several times at his house, Wordsworth has written: "There was much sympathy between us, and, if opportunity had been allowed me to see more of her, I should have loved and valued her accordingly." An old man's poem, it is a fitting one to conclude this volume.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

ON ARNOLD'S ESSAY ON WORDSWORTH

Read the entire essay through carefully, although not particularly studying it, for a general impression. Then, after reading the Introductory Sketches of Arnold and Wordsworth, ask yourself the following questions:

1. When was Wordsworth's poetry at the height of its popularity? How do you account for that? 2. What are the successive steps by which Arnold justifies his edition of Wordsworth's poems? 3. What was Arnold's purpose in making this collection of poems? Why was selection necessary? 4. What, according to Arnold, is the most important quality in Wordsworth's poetry? Explain. Is this very excellence capable of harming the poet's reputation in some quarters? 5. How should you briefly describe Wordsworth's style? Would the poems be likely to gain attention if contributed to magazines to-day? 6. What defects are we likely to recognize in Wordsworth's poetry? 7. What qualifications should you judge Arnold had for editing a volume of Wordsworth's poems? 8. Does Arnold write like a scholar, a public speaker, a novelist, a great conversationalist? Has he himself a "heightened and telling way of putting things?" How does it differ from Macaulay's?

QUESTIONS FOR MORE CAREFUL STUDY

(The numbers of the following questions refer to the paragraphs of the Essay.)

1. Was the popularity of 1830-1840 probably very encouraging to Wordsworth? In what part of his long career as a poet did it come? Would Scott and Byron appeal to the same class of readers as Wordsworth? What does Arnold mean, then, by "this public"? In what way does this paragraph serve appropriately as an introduction to the essay and selections of Wordsworth's poems? 2. What three things assisted the growth of Wordsworth's fame at this time? Why was it particularly helpful to a poet like Wordsworth to be popular in a place like Cambridge? What suggestion does Arnold make of the nature of much of Wordsworth's fame elsewhere?

3. What qualities in a poet's work make it popular? Briefly contrast the poetry of Tennyson and of Wordsworth. Why was not the rapid rise of Tennyson quite fatal to Wordsworth's reputation? What element of the reading public, according to Arnold, did Tennyson attract? 4. What subject have paragraphs three and four in common? What has been done since 1850 to sustain the reputation of Wordsworth? 5-11. (Read through these seven paragraphs which have a unity in themselves—the justification for a new volume of Wordsworth's poems at this time, 1879.) Re-state in your own words the quotation from M. Renan. Does "vanity" here mean "emptiness, futility"? Does it anywhere mean "petty pride, conceit"? Is it necessary to spend so much space establishing the "glory" of a poet? Do you agree that the fame of the poets of a country is as important as her reputation as a nation or the splendor of her civilization? Is there a reason why England excels in her poets and men of science, rather than in painters and musicians? Has time changed the correctness of Arnold's estimate? Can Arnold be accused of "provincial infatuation" in speaking well of the English poets? What are the distinguishing "gifts and excellencies" of the following poets: Spenser, Dryden, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Coleridge, Scott, Campbell, Moore, Byron, Shelley, Keats? On what grounds is Chaucer ruled out of the comparison? Should he be? What are the three qualities of Wordsworth which make his poetry superior to that of the lesser poets of Germany, Italy, France? Why was the United States omitted from this survey? 12. Why, according to Arnold, has not all the world long been aware of Wordsworth's eminence?

12-13. Why does the mingling of good and bad in his work count more heavily against Wordsworth than against Shakespeare or Milton? What solution can you offer for the unequal quality of the great bulk of Wordsworth's work? 14. Name five of Wordsworth's best known pieces. How many were written between 1798 and 1808? Is it fair and proper for an editor to do for a poet what Arnold has done for Wordsworth? 15. What is Arnold's objection to Wordsworth's classification of his poems? 16. What classification of poetry does Arnold recognize as a standard? Make a list of at least ten poems, not including Wordsworth's, that you have read, and arrange them according to this category. 17. Glance over the contents of this volume. On the basis of this do you agree with these statements? 18. Upon what grounds does Arnold base his opinion of Wordsworth's superiority to these six poets? Why

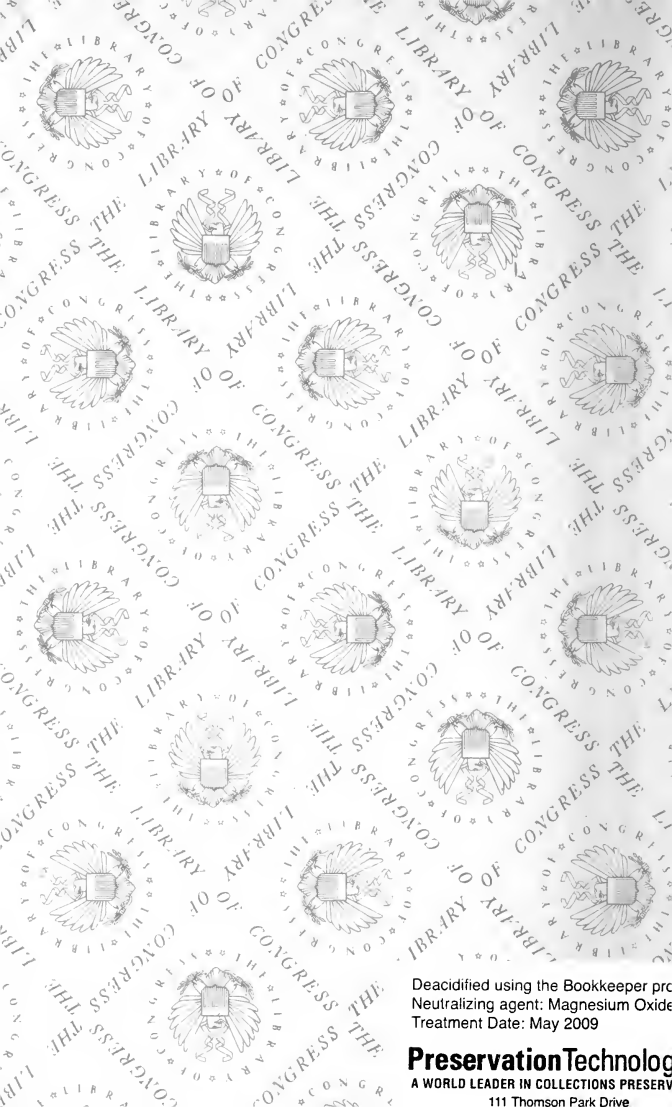
does he insist that "this is of very great importance"? Do you agree with Arnold's ranking of the various poetic forms? Why? 19. Are writers apt to be good judges of their own work? Is the case similar with painters, sculptors, composers? 20. What is meant by "poetic beauty," "poetic truth"? Sum up in a single sentence Arnold's criterion of poetry. Apply it to several different types of poetry, such as that of Milton, Tennyson, Browning, Coleridge, Longfellow, Kipling, Service, a poem in a current magazine. How does it work out? 21. It will be noted that Arnold finds in Voltaire's judgment of English poets the foundation for the chief excellence of Wordsworth's poetry—its moral quality. Explain "moral." Why are didactic poems second-rate? Is the same thing true of problem plays and allegorical pictures? In what way do the three quotations from Milton, Keats, Shelley, illustrate moral ideas? Can you now think of a really fine poem which is not moral? 22. Does this definition seem to imply that great poetry is written by students for students, or by men of the world for persons who take a lively interest in the adventures of their very human fellow beings? Who is more fully *alive*: the person who reads, or the person who does not? 23. Explain: "Poetry is a criticism of life." Are manner (style) and matter (subject or idea) equally important in literary compositions? In prose, in poetry, in drama? What would be Arnold's opinion? 24. What light does this paragraph throw on the preceding questions? Explain the figure of speech of Epictetus.

25. In describing the work of a poet, what would be meant by saying "He has taken up his abode at an inn"? Mention two other poets, English or American, of whom this might be said. 26. What is meant here by "felicity"? Do humor, felicity, and passion seem to you appropriate or necessary qualities for poetry? If Burns, Keats, Heine possess these qualities, why are they not superior to Wordsworth? 27. What does Arnold mean by a "Wordsworthian"? Is he one himself? 28-29. What is the meaning of: "Poetry is the reality; philosophy, the illusion"? Of what real value to the world is poetry? Is the combination of philosophy and poetry a really sweet union? What has Arnold already said on this subject? What terms which Arnold has already used would appropriately describe these two selections? Why are they not admirable poetry? 30. Do you agree that "the love of nature is nearly imperceptible at ten years old, but strong and operative at thirty"? Why? Are persons correct in maintaining that the following are traits of youth rather than of maturity:

originality, innocence, radicalism, a sense of justice? 31. What would be a modern equivalent for a "social science congress"? Do literary clubs aid the reputation of the subject of their study? 32. What is the real source of Wordsworth's greatness? What is often mistaken to be it? 33. What common pleasures of the average schoolboy or schoolgirl would perhaps find an echo in Wordsworth's poems? What ones would not? Why? Which of the two kinds are the simpler? the more permanent? the finer? 34. Would the two adjectives "conscious" and "unconscious" artists describe Goethe and Wordsworth? According to Jeffrey, what was the trouble with *The Excursion*? Was this a defect of Wordsworth's? 35-37. (Refer to the *Life of Wordsworth*.) Describe what seems to you the differences in the styles of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth as indicated by these three selections.

If Wordsworth's style is nearly as simple as plain speech, wherein lies its power? What is the twofold reason for the simplicity of Wordsworth's style? Is it true that the expression of sincere feeling is usually simple? Is this true in painting, sculpture, architecture? 38. Why do you think Arnold prefers *The Highland Reaper* (*The Solitary Reaper*) to *Laodameia* or *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*? 39. Can you suggest in what respect it is that "the ancients are far above us," or what it is "that we demand which they can never give"? What are the traits in Shakespeare or Milton which make them "splendid luminaries in the poetical heaven"? What was Arnold's test for greatness? 40. What type of poems that Wordsworth wrote would Arnold probably reject? What type would he choose? As you read the poems in this volume, criticize the appropriateness of his choice. 41. Are we led to believe Arnold's suggestion that he is not a Wordsworthian, or this statement that he is? Why? Give reasons for your answer. In your own words, sum up Arnold's estimate of Wordsworth.





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