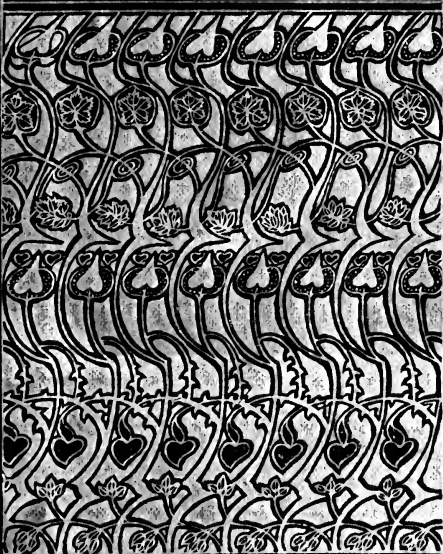


SELECTIONS FROM THE
POETS

WORDSWORTH

BY
ANDREW LANG



IN MEMORIAM



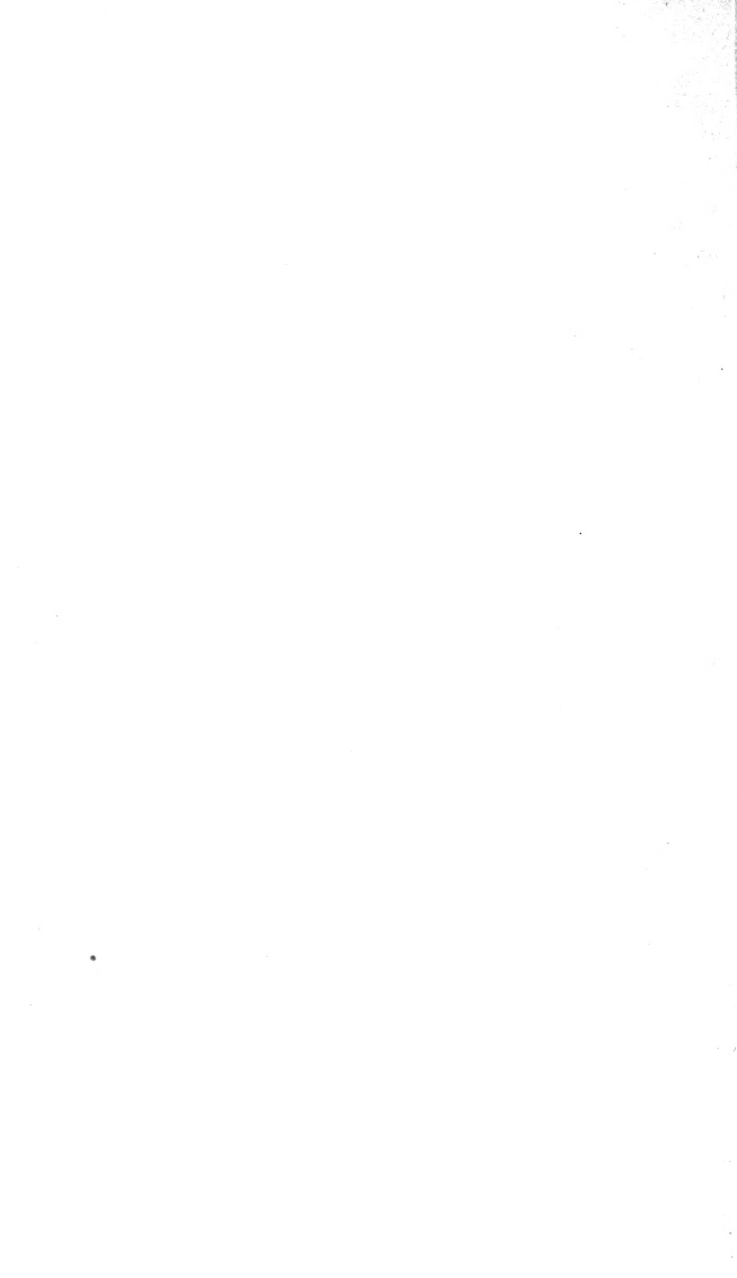
ROBERT HOLMES

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SELECTIONS FROM
WORDSWORTH



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ALFRED PARSONS.

Rydal Mount.

From Rydal, looking up.

Selections from the Poets

Wordsworth

By
Andrew Lang



Illustrated by Alfred Parsons, A.R.A.

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INTRODUCTION



WISH either to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing," said Wordsworth, writing to Sir George Beaumont. In the changes of critical opinion, a poet who is nothing but a teacher is apt to be considered nothing of a poet. Yet Wordsworth's aspiration merely repeated a commonplace of the eighteenth century. Atterbury writes to Pope: "You know my opinion that poetry without a moral is a body without a soul. Let the lines be ever so finely turned, if they do not point to some useful truth—if there is not instruction at the bottom of them, they can give no true delight to a reasonable mind." Swift, on the other hand, says that "Parnassus is not a cure of souls."

This was Wordsworth's own theory, Parnassus *is* a cure of souls, and it injures him with a generation whose criticism has swung like a pendulum to the opposite extreme of *l'art pour l'art*. "Each of his

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verses," says Wordsworth in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, "has a worthy *purpose*." A poet who confesses to a worthy purpose prejudices many critics against him, now, when novels with a purpose, on the other hand, are the joy of the earnest reader. Then Mr. Matthew Arnold comes to Wordsworth's aid with the maxim that "a poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life*," and he finds a moral idea in Keats's line, addressed to the lover on the Greek Urn—

"For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair."

No purist is revolted by that sentiment! If ideas about *life* are "moral ideas," it is plain that no poetry is devoid of them. All poems are inevitably concerned with *life*. No poet is less apt to invoke "the moral Muse" than Théophile Gautier, yet his *Château de Souvenir*, or his *Les Hirondelles*, or his *Nostalgie des Obélisques* as inevitably evokes moral ideas as does *Resolution and Independence*. Ideas about life are awakened, but neither Gautier nor Keats state the ideas explicitly, in Wordsworth's manner, like the moral tagged on to a fable. The question is not really one of dealing with ideas about life—for these the poet cannot avoid if he would—but of introducing, as in a sermon, "a practical conclusion," explicitly put forward, which Wordsworth generally does.

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Wordsworth maintains that "one impulse from a vernal wood" can teach us more of man than the collected works of all the philosophers. Yet the vernal wood has, certainly, no didactic intentions. If the vernal wood be so instructive, manifestly the poet in a vernal mood, or any other mood, say autumnal, can teach us abundantly too, though, like the coppice in question, he has no set purpose of instruction. Thus Keats's *Ode to Autumn* inevitably begets moral ideas, ideas about life, just as much as *The Idiot Boy*, or more. Great poetry, with or without a purpose, makes existence more vivid and real, brings us into more intimate contact and closer touch with existence, whether the poet approaches "a practical conclusion" or not.

We are now rather apt to resent the "practical conclusion," and Wordsworth's insistence on it perhaps injures him with readers, especially with intolerant young readers of poetry. But this insistence of his, after all, is only an accident, a result of temperament and of theory. What is truly great in his poetry is independent of his theory, and may almost be called independent of his conscious reasoning self. Wordsworth, at his best, charms by felicities which he did not wilfully and consciously elaborate like Keats, but which were given to him by his genius, he being apparently unaware of the immeasurable gulf between his inspired and his uninspired compositions. Writing

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to Shelley, Keats bids him "load every rift with ore," and this was his own invariable practice. Nobody can say that Wordsworth deliberately loaded every rift with ore. Now and again, in his moral quarrying, he struck on a rift or a nugget, but he seems to have been as unaware of his successes as of his failures, esteeming all as "highly valuable chains of thoughts." Mr. Arnold says, "Work altogether inferior, work quite uninspired, flat, and dull, is produced by him with obvious unconsciousness of its defects, and he presents it to us with the same faith and seriousness as his best work." Necessarily he does so, because he was for ever thinking and talking, as Lockhart says, "about those humbugs, the Principles of Poetry."

These principles of poetry he had with him always; they may be studied in his famous Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. He would "fit to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men" (Cumberland and Westmoreland men) "in a state of vivid sensation." He would avoid "the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers," which he does by calling a fowling-piece "the deadly tube," just as Gibbon calls a hoop "the flying circle," so difficult was it for him, even with a set purpose, to shun the conventional periphrases of the eighteenth century. Again, it was a "principle" to describe nature accurately "with the eye on the object," not in

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Pope's and Dryden's manner, wherein the mountains "nod their drowsy head." "From my very childhood," says Wordsworth, "I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the world under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious."

Add to these things, to simple everyday diction and close observation, a moral and philosophical purpose, all directed by poetical genius, and you have, in brief, Wordsworth's principles of poetry. He knew that he had genius: he was possessed of, he had discovered, "the principles," he had only to go out, look around on flowers and hills, mark some incident of humble life, and poetry must be the inevitable product, new poetry, which had to "create its own public." The results, as he says, would be "not unimportant in quantity," and in quantity they are important indeed. Every day Wordsworth could take a walk, could go "booning through the woods," as the country people called his inspired murmurs, and could dictate the consequences of his booning to the ladies of his family. But his theory did not take into account that of which he was unconscious, the intermittence of his inspiration. It lasted in force during ten years, 1798-1808; then the Muse went away, except on very rare occasions, while the "booning," dictating, and publishing continued.

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Wordsworth suffered much, both as a poet and as a man, from his attachment to his own theories, and from his militant proclamation of his theories in his Preface. As a poet, he thought it desirable to practise the art of sinking, in language and in subject, hence his *Idiot Boy* and many quaint trivialities of expression. These he often altered in later editions, but to the *Idiot Boy*, and several other poems equally uninspired, he was fondly attached. No man had ever less humour, thus he offered a butt to critics like Jeffrey and Byron. Young men, like Lockhart and Wilson, found in themselves the taste which Wordsworth deemed that he must create; elder men, like Coleridge and Scott, were themselves too great poets not to understand and appreciate him. But, in spite of the outspoken admiration of Scott, Lockhart, and Wilson, he wrote of Scotland as "a soil to which this sort of weed," the curst critics, "seems natural." He was thinking of Jeffrey, and not thinking of the others, two of whom were still to come. Jeffrey, indeed, was not content with laughing at what in Wordsworth is laughable—he could see no merit, where the merit is so great, noble, and original. His influence was of the worst practical consequence to Wordsworth's popularity.

Another result of Wordsworth's principles, and want of humour, and, it must be added, self-sufficiency, was his lack of appreciation of others.

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His biographer, Professor Knight, says, indeed, that "a noteworthy feature in Wordsworth's character was his appreciation of his contemporaries." If we had only Wordsworth's poetry before us, we might agree. His beautiful sonnet on Scott—"A trouble, not of clouds or weeping rain"—and his lines on the death of the Ettrick Shepherd would justify Mr. Knight's opinion. He also spoke well of Shelley: "Shelley is one of the best artists of us all; I mean in workmanship of style." But he dismissed a poem of Keats as "a pretty piece of paganism;" he offended Hogg by a celebrated question, "What poets?" and he coldly dismissed *Marmion* in a letter to Sir Walter: "I think your end has been attained. That it is not the end which I should wish you to propose to yourself, you will be well aware from what you know of my notions of composition, both as to matter and manner." This was honest, and Scott was the last man to take it ill. Lockhart has left an amusing picture, in a letter to his wife, of Scott and Wordsworth together, both of them continually quoting Wordsworth, while Wordsworth never betrays a consciousness that his companion has written a line. Yet Wordsworth, in *The White Doe*, wrote a narrative poem of which Coleridge justly says, "I cannot get rid of the fear that it will be talked of as an imitation of Walter Scott." Indeed, Wordsworth seems to have intended, as it were, to show Scott

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how a romantic tale should be told in verse, in accordance with "my notions of composition, both as to matter and manner." The results are unexhilarating. Of Scott he said, "What he writes in the way of natural description is mere rhyming nonsense." Fortunately Mr. Ruskin has corrected this announcement.

Scott's novels did not conciliate Wordsworth. The pictures of lowly life seem to have left him cold, though he was the almost professional admirer of such scenes. But it was *Redgauntlet*, not *The Idiot Boy*, that Millet, the great peasant painter, asked for on his deathbed. Humour was a closed book to Wordsworth. Yet Scott and he remained friends, though all the appreciation was on the side of Sir Walter. One thing they lacked in common, the sense of smell!

Wordsworth could write noble poetry on Scott's last days, but, in his heart and daily conversation, Wordsworth was very far from being a warm admirer of his contemporaries. Of Coleridge, who praised him so nobly, Wordsworth said to Moore that his prose would live, "while of his poetry he thought by no means so highly." Indeed, his appreciation of *The Ancient Mariner* was rather tepid, as we read in Mr. Norton Longman's *Wordsworth and Coleridge MSS.* On another occasion Moore thought that he overestimated Coleridge.

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In short, Wordsworth alone, of contemporaries, wrote poetry in accordance with "the Principles of Poetry," so he had but a poor opinion of his great coevals : as Landor states, illustrating by rather invidious anecdotes.

One of his "principles," the use of the language of ordinary men, and the selection of themes from the incidents of lowly life, was a corollary from his early democratic ideas, his sympathy with the French Revolution and with the poor. These ideas animate his noblest verses, and inspire his least fortunate early pieces. He conceived that, in opposition to "the Public," "the People" would love *Peter Bell*! Canon Rawnsley's collection of reminiscences of Wordsworth lingering among the peasantry prove, as might be expected, that "the People" is not enthusiastic about *Peter Bell*, or anything else of Wordsworth's.

He had not a conciliatory manner, he was not loved like "little Hartley," Hartley Coleridge. He was interested in his rural neighbours partly as subjects of verse, and his interest in them awoke no corresponding interest in him. Intellectually he was self-absorbed, in spite of a most affectionate nature. He did not "speak to everybody as if they were of his blood kin," like Scott. Apart from his political and patriotic emotions, he lived for the family, nature, and his art. Not to be deeply concerned

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about these, especially the last, was to be out of touch with Wordsworth.

Such were his drawbacks, with their compensations. Wordsworth did do more than any one man to bring poetry back to nature. He overstrained himself in this reaction against a stereotyped "poetic diction"; he did not supply the generous substitute which his great contemporaries, like Keats, found in the rich Elizabethan language. The essence of his genius, when his genius is awake, lies in a grandly austere sympathy with life, and in a marvellous spiritual sympathy with nature.

"I remember," writes Mr. Graves, "Mr. Wordsworth saying that, at a particular stage of his mental progress, he used to be frequently so rapt into an unreal transcendental world of ideas, that the external world seemed no longer to exist in relation to him, and he had to convince himself of its existence by clasping a tree." Tennyson makes a similar confession about himself in *In Memoriam*, and Scott confesses to similar moods in his *Journal*. Wordsworth is occasionally in contact with that "something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns." From such mysterious moments of inspiration come his wonderful felicities, now in lyric measures, now breaking the monotony of rather bald blank verse. He is a born poet.

His early history, as told in *The Prelude*, harmonises

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with the passion for nature in some of his very earliest verse. He had met on the hills the rustic Pan, and followed his pipes, and ever and again set their music to words. It is for these words, not for philosophy in "a tissue of elevated but abstract verbiage," as Mr. Arnold says, that we prize Wordsworth. "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 elementary 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." Thus Wordsworth is great, and is loved, *not*, after all, for his insistence on moral ideas, but because of his gift of feeling deeply and passionately, and his gift of "rendering" what he feels; that is, because—all his theories of every sort apart—he is a great, singular, and original genius. He is visited, to use Mr. Arnold's phrase, by "the not ourselves." He has "no assured poetic style of his own," but when the "not ourselves" comes, behold it brings the style with it. A familiar example is—

" Will no one tell me what she sings ?
Perhaps the plaintive murmurs flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago."

Here everybody (except one ingenious critic) feels that Nature, the *lutin*, the "not himself," has taken

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the pen from Wordsworth and is writing for him. In four lines he conveys the essence of Celtic song; the sweet unsatisfied longing for a past that never was present. It would be unkind to select typical passages, where Wordsworth is too obviously writing by himself.

This seems a mystical way of speaking, this talk of the "not ourselves," and it is curious to find it in the criticism of Mr. Matthew Arnold. He had another "stream of tendency, not ourselves," which "makes for righteousness." What we mean, after all, is no more than that Wordsworth was apparently unconscious of doing anything out of his common way when he produced pieces as remote from his common way as that way is from Shakespeare's. How did he stumble on these excellencies? Was it the result of some untraced and untraceable physical antecedents in blood, and brain, and nerve; or have we really a consciousness apart from and infinitely vaster than that of which, as we say, we are conscious? Is the difference between what we think inspired and what we think uninspired excellence a difference of kind or only of degree? We know Shelley's account of the unconsciousness which accompanies poetic meditation, as the poet watches, unheeding and unseeing, "the yellow bees in the ivy bloom." A curious anecdote, on this head, is told of Tennyson, and every one knows Coleridge's account of the birth of *Kubla Khan*. Ignorant we remain of the psy-

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chology of genius. Like the wind, it bloweth where it listeth, and it blew upon Wordsworth often, yet intermittently.

A very brief sketch of Wordsworth's life, and of the circumstances in which his poems were produced, may not be quite superfluous in this place. He was born at Cockermouth, on April 7, 1770. His father was a solicitor, like Scott's; and, like Scott, he came of an old family of gentry. His mother was the daughter of a Mr. Cookson, a mercer in Penrith, but, on the maternal side, she descended from the very ancient family of Crackenthorp of Newbiggen, whose names as warders of the fords of Eden occur in the old Border Laws. Wordsworth was educated at Hawkshead School, and in the holidays read the best fiction of the last century—Fielding, Swift, Smollett, and the rest. Of his early poetic reading he says very little. In a school poem he imitated Pope, of course; but, writing for his own pleasure, he composed "a long poem, running upon my own adventures, and the scenery of the country in which I was brought up." The first two pieces in this collection are of his boyhood, and already his minute observation of nature, and his power of enjoying, rendering, and moralising nature, are conspicuous. The fair stream, "her quiet soul on all bestowing" (p. 3), is already essentially Wordsworthian. In later years he told, in *The Prelude*, the story of the growth of his

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mind, and recalled that singular ecstasy which nature produced in his soul. A man with more humour might not have written his own intellectual biography at very great length in blank verse, but the document is instructive. In 1787 Wordsworth went to St. John's College in Cambridge, where "he felt himself to stand at a higher elevation of moral dignity than some of his teachers." It is not unusual for undergraduates to look down on dons, but moral dignity is seldom their vantage-ground. He "was not for that hour, nor for that place," like Gibbon and Shelley at Oxford. He wrote *The Evening Walk*, but Cambridge is not the scene of that promenade. The poet

" Listens to the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore,"

Or muses

" Where horses in the sunburnt intake stood "—

the word "intake" being already adopted from rural and local speech. In his last long vacation he made a walking tour in France, landing at Calais in all the enthusiasm of the nascent Revolution—

" When faith was pledged to new-born Liberty."

He wandered by the Rhine and through the Alps as far as the Italian lakes ; indeed, but for circumstances, Wordsworth would have been the wanderer of his own *Excursion*. Travel, contemplative travel, was his

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passion. In 1793 he published several of his descriptive poems, some composed beside the Loire, in a later visit to France (1791-1792). They were read at the time by Coleridge, who recognised "the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon." Wordsworth was in Paris a month after the September Massacres, and, if he could have stayed, he would probably have perished with his friends the Brissotins. His faith in the Revolution was, later, sapped, his high hopes were broken, and during the Napoleonic wars he became nearly as good a Tory as Scott. Hazlitt resented fiercely, and Mr. Browning appears not to have approved of this very natural and normal turn in Wordsworth's sentiments. Liberty is a fine thing, but when accompanied by plunder, carnage, conquest, and despotism, Liberty, to the contemplative man, loses many of its attractions.

Averse to taking orders, Wordsworth thought of journalism, for which he was not very well fitted (1794). In the following year, a young friend, whom he had nursed in a fatal illness (Mr. Raisley Calvert), left Wordsworth £900.

"I to thee
Owe many years of early liberty."

the poet says. Frugal and simple, Wordsworth, with his sister Dorothy, managed to live for seven years on the legacy. After that a long-standing debt to his family was paid. He had leisure, gained by an

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absolute contempt of luxury and wealth; he had confidence; and he formally dedicated himself, like Milton, to poetry. At the early age of fourteen he discovered his "consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them, and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency." Mr. Calvert's legacy enabled him to carry out this resolution. In 1795-96 he composed *The Borderers*, a play. Wordsworth's genius was not dramatic, and his *Borderers* were very unlike *Wat Tinlin* and *Dickon Draw the Sword*: the tragedy was not published till 1842.

Wordsworth was now living with his sister Dorothy, at Racedown in Dorset. Later they went to Alfoxden, near Nether-Stowey. Between himself and his sister there was a singular affection. She shared his passion for nature, his power of feeling, if not of rendering nature, with an almost Dionysiac enthusiasm. The Greeks would have accounted for her long and sometimes lonely wanderings on the hills by a theory of Bacchic inspiration. Miss Wordsworth's Diaries often contain the prose originals of her brother's poems. To them, in June 1797, came Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose own first volume of poems had been published by Cottle at Bristol in the previous year. Nothing, as a rule, is more stimulating to poetic composition than the social

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intercourse of poets, though the world has often laughed at the *cénacles* or coteries of verse-writers. These have their humorous aspects, but, as a rule, it is from such sympathetic societies that poetry emanates. Coleridge and Wordsworth at once set about reading or reciting their verses to each other—

“He would entice that other man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery.”

Wordsworth was not very fond of hearing the music and viewing the imagery of other people, but Coleridge certainly heard *him* gladly, and was persuaded that Wordsworth “admires my tragedy.” The Wordsworths presently visited Nether-Stowey, in Somerset, where Coleridge and his wife were living. During a walking tour on the Quantocks the friends decided to publish a joint volume of poems, and planned *The Ancient Mariner*. Wordsworth contributed the albatross, and the navigation of the ship by the dead, with a few lines, and then withdrew from the ballad. He wrote *We are Seven*, *The Idiot Boy*, *The Thorn*, and some other pieces: as to *The Idiot Boy*, “I never wrote anything with so much glee,” a glee by no means contagious, or, if contagious, not sympathetic. In 1798, on another tour with Coleridge, he composed the *Lines on Tintern Abbey*, and, about the same time, *Peter Bell*, published and parodied twenty years later. *The Lyrical*

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Ballads, containing *The Ancient Mariner*, appeared in September 1798, published by the friendly Cottle at Bristol.

Coleridge, in a well-known passage of his *Biographia Literaria*, has described the principles of poetry as they were to be illustrated in the volume. "Truth to nature" was to be Wordsworth's share. Coleridge was to add "the modifying colours of the imagination." His incidents and characters were to be "in part, at least, supernatural," and to exhibit "such emotions as would accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real, in this sense, they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency." Coleridge, as he said, "had seen too many ghosts to believe in them." Wordsworth's contributions were to turn on "subjects chosen from ordinary life," and were to "awake the mind from the lethargy of custom, directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us." Wordsworth being the more industrious ("it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill" of Coleridge's), Coleridge did not publish *Christabel* in the collection. It became known in recitation, and was the origin of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Thus modern romantic poetry in England arose in the Quantocks and the Border hills.

The Ancient Mariner was not appreciated even by

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Southey and Charles Lamb ; the five hundred copies of the *Lyrical Ballads* met with scanty sale ; and when Cottle sold his copyrights to Messrs. Longman, the *Lyrical Ballads* were "valued at *nil*," and transferred to the authors. Everything was against the poems. The blank dull "common sense" of the eighteenth century rejected *The Ancient Mariner* ; the democracy conspicuous in Wordsworth, like the pictures of the poor by Millet, revolted Toryism ; and *The Idiot Boy*, with some absurdities in diction since removed, gave a handle to flippant reviewers, as, later, to Byron.

In September 1798 the Wordsworths and Coleridge went to Germany, and the brother and sister settled at Goslar for the winter, where *Lucy Gray*, *Two April Mornings*, *Matthew*, and the pieces on "My Lucy," were written, with "There was a Boy," and other reminiscences of the Lake country. Leaving Goslar in February 1799, Wordsworth began, with great delight, *The Prelude*, an autobiography in blank verse. The fourteen books were finished, but, of course, not published, by 1805. In the autumn of 1799 the Wordsworths settled at Grasmere for a term of eight years, that is, practically, till the poet's inspiration ended. In 1800 he published in two volumes, with the famous Preface, the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, including *Michael*, *Hart-Leap Well*, *Poor Susan*, *Nutting*, *The Pet Lamb*, and other novelties. Miss Wordsworth's Diary now shows the

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sources of Wordsworth's inspiration, as in *The Daffodils*, and illustrates his fertility. The first Scotch tour, so rich in a poetic harvest, began in August 1803; on September 19 they met Scott at Melrose. The friendship with Sir George Beaumont began; the death of Nelson suggested *The Happy Warrior* (1806). Wordsworth's marriage with Miss Hutchinson now added greatly to his happiness, and, by singular good fortune, did not interrupt his relations with his sister. Wordsworth never was a poet of love, if we except the beautiful regrets for Lucy. "She was a phantom of delight" was begun in praise, not of Mrs. Wordsworth, but of the fair Highland girl who literally did no more than cross his path.

The rich poetic harvest of 1800-1807 was garnered in "Poems, Two Volumes," published in the latter year. Among these are "She was a phantom," "To the Small Celandine," "The Happy Warrior," "The Affliction of Margaret," the "Ode to Duty," "Resolution and Independence;" Sonnets, including those to "Sleep," "Westminster Bridge," "The World is too much with us;" the beautiful patriotic series inspired by French wars and threats of invasion; the Scotch poems, including "Yarrow Unvisited," and the celebrated example of the Art of Sinking, in the "Address to Mr. Wilkinson's Spade." Wordsworth was now one of the very greatest masters of the sonnet, "the thing became a trumpet," in his patriotic appeals.

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Later, like most sonneteers, he wrote far too many sonnets; he overflowed with them.

He was now so violently criticised, and that for his immortal verses, the flower of his genius, that no new edition was called for between 1807 and 1815. Scott was the only acceptable poet, and Byron succeeded Scott. Southey represents Wordsworth as writhing under rebuke and ridicule; at all events, he maintained his dignity in his public demeanour. An amusing letter of Lamb's proves that he was indeed very sensitive to the most delicate criticism by friends, but his confidence was never abated. He adopted prose in his tract on the Conference of Cintra, and in his book on the Lake Country and "Opinions on Certain Questions." In 1813 he settled at Rydal Mount (where he lived till his death in 1850); and in 1814 he became stamp collector for Westmoreland, a post of more emolument than labour, but one which only envy could grudge. The year 1814 saw him in Scotland again: "Yarrow Visited" was probably the best of the consequent poems. In this year he published the *Excursion*, part of the huge work in blank verse. Jeffrey with his "This will never do," Byron with his "drowsy, frowzy poem *The Excursion*, writ in a manner which is my aversion," gave the keynote of popular criticism. The general mind shrunk from several avatars of Wordsworth holding high and

INTRODUCTION

extremely long discourses in bald blank verse. Take his Jacobite—

“ He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed
The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
Aroused his clan, and fighting at their head,
With his brave sword attempted to prevent
Culloden’s fatal overthrow,” &c.

“Wae’s me for Prince Charlie,” indeed! The Jacobite gentleman is said to have been a Drummond, but certainly was not the chief, the Duke of Perth.

The poetry in the *Excursion* needs to be dug for, or disentangled from the abounding sermons. “It is a remarkable fact,” says Wordsworth’s nephew—but really it is not so very remarkable—that one thousand copies contented the public for thirteen years. Blank verse ought to be very good; Wordsworth’s is not very good, and he has an uncurbed flow of pulpit eloquence which scarcely conduces to what he so finely calls

“Joy in widest commonalty spread.”

“To the disinterested lover of poetry,” says Mr. Arnold, “*The Excursion* can never be a satisfactory work.” We may read it for instruction, we may find poetic oases in the desert, but a satisfactory poem, as a poem, *The Excursion* is not. The year of Waterloo produced *The White Doe of Rylstone*. Wordsworth hoped that it would be “acceptable to

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the intelligent, for whom alone it is written." "It comes round to a high point of imagination, the apotheosis of the animal," the doe in question.

If the poem was meant to show the world how a feudal romance in octosyllabic rhyme should be written, it can hardly be called successful. Wordsworth was never a poet of swift action and heady conflict. His hunting knight, in *Hart-Leap Well*, rides "with the slow motion of a summer cloud," not "without stop or stay down the rocky way," not like the Baron of Smailholme or William of De-lorraine. *Hart-Leap Well*, compared with the Chase, when

"The stag at eve had drunk his fill,"

shows how incapable Wordsworth must have necessarily been to appreciate a different kind of hunting poetry. Yet a very distinguished novelist calls the stag of Ben Venue, "Wordsworth's stag"! His aversion to sport did not include angling, of which he was fond; witness his sonnet to Walton and other passages.

In 1814-16, as Mr. Myers points out, Wordsworth was studying Virgil, and Virgil's influence is as perceptible in the stately calm of *Laodamia* (1814) as is the influence of Milton in the patriotic sonnets. In 1819 *Peter Bell* was published, following on a parody, which is exceedingly comic, by Keats's friend, Reynolds. Probably the parody caused the comparative popularity of *Peter Bell*. The remainder

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of Wordsworth's life need not be dwelt on at length. His Scotch and foreign tours produced no poems of much living interest, except his sonnet on Scott and his *Yarrow Revisited*. His attempt to write a history of the Church of England in sonnets, inevitably reminds the scoffer of Mascarille's History of Rome in Madrigals. The Muse had gone away. Wordsworth was made Poet Laureate, in succession to Southey, in 1843. At this time he was at the height of poetical glory, in a veiled grey sunset, while the nascent fame of Tennyson showed

" Fair as a star when only one
Is shining in the sky."

He died on Shakespeare's birthday and death-day, April 23 (1850). There are poets more alluring, both in life and verse; poets with less of dross in their ore, with more of charm in their character; but none more absolutely inspired when inspiration came, none of a career more soberly honourable and brave, none with a better claim to be reckoned among *pii vates et Phæbo digna locuti*. The grave of Scott, beside his beloved Tweed, and among the beautiful ruins of a shrine of the ancient Faith, is not a more sacred place of pilgrimage than Wordsworth's simple tomb in the shadow of his dear hills, within sound of the murmur of the Rotha.

SELECTIONS FROM
WORDSWORTH

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN
ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL



DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this fare-
well,
That, wheresoe'er my steps
may tend,

And whensoe'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look, alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,

WORDSWORTH

Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

1786.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH



ALM is all nature as a resting wheel.

The kine are couched upon the
dewy grass ;

The horse alone, seen dimly as I
pass,

Is cropping audibly his later meal :

Dark is the ground ; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.

Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,

Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal

That grief for which the senses still supply

Fresh food ; for only then, when memory

Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends ! restrain

Those busy cares that would allay my pain ;

Oh ! leave me to myself, nor let me feel

The officious touch that makè's me droop again.

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND



GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames! that other bards may
see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.

Oh glide, fair stream! for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought!—Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,
Who murmuring here a later * ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

* Collins's Ode on the death of Thomson, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his lifetime. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.

WORDSWORTH

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar ;
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.
How calm ! how still ! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended !
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

1789.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE WHICH STANDS NEAR
THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE, ON A DESOLATE PART OF
THE SHORE COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT



AY, Traveller ! rest. This lonely
Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling : what
if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the ver-
dant herb ?

What if the bee love not these barren boughs ?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

LINES LEFT UPON A SEAT

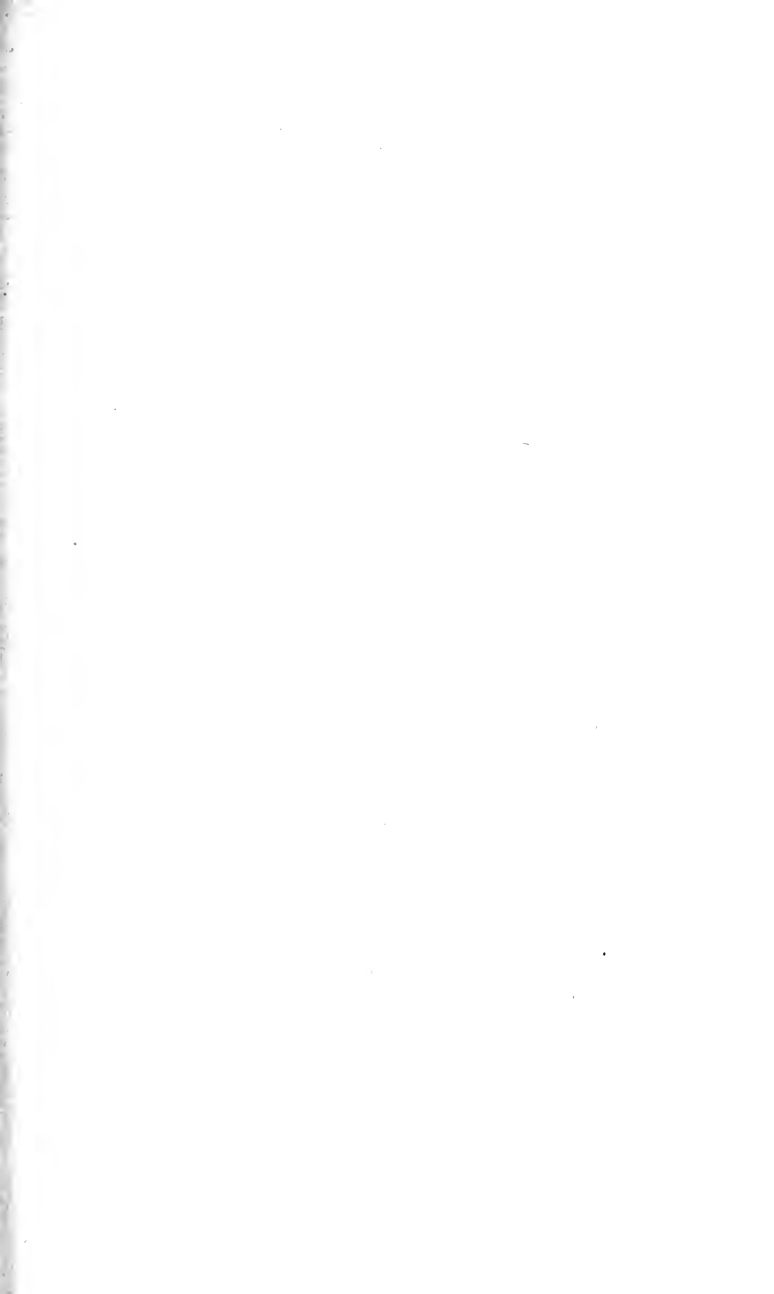
Who he was

That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favoured Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow ; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service ; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger ! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him ; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper :
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here

WORDSWORTH

An emblem of his own unfruitful life :
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beautiful ! Nor, that time,
When Nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds
Warm from the labours of benevolence
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness : then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel : and so, lost Man !
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger ! henceforth be warned ; and know that pride,
How'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness ; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used ; that thought with him





ALFRED PARSONS

“ My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky.”

MY HEART LEAPS UP

Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. Oh be wiser, Thou !
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love ;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

1795.

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 ;
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.

1804.

WORDSWORTH

TO A BUTTERFLY



TAY near me—do not take thy
flight !

A little longer stay in sight !
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy !

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 !

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
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.

1801.

THE SPARROW'S NEST

THE SPARROW'S NEST



BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs to-
gether laid !
On me the chance-discovered
sight

Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it ;
Dreading, though wishing, to be near it ;
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy :

WORDSWORTH

She gave me eyes, she gave me ears ;
And humble cares, and delicate fears ;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears ;
And love, and thought, and joy.

1801.



Walk by the river, in the garden of the house where Wordsworth
was born—Cockermouth.

ALICE FELL

ALICE FELL

OR, POVERTY



HE post-boy drove with fierce career,
For threatening clouds the moon
had drowned ;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways,
I heard the sound,—and more and more ;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out ;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain ;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

WORDSWORTH

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
“Whence comes,” said I, “this piteous moan?”
And there a little Girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

“My cloak!” no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break ;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

“What ails you, child?”—she sobbed “Look here!”
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scarecrow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke,
It hung, nor could at once be freed ;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed !

“And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways?”
“To Durham,” answered she, half wild.
“Then come with me into the chaise.”

ALICE FELL

Insensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

“My child, in Durham do you dwell?”
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, “My name is Alice Fell;
I’m fatherless and motherless.”

And I to Durham, sir, belong.”
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
And all was for her tattered cloak!

The chaise drove on; our journey’s end
Was nigh; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern door we post;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

WORDSWORTH

“ And let it be of duffel grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell ! ”
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell !

1801.

LUCY GRAY

OR, SOLITUDE



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

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,
The hare upon the green ;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

LUCY GRAY

“To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go ;
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,
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.

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

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

WORDSWORTH

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

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor ;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
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.

Then downward 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 :
The marks were still the same ;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the bridge they came.

WE ARE SEVEN

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

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
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.

1799.

WE ARE SEVEN

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

WORDSWORTH

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,
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 ? ”
“ 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,
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. ”

WE ARE SEVEN

“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,
“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 ;
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,
And they are side by side.

“My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

WORDSWORTH

“ 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 sister Jane ;
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,
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,
And he lies by her side.”

“ How many are you, then,” said I,
“ If they two are in heaven ?”
Quick was the little maid’s reply,
“ O master ! we are seven.”

THE PET LAMB

“ 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 ! ”

1798.

THE PET LAMB

A PASTORAL.



HE dew was falling fast, the stars
began to blink ;

I heard a voice ; it said, “ Drink,
pretty creature, drink ! ”

And, looking o’er the hedge, before
me I espied

A snow-white mountain lamb with a maiden at its
side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near ; the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone ;
With one knee on the grass did the little maiden kneel,
While to that mountain lamb she gave its evening meal.

WORDSWORTH

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper
took,

Seemed to feast with head and ears ; and his tail
with pleasure shook.

“ Drink, pretty creature, drink,” she said in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

’Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare !
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can the maiden turned away ;
But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked ; and from a shady
place

I unobserved could see the workings of her face :
If nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little maid might
sing :

“ What ails thee, young one? what? Why pull so at
thy cord?

Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be ;
Rest, little young one, rest ; what is’t that aileth thee?

THE PET LAMB

“What is it thou wouldst seek? What is wanting to
thy heart?

Thy limbs, are they not strong? And beautiful thou
art :

This grass is tender grass ; these flowers they have no
peers ;

And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears !

“If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy woollen
chain,

This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst
gain ;

For rain and mountain storms ! the like thou need'st
not fear—

The rain and storm are things that scarcely can come
here.

“Rest, little young one, rest ; thou hast forgot the
day

When my father found thee first in places far away ;

Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned
by none,

And thy mother from thy side for evermore was
gone.

WORDSWORTH

“ He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee
home :

A blessed day for thee ! then whither wouldst thou
roam ?

A faithful nurse thou hast ; the dam that did thee yearn
Upon the mountain-tops no kinder could have been.

“ Thou know’st that twice a day I have brought thee
in this can

Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran ;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and new.

“ Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they
are now,

Then I’ll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the
plough ;

My playmate thou shalt be ; and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy
fold.

“ It will not, will not rest !— poor creature, can it be
That ’tis thy mother’s heart which is working so in
thee ?

THE PET LAMB

Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see
nor hear.

“Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and
fair !
I've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come
there ;
The little brooks that seem all pastime and all
play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

“Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky ;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me ? Why pull so at thy chain ?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee
again !”

As homeward through the lane I went with lazy
feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat ;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was hers, and one half of it was
mine.

WORDSWORTH

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song ;
“Nay,” said I, “more than half to the damsel must
belong,
For she looked with such a look, and she spake with
such a tone,
That I almost received her heart into my own.”

1800.

TO H. C.

SIX YEARS OLD



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 ;
Thou faery voyager ! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream ;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery ;

TO H. C.

O blessed vision ! happy child !
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

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 !

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.

What hast thou to do with sorrow,

Or the injuries of to-morrow ?

Thou art a dewdrop, which the morn brings
forth,

Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks,

Or to be trailed along the soiling earth ;

WORDSWORTH

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.

1802.

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION
IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

[This extract is reprinted from "The Friend."]



WISDOM and Spirit of the universe !
Thou soul, that art the eternity of
thought !
And giv'st to forms and images a
breath

And everlasting motion ! not in vain,
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,

NATURAL OBJECTS

With life and nature ; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine :
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long ;
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
It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse

WORDSWORTH

That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle : with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron ; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
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,
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
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still

TO A BUTTERFLY

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
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.

1799.

TO A BUTTERFLY



I'VE watched you now a full
half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow
flower ;
And, little butterfly ! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless !—not frozen seas
More motionless ! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again !

WORDSWORTH

This plot of orchard-ground is ours ;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers ;



“Self-poised upon that yellow flower.”

Here rest your wings when they are
weary ;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary !
Come often to us, fear no wrong ;
Sit near us, on the bough !

A FAREWELL

We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young ;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

1801.

A FAREWELL



FAREWELL, thou little nook of
mountain ground,
Thou rocky corner in the lowest
stair
Of that magnificent temple which
doth bound

One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare ;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell!—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful care,
Thee, and the cottage which thou dost surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And there will safely ride when we are gone ;
The flowering shrubs that deck our humble door
Will prosper, though untended and alone.

WORDSWORTH

Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none :
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes, and sun doth shine upon ;
Here are they in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell !
For two months now in vain we shall be sought ;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought ;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell !
Whom from the borders of the lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky well.

We go for one to whom ye will be dear ;
And she will prize this bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, building without peer !
A gentle maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gatherèd,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you ; to you herself will wed—
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown

A FAREWELL

Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known ;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And O most constant, yet most fickle place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost show
To them who look not daily on thy face ;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And say'st, when we forsake thee, " Let them go !"
Thou easy-hearted thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring, the best beloved and best
Joy will be flown in its mortality ;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky ;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sang one song that will not die.

WORDSWORTH

O happy garden! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

1802.

STANZAS

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



WITHIN our happy castle there dwelt
one
Whom without blame I may not
overlook;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took:
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 to-day,
Seek for him,—he is fled; and whither none can say.

STANZAS

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 neighbouring height :
Oft could 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
When he came back to us, a withered flower,—
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,
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 ;
For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.

WORDSWORTH

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 ;
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 grey eyes,
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 ;
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.
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.

STANZAS

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,
A mailed 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
His music, and to view his imagery :
And, sooth, these two were each to the other dear :
No livelier love in such a place could be :
There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen ;
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.

1802.

WORDSWORTH

LUCY



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

When she I loved looked every day
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea ;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard plot ;
And, as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near, and nearer still.

LUCY

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

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a lover's head !
“ Oh mercy ! ” to myself I cried,
“ If Lucy should be dead ! ”

1799.

WORDSWORTH

SHE DWELT AMONG THE
UNTRODDEN WAYS



HE dwelt among the untrodden
ways

Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none
to praise,
And very few to love :

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
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me !

1799.



" She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove."



AMONG UNKNOWN MEN

AMONG UNKNOWN MEN



TRAVELLED among un-
known men,
In lands beyond the sea ;
Nor, England ! did I know
till then
What love I bore to thee.

'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
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 ;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799.

WORDSWORTH

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK



IN distant countries have I
been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full
grown,

Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met ;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet :
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad ;
And in his arms a lamb he had.

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide :
And with his coat did then essay
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, " My friend,
What ails you ? wherefore weep you so ? "

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

“ Shame on me, sir ! this lusty lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock ;
He is the last of all my flock.

“ When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe I bought ;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see ;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be ;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

“ Year after year my stock it grew ;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine a flock as ever grazed !
Upon the Quantock hills they fed ;
They throve, and we at home did thrive :

WORDSWORTH

This lusty lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive ;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

“Six children, sir, had I to feed ;
Hard labour in a time of need !
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man ;
My sheep upon the uplands fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
‘ Do this : how can we give to you,’
They cried, ‘ what to the poor is due ?’

“ I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food ;
For me—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day.

“ Another still ! and still another !
A little lamb, and then its mother !
It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
’Till thirty were not left alive.
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one ;
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone—
Reckless of what might come at last,
Were but the bitter struggle past.

“ To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind ;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me :
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without ;

WORDSWORTH

And crazily and wearily
I went my work about ;
And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.

“ Sir, ’twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be ;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas ! it was an evil time ;
God cursed me in my sore distress ;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less ;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

“ They dwindled, sir, sad sight to see !
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and an ewe ;
And then at last from three to two ;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one :

AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —

And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas ! and I have none ;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock ;
It is the last of all my flock.”

1798.

THE AFFLICTION OF
MARGARET —



HERE art thou, my beloved son,
Where art thou, worse to me
than dead ?
Oh, find me, prosperous or
undone !

Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest ; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name ?

Seven years, alas ! to have received
No tidings of an only child ;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled ;

WORDSWORTH

Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss !
I catch at them, and then I miss ;
Was ever darkness like to this ?

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold ;
Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold :
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base ;
And never blush was on my face.

Ah ! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares !
He knows it not, he cannot guess :
Years to a mother bring distress ;
But do not make her love the less.

Neglect me ! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought ; and, being blind,
Said, " Pride shall help me in my wrong :
Kind mother have I been, as kind

AFFLICTION OF MARGARET —

As ever breathed :” and that is true ;
I’ve wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

My son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh ! do not dread thy mother’s door ;
Think not of me with grief and pain :
I now can see with better eyes ;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And Fortune with her gifts and lies.

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion’s den ;

WORDSWORTH

Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou, and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
'Their way to me : 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
I dread the rustling of the grass ;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass :
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind ;
And all the world appears unkind.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief :
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.

MICHAEL

Then come to me, my son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end ;
I have no other earthly friend.

1804.

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM



F 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

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

Who journey thither find themselves alone

With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites

That overhead are sailing in the sky.

WORDSWORTH

It is in truth an utter solitude ;
Nor should I have made mention of this dell
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 simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet 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
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
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
Homely and rude, I will relate the same

MICHAEL

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.

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,
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,
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,
"The winds are now devising work for me !"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains : he had been alone

WORDSWORTH

Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
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.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed ; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
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 honourable gain ;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less ?
 had laid
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—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.

MICHAEL

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,
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,
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
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The son and father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease ; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the
meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)

WORDSWORTH

And his old father both betook themselves
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.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp ;
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
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 sate,
Father and son, while far into the night
The housewife plied her own peculiar work,

MICHAEL

Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
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,
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.

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
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they

WORDSWORTH

By tendency of nature needs must fail.
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
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the young one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,* a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,

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

MICHAEL

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
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
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
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;
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,
Receiving from his father hire of praise ;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or
voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

WORDSWORTH

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could
stand

Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,
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
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,
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
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means ;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly

MICHAEL

Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
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.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,
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
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
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he

WORDSWORTH

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
'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 ;
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,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return 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,
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

MICHAEL

They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours 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
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas ; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and moneys to the poor,
And at his birthplace built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
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.
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
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night :
If he *could* go, the boy should go to-night.”

WORDSWORTH

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
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 last two nights
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 :
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,
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

MICHAEL

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
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over ; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round ;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
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
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,
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.

WORDSWORTH

With Luke that evening thitherward he walked ;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
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.
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 touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam’st into the world—as oft befalls
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
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;
While 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
And on the mountains ; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father’s knees.

MICHAEL

But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,
As well thou know'st, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
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.
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
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 loath
To give their bodies to the family mould.
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
Than half of my inheritance was mine.

WORDSWORTH

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,
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,
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 ;
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,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee,
boy !

Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast

MICHAEL

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
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
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
May'st bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here : a covenant
'Twill be between us ; but, whatever fate
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

WORDSWORTH

The first stone of the sheep-fold. At the sight
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
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face ;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

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.”
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

MICHAEL

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
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 :
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
He went, and still looked up to sun and
cloud,
And listened to the wind ; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet

WORDSWORTH

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,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
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.
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 neighbourhood :—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door ; and the remains
Of the unfinished sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

1800.

THERE IS AN EMINENCE

THERE IS AN EMINENCE



HERE is an eminence,—of these
our hills

The last that parleys with the
setting sun ;

We can behold it from our orchard
seat ;

And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this peak, so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible ; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
The meteors make of it a favourite haunt :
The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
And she who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Hath to this lonely summit given my name.

1800.



TO THE SMALL CELANDINE *



PRIMSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their
praises ;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory ;

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
For the finding of a star ;

* Common Pilewort.

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE

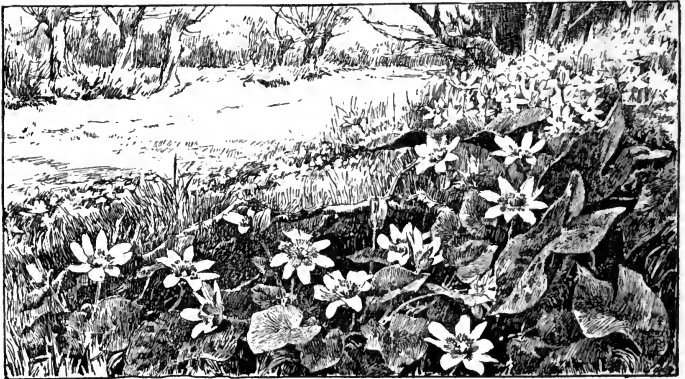
Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout !
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little flower !—I'll make a stir,
Like a sage astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself ;
Since we needs must first have met
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.

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
Like a careless prodigal ;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

WORDSWORTH

Poets, vain men in their mood !
Travel with the multitude :
Never heed them ; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers ;



“ Telling tales about the sun.
When we've little warmth, or none.”

But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,
Joys to spy thee near her home ;
Spring is coming, thou art come !

TO THE SMALL CELANDINE

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming spirit !
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
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,
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 worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble celandine !

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth ;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,

WORDSWORTH

Serving at my heart's command,
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

1803.

THE REDBREAST CHASING
THE BUTTERFLY



ART thou the bird whom man
loves best,
The pious bird with the scarlet
breast,
Our little English robin ;

The bird that comes about our doors
When autumn winds are sobbing ?
Art thou the Peter of Norway boors ?

Their Thomas in Finland,
And Russia far inland ?

The bird, who by some name or other
All men who know thee call their brother,

REDBREAST CHASING BUTTERFLY

The darling of children and men ?
Could Father Adam * open his eyes
And see this sight beneath the skies,
He'd wish to close them again.
If the butterfly knew but his friend,
Hither his flight he would bend ;
And find his way to me,
Under the branches of the tree :
In and out, he darts about ;
Can this be the bird, to man so good,
That, after their bewildering,
Covered with leaves the little children,
So painfully in the wood ?

What ailed thee, Robin, that thou couldst pursue
A beautiful creature,
That is gentle by nature ?
Beneath the summer sky
From flower to flower let him fly ;
'Tis all that he wishes to do.
The cheerer thou of our indoor sadness,
He is the friend of our summer gladness :

* See " Paradise Lost," Book XI., where Adam points out to Eve the ominous sign of the eagle chasing " two birds of gayest plume," and the gentle hart and hind pursued by their enemy.

WORDSWORTH

What hinders, then, that ye should be
Playmates in the sunny weather,
And fly about in the air together !
His beautiful wings in crimson are drest,
A crimson as bright as thine own :
Wouldst thou be happy in thy nest,
O pious bird ! whom man loves best,
Love him, or leave him alone !

1806.

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES



WHAT way look, my infant, lo !
What a pretty baby show !
See the kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,
Withered leaves—one—two—
and three—

From the lofty elder-tree !
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES

Eddyng round and round they sink
Softly, slowly : one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or faery hither tending,—
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his wavering parachute.
——But the kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts !
First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light and just as yellow ;
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop, and there are none :
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire !
With a tiger-leap half way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again :
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjurer ;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart.

WORDSWORTH

Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little tabby care
For the plaudits of the crowd?
Over-happy to be proud,
Over-wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure !

'Tis a pretty baby-treat ;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet ;
Here, for neither babe nor me,
Other playmate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmurings,
Made this orchard's narrow space
And this vale so blithe a place ;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day :

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES

Some are sleeping ; some in bands
Travelled into distant lands ;
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighbourhood ;
And, among the kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.

Where is he that giddy sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colours bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree ;
Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out ;
Hung—head pointing towards the ground—
Fluttered. perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound ?
Lithest, gaudiest harlequin !
Prettiest tumbler ever seen !
Light of heart, and light of limb ;
What is now become of him ?
Lambs, that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,

WORDSWORTH

When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighbouring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain ;
Vainly morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure ;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy :
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near ?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gaiety ?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every creature ;
Whatsoever we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show,

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES

Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty kitten ! from thy freaks,—
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Laura's face ;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
Thee, baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
'That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair !
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason ;
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladsomeness.
—Pleased by any random toy ;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy ;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss ;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,

WORDSWORTH

Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with life's falling leaf.

1804.

THERE WAS A BOY



HERE was a boy; ye knew him
well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many
a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars
began

To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,

THERE WAS A BOY

Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled ; concourse wild
Of jocund din ! And, when there came a pause
Of silence such as baffled his best skill,
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents ; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Pre-eminent in beauty is the vale
Where he was born and bred : the churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village school ;
And through that churchyard when my way has led
On summer evenings, I believe, that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies !

1799.

WORDSWORTH

TO THE CUCKOO



BLITHE new-comer ! I have
heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee
bird,
Or but a wandering voice ?

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,
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
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery ;

TO THE CUCKOO

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to ; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
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.

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
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place ;
That is fit home for thee !

1804.

WORDSWORTH

NUTTING

————— It seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days that cannot die ;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
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
Tow'rd some far-distant wood, a figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
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 ! O'er pathless rocks,
Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
Forcing my way, 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
Tall and erect, with tempting clusters hung,
A virgin scene !—A little while I stood,

NUTTING

Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in ; and, with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
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.
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons reappear
And fade, unseen by any human eye ;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
For ever ; and I saw the sparkling foam,
And—with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, under 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
Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with
crash

WORDSWORTH

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,
Ere from the mutilated bower I turned
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart ; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

1799.

O NIGHTINGALE !



NIGHTINGALE ! thou surely art
A creature of a fiery heart :—
These notes of thine—they pierce
and pierce ;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce !

Thou sing'st as if the god of wine
Had helped thee to a valentine ;

O NIGHTINGALE!

A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night ;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a stockdove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day ;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze :
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 ;
That was the song—the song for me !

1806.

WORDSWORTH

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 ;
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,
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
Or up the mountain springs ;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

THREE YEARS SHE GREW

“The floating clouds their state shall lend
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.

“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
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
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 !

WORDSWORTH

She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene ;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799.

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

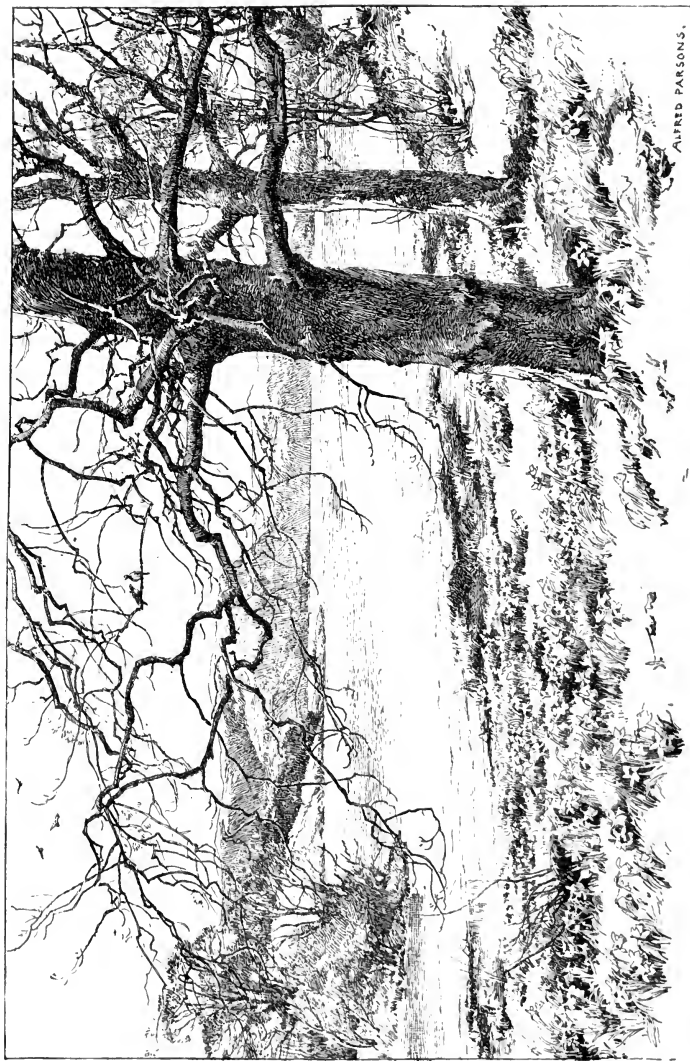


SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
I had no human fears :
She seemed a thing that could not
feel
The touch of earthly years.

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.

1799.





ALFRED PARSONS.

"A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees."

I WANDERED LONELY

I WANDERED LONELY



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 ;

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
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
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :—
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 :

WORDSWORTH

For oft when on my couch I lie
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.

1804.

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.

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

A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

BEGGARS

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
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 :
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her
eyes !

1797.

BEGGARS



HE had a tall man's height, or
more ;
Her face from summer's noontide
heat
No bonnet shaded, but she wore
A mantle, to her very feet
Descending with a graceful flow,
And on her head a cap as white as new-fallen snow.

WORDSWORTH

Her skin was of Egyptian brown ;
Haughty, as if her eye had seen
Its own light to a distance thrown,
She towered, fit person for a queen
To lead those ancient Amazonian files ;
Or ruling bandit's wife among the Grecian
 isles.

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
And begged an alms with doleful plea
That ceased not ; on our English land
Such woes, I knew, could never be ;
And yet a boon I gave her, for the creature
Was beautiful to see—a weed of glorious feature.

I left her, and pursued my way ;
And soon before me did espy
A pair of little boys at play,
Chasing a crimson butterfly :
The taller followed with his hat in hand,
Wreathed round with yellow flowers the gayest of
 the land.

BEGGARS

The other wore a rimless crown
With leaves of laurel stuck about ;
And, while both followed up and down,
Each whooping with a merry shout,
In their fraternal features I could trace
Unquestionable lines of that wild suppliant's face.

Yet *they*, so blithe of heart, seemed fit
For finest tasks of earth or air :
Wings let them have, and they might flit
Precursors to Aurora's car,
Scattering fresh flowers ; though happier far, I ween,
To hunt their fluttering game o'er rock and level
green.

They dart across my path—but lo,
Each ready with a plaintive whine !
Said I, “ Not half-an-hour ago
Your mother has had alms of mine.”
“ That cannot be,” one answered—“ she is dead : ”—
I looked reproof—they saw—but neither hung his
head.

WORDSWORTH

“ She has been dead, sir, many a day.”—
“ Hush, boys ! you’re telling me a lie ;
It was your mother, as I say ! ”
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
“ Come ! come ! ” cried one, and without more ado,
Off to some other play the joyous vagrants flew !

1802.

RUTH



WHEN Ruth was left half deso-
late,
Her father took another mate ;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods ;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

R U T H

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live ; her thoughts her own ;
Herself her own delight ;
Pleased with herself, nor sad nor gay ;
And passing thus the livelong day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest ;
He brought them from the Cherokees ;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung :
But no ! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name ;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the youth could speak :
While he was yet a boy,

WORDSWORTH

The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth ! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he ;
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought ;
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear ;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout !
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long ;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

RUTH

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues ;
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head !
The cypress and her spire ;
Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

“ How pleasant,” then he said, “ it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade

WORDSWORTH

To wander with an easy mind ;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade !

“What days and what bright years ! Ah me !
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while,” said he, “to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this !”

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father's love :
“For there,” said he, “are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

“Sweet Ruth ! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear ;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer !

R U T H

“ Beloved Ruth ! ”—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear :
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

“ And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife.”
Even so they did ; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,

WORDSWORTH

So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers ;
The breezes their own languor lent ;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favoured bowers.

R U T H

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent :
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known ;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires :
A man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn :

WORDSWORTH

What could he less than love a maid
Whose heart with so much nature played?
So kind and so forlorn!

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
“O Ruth! I have been worse than dead;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When I, in confidence and pride,
Had crossed the Atlantic main.

“Before me shone a glorious world—
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
To music suddenly:
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains
To live at liberty.

“No more of this; for now, by thee,
Dear Ruth! more happily set free,
With nobler zeal I burn;
My soul from darkness is released,
Like the whole sky when to the east
The morning doth return.”

RUTH

Full soon that better mind was gone ;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more ;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore ;
But, when they thither came, the youth
Deserted his poor bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth !—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed ;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May—

WORDSWORTH

They all were with her in her cell ;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain ;
She from her prison fled ;
But of the vagrant none took thought ;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again :
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free ;
And, coming to the banks of Tone,
There did she rest ; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still,
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

RUTH

A barn her *winter* bed supplies ;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray !
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old :
Sore aches she needs must have ! but less
Of mind than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is pressed by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a roadside ;
And there she begs at one steep place,
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away ; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers :

WORDSWORTH

This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy child!

Farewell! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth! in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be;
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

1799.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE



HERE 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 ;
Over his own sweet voice the stockdove 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 ;
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.

WORDSWORTH

I was a traveller 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 :
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 farther go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
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 skylark warbling in the sky ;
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—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

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 ;
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 ;
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 come in the end despondency and
madness.

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

WORDSWORTH

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,
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 reposes, there to sun itself ;

Such seemed this man, not all alive nor dead,
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,
A more than human weight upon his frame had
cast.

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale 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
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.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
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.”

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.”
Ere he replied, 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 ;
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.

WORDSWORTH

He told, that to these waters he had come
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;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

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
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 admonishment.

My former thoughts returned : the fear that kills ;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed ;
Cold, pain, and labour, 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 ? ”

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

He with a smile did then his words repeat ;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled ; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
“Once I could meet with them on every side ;
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,
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,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour 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 ;
I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely moor !”

WORDSWORTH

HART-LEAP WELL

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second part of the following poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.



HE knight had ridden down from
Wensley moor
With the slow motion of a summer's
cloud ;
And now, as he approached a
vassal's door,

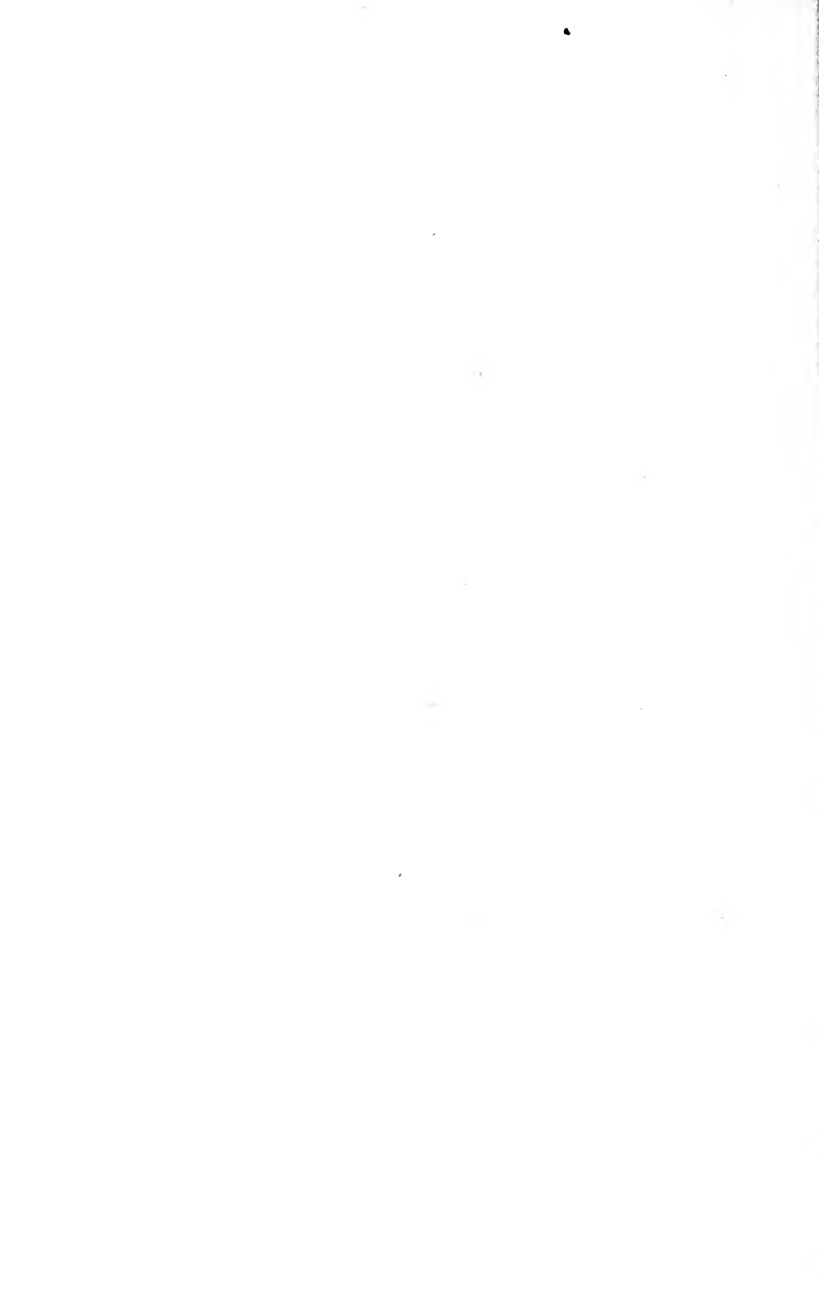
“Bring forth another horse !” he cried aloud.

“Another horse !”—That shout the vassal heard,
And saddled his best steed, a comely grey ;
Sir Walter mounted him ; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes ;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair ;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.



Hart-Leap Well, near Richmond in Yorkshire.



HART-LEAP WEL L

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar ;
But horse and man are vanished one and all ;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain :
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The knight hallooed, he cheered, and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern ;
But breath and eyesight fail ; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race ?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown ?
This chase it looks not like an earthly chase ;
Sir Walter and the hart are left alone.

The poor hart toils along the mountain-side ;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died ;
But now the knight beholds him lying dead.

WORDSWORTH

Dismounting then, he leaned against a thorn ;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy :
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat :
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned ;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the hart was lying stretched ;
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot !)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

HART-LEAP WELL

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes :
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

"I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour, made for rural joy ;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

"A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell !
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

"And, gallant stag ! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised ;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

"And, in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour ;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

WORDSWORTH

“Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure ;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure !”

Then home he went, and left the hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
Soon did the knight perform what he had said,
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well ;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering paramour ;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

HART-LEAP WELL

The knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

The moving accident is not my trade ;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts :
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song from thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square ;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine :
And pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line—
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

WORDSWORTH

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head :
Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green ;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
“ Here in old time the hand of man hath been.”

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey ;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow :—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
“ A jolly place,” said he, “ in times of old !
But something ails it now ; the spot is cursed.

“ You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower ; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms !

HART-LEAP WELL

“The arbour does its own condition tell ;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream ;
But as to the great lodge ! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

“There’s neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone ;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

“Some say that here a murder has been done
And blood cries out for blood : but, for my part,
I’ve guessed, when I’ve been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy hart.

“What thoughts must through the creature’s brain
 have past !
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, sir, at this last—
O master ! it has been a cruel leap.

“For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race ;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

WORDSWORTH

“ Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-tide ;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother’s side.

“ In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing ;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

“ Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade ;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone ;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone.”

“ Grey-headed shepherd, thou hast spoken well ;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine :
This beast not unobserved by Nature fell ;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

“ The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom He loves.

HART-LEAP WELL

“The pleasure-house is dust :—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom ;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

“She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known ;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

“One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals ;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

1800.

WORDSWORTH

SONG AT THE FEAST OF
BROUGHAM CASTLE

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD,
TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS



HIGH in the breathless hall the
minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled
with the song.—
The words of ancient time I thus
translate,

A festal strain that hath been silent long :—

“ From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last ;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming :
Both roses flourish, red and white :
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended —

SONG

Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how she smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

“They came with banner, spear, and
shield;
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

WORDSWORTH

“How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though lonely, a deserted tower ;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom :
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her !—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream ;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard ;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely tower :—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair house by Emont's side,
This day distinguished without peer
To see her master and to cheer
Him, and his lady mother dear !

“Oh ! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die !

SONG

Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the mother and the child. .
Who will take them from the light ?
Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where ?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks ;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, mother mild,
Maid and mother undefiled,
Save a mother and her child !

“Now who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock’s side, a shepherd boy ?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be he who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame ?
O’er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man’s bread !
God loves the child ; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,

WORDSWORTH

The lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her babe did say :
' My own, my own, thy fellow-guest
I may not be ; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best ! '

“ Alas ! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs ;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise !
Hear it, good man, old in days !
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young bird that is distress ;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

“ A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear !

SONG

I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth !
Our Clifford was a happy youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill :
His garb is humble ; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien ;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a child of strength and state !
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear ;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty ;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-Tarn did wait on him ;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality ;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.

WORDSWORTH

He knew the rocks which angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant ;
He hath kenned them taking wing :
And into caves where faeries sing
He hath entered ; and been told
By voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be ;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom :
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book ;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls ;—
' Quell the Scot,' exclaims the lance—
' Bear me to the heart of France,'
Is the longing of the shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field ;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory !
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our shepherd, in his power,

SONG

Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored,
Like a reappearing star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart was
framed :

How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie ;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead :
Nor did he change ; but left in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

WORDSWORTH

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth ;
The shepherd lord was honoured more and more ;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
“The good Lord Clifford” was the name he bore.

1807.

LINES

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



IVE years have passed ; five summers,
with the length
Of five long winters ! and again I
hear
These waters, rolling from their
mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.*—Once again
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

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

LINES

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
'Mid groves and copses. 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 !
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 beauteous forms.

Through a long absence, have not been to me
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 ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration :—feelings, too,
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,

WORDSWORTH

As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
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,
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,
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,
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,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—

LINES

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
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
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
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,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract

WORDSWORTH

Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours 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, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
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
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
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
A motion and a spirit, that impels

LINES

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,
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,*
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
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 :
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
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,

* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

WORDSWORTH

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
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,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
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
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,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,

LINES

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
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
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
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !

1798.

WORDSWORTH

FRENCH REVOLUTION

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS COMMENCEMENT.*
REPRINTED FROM "THE FRIEND."



H! 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

But to be young was very heaven!—Oh! times,

In which the meagre, 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,

When most intent on making of herself

A prime enchantress—to assist the work,

Which then was going forward in her name!

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,

* This, and the extract ("Influence of Natural Objects"), page 30, and the first piece of this class, are from the unpublished poem of which some account is given in the preface to "The Excursion."

FRENCH REVOLUTION

The beauty wore of promise—that which sets
(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
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
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
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,—
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,

WORDSWORTH

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
We find our happiness, or not at all !

1805.

TO A SKYLARK



THE REAL 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 ?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still !

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood ;
A privacy of glorious light is thine ;
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 !

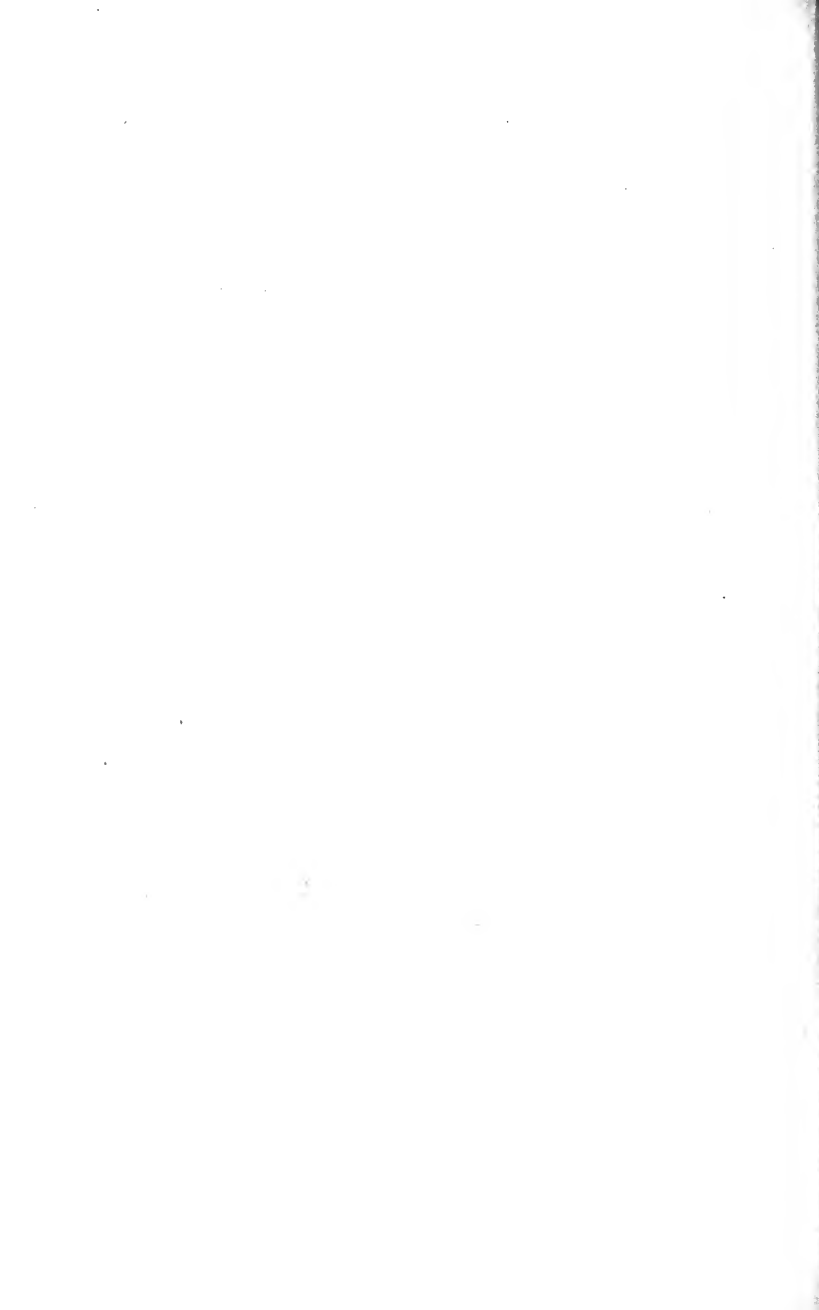
1825.



ALFRED PARSONS:

To a Skylark.

L





LAODAMIA



WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope
inspired ;
And from the infernal gods, 'mid
shades forlorn

Of night, my slaughtered lord have I required :
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,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands ;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows ;
And she expects the issue in repose.

WORDSWORTH

O terror ! what hath she perceived?—O joy !
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold ?
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
That calms all fear : “ Such grace hath crowned thy
prayer,
Laodamia ! 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 ! ”

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 reunite,
And reassume his place before her sight.

LAODAMIA

“Protesilæus, 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.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

Thou know'st, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan
strand
Should die; but me the threat could not with-
hold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

WORDSWORTH

“Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
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.

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

“No spectre 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!”
Jove frowned in heaven; the conscious Parcæ
threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

“This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys

LAODAMIA

Of sense were able to return as fast
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
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
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.

“ 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,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman’s breast.

WORDSWORTH

“But if thou goest I follow—” “Peace!” he said—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
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—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued:

Of all that is most beautiful—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purple 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
That privilege by virtue.—“Ill,” said he,

LAODAMIA

“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 :

“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 council were detained ;
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
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,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains—flowers ;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

WORDSWORTH

“ But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
‘ Behold, they tremble !—haughty their array,
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
In reason, in self-government too slow ;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest reunion in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised ;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

“ Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend—
Seeking 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
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 :

LAODAMIA

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

And him no mortal effort can detain :

Swift, towards 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.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,

She perished ; and, as for a wilful crime,

By the just gods whom no weak pity moved,

Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,

Apart from happy ghosts, that gather flowers

Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Yet tears to human suffering are due ;

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

From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;

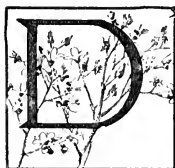
WORDSWORTH

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 ! *

1814.

TO A YOUNG LADY

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS
IN THE COUNTRY.



DEAR child of nature, let them
rail !
There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold ;
Where thou, a wife and friend,
shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

* For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's Natural History, lib. xvi. cap. 44 ; and for the features in the character of Protesilaus, see the "Iphigenia in Aulis" of Euripides. Virgil places the shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers :

" ———— His Laodamia
It comes."

NUNS FRET NOT

There, healthy as a shepherd boy,
And treading among flowers of joy
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh
A melancholy slave ;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

1803.

NUNS FRET NOT



UNS 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,
Sit blithe and happy ; bees that soar for bloom,

WORDSWORTH

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,
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.

PELION AND OSSA



PELION and Ossa flourish side by
side,
Together in immortal books en-
rolled :
His ancient dower Olympus hath
not sold ;

And that inspiring hill which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old ;
While not an English mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.

TO SLEEP

Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds :
What was the great Parnassus' self to thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British hill is nobler far ; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

1801.

TO SLEEP



GENTLE sleep! do they belong
to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou
dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brood-
ing dove,

A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O sleep! thou art to me
A fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no ;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child ;

WORDSWORTH

Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled :
O gentle creature ! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

TO SLEEP



SOFT words have oft been spoken to
thee, sleep !
And thou hast had thy store of
tenderest names ;
The very sweetest fancy culls or
frames.

When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep !
Dear bosom child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering ; balm that tames
All anguish ; saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst tyrant by which flesh is crost ?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most !

TO SLEEP

TO SLEEP



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;

I have thought of all by turns, and yet do 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,
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!

WORDSWORTH

THE WILD DUCK'S NEST



HE imperial consort of the fairy
king

Owens not a sylvan bower ; or
gorgeous cell

With emerald floored, and with
purpureal shell

Ceilinged and roofed, that is so fair a thing
As this low structure—for the tasks of spring
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell ;
And spreads in steadfast peace her brooding-wing.
Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree
bough,

And dimly-gleaming nest,—a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow :
I gazed—and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For humankind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride !

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN
“THE COMPLETE ANGLER.”



WHILE flowing rivers yield a blame-
less sport,
Shall live the name of Walton ;—
sage benign !
Whose pen, the mysteries of the
rod and line

Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline,
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook !
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet book,
The cowslip bank and shady willow-tree,
And the fresh meads ; where flowed from every
nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome piety !

WORDSWORTH

DECAY OF PIETY



IT have I seen, ere time had
ploughed my cheek,
Matrons and sires—who, punctual
to the call
Of their loved church, on fast or
festival

Through the long year the house of prayer would
seek :

By Christmas snows, by visitation bleak
Of Easter winds, unscared, from hut or hall
They came to lowly bench or sculptured stall,
But with one fervour of devotion meek.

I see the places where they once were known,
And ask, surrounded even by kneeling crowds,
Is ancient piety for ever flown ?

Alas ! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds
That, struggling through the western sky, have
won

Their pensive light from a departed sun !

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING



T 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 ;

The gentleness of heaven broods o'er 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,

If thou appear 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.

WORDSWORTH

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH
WITH US



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 !
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
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.

SCORN NOT THE SONNET

SCORN NOT THE SONNET

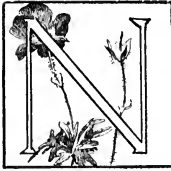


CORN not the sonnet ; critic, you
have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours ;—with
this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart ;
the melody

Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound ;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound ;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief ;
The sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionáry brow : a glow-worm lamp,
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 !

WORDSWORTH

NOT LOVE, NOR WAR



NOT love, nor war, nor the
tumultuous swell
Of civil conflict, nor the
wrecks of change,
Nor duty struggling with afflic-
tions strange—

Not these alone inspire the tuneful shell ;
But where untroubled peace and concord
 dwell,

There also is the muse not loth to range,
Watching the twilight smoke of cot or grange,
Skyward ascending from a woody dell.

Meek aspirations please her, lone endeavour,
And sage content, and placid melancholy ;
She loves to gaze upon a crystal river,
Diaphanous because it travels slowly ;
Soft is the music that would charm for ever ;
The flower of sweetest smell is shy and lowly.

HAIL, TWILIGHT

HAIL, TWILIGHT



AIL, Twilight, sovereign of one
peaceful hour!

Not dull art thou as undiscerning
night:

But studious only to remove from
sight

Day's mutable distinctions. Ancient power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower,
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was
seen

The self-same vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy power! brought
forth;

These mighty barriers, and the gulf between;
The floods,—the stars,—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

WORDSWORTH

WITH HOW SAD STEPS



WITH how sad steps, O moon, thou
climb'st the sky,

“How silently, and with how wan
a face!”

Where art thou? Thou so often
seen on high

Running among the clouds a wood-nymph's race!

Unhappy nuns, whose common breath's a sigh

Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!

The northern wind, to call thee to the chase,

Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I

The power of Merlin, goddess! this should be:

And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,

Should sally forth, to keep thee company,

Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue
heaven;

But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,

Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

CAPTIVITY

CAPTIVITY.—MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS



AS the cold aspect of a sunless
way
Strikes through the traveller's frame
with deadlier chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious
hill,

Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray ;
So joys, remembered without wish or will,
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill,—
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state !
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Reflected in my bosom all too late !
Oh, be my spirit, like my thralldom, strait ;
And, like mine eyes that stream with sorrow,
blind.

WORDSWORTH

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER
BRIDGE

SEPTEMBER 3, 1802



ARTH has not anything to show
more fair :

Dull would he be of soul who
could pass by

A sight so touching in its ma-
jesty :

This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, 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
In his first splendour 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 !

OXFORD

OXFORD

MAY 30, 1820



E sacred nurseries of blooming youth !

In whose collegiate shelter Eng-land's flowers

Expand—enjoying through their vernal hours

The air of liberty, the light of truth ;

Much have ye suffered from time's gnawing tooth,

Yet, O ye spires of Oxford ! domes and towers !

Gardens and groves ! your presence overpowers

The soberness of reason ; till, in sooth,

Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,

I slight my own beloved Cam, to range

Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet ;

Pace the long avenue, or glide adown

The stream-like windings of that glorious street—

An eager novice robed in fluttering gown !

WORDSWORTH

TO THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT

[PAINTED AT RYDAL MOUNT, BY W. PICKERSGILL, ESQ., FOR
ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE]



O, faithful portrait! and where long
hath knelt
Margaret, the saintly foundress,
take thy place;
And if time spare the colours
for the grace

Which to the work surpassing skill hath dealt,
Thou, on thy rock reclined, though kingdoms
melt

And states be torn up by the roots, wilt seem
To breathe in rural peace, to hear the stream,
And think and feel as once the poet felt.

Whate'er thy fate, those features have not grown
Unrecognised through many a household tear
More prompt, more glad, to fall than drops of
dew

By morning shed around a flower half-blown;
Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear!

AT FURNESS ABBEY

AT FURNESS ABBEY



WELL have yon railway labourers to
THIS ground

Withdrawn for noontide rest. They
sit, they walk

Among the ruins, but no idle
talk

Is heard ; to grave demeanour all are bound ;
And from one voice a hymn with tuneful sound
Hallows once more the long-deserted quire
And thrills the old sepulchral earth, around.
Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
That wide-spanned arch, wondering how it was
raised,

To keep, so high in air, its strength and grace :
All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
And by the general reverence God is praised :
Profane despoilers, stand ye not reproved,
While thus these simple-hearted men are moved ?

June 21, 1845.

WORDSWORTH

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

1803

SEVEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH



SHIVER, spirit fierce and
bold,

At thought of what I now
behold :

As vapours breathed from
dungeons cold

Strike pleasure dead,
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
I shrink with pain ;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Of weight—nor press on weight !—away
Dark thoughts !—they came, but not to stay ;

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

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
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.

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

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for he was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
 And showed my youth
How verse may build a princely throne
 On humble truth.

WORDSWORTH

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

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

The tear will start, and let it flow ;
Thou ' poor inhabitant below,'
At this dread moment—even so—
 Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
 Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach ; of knowledge graded

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS

By fancy what a rich repast !

But why go on?—

Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,

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 !

Yet one to which is not denied

Some sad delight.

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed

Hath early found among the dead,

Harboured where none can be misled,

Wronged, or distrest ;

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,

May He who halloweth the place

Where man is laid

Receive thy spirit in the embrace

For which it prayed !

WORDSWORTH

Sighing I turned away ; but ere
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.

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

(AT INVERRNAID, UPON LOCH LOMOND.)



WEET Highland girl, a very
shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower !
Twice seven consenting years
have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy
head :

And these grey rocks ; that household lawn ;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn ;
This fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake ;
This little bay, a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy abode—

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream ;
Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep !
But, O fair creature ! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless thee, vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart ;
God shield thee to thy latest years !
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers ;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away :
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered like a random seed,
Remote from men, thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness :
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a mountaineer :

WORDSWORTH

A face with gladness overspread !
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred !
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays ;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts, that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech :
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life !
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind,
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee, who art so beautiful ?
O happy pleasure ! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell ;
Adopt your homely ways and dress,
A shepherd, thou a shepherdess !
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality :
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea ; and I would have

TO A HIGHLAND GIRL

Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see !
Thy elder brother I would be,
Thy father—anything to thee !

Now thanks to Heaven ! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had ; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our memory, feel that she hath eyes :
Then, why should I be loth to stir ?
I feel this place was made for her ;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland girl ! from thee to part ;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall ;
And thee, the spirit of them all !

WORDSWORTH

GLEN-ALMAIN ;

OR,

THE NARROW GLEN



IN this still place, remote from
men,

Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW
GLEN ;

In this still place, where mur-
murs on

But one meek streamlet, only one :
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death ;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent ;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled ;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet ;
But this is calm ; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

GLEN-ALMAIN

Does then the bard sleep here indeed?
Or is it but a groundless creed?
What matters it?—I blame them not
Whose fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved ; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell
Would break the silence of this dell :
It is not quiet, is not ease ;
But something deeper far than these :
The separation that is here
Is of the grave ; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead :
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race !
Lies buried in this lonely place.

WORDSWORTH

STEPPING WESTWARD

[While my fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Katrine, one fine evening after sunset, in our road to a hut where, in the course of our tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What! you are stepping westward?"]



HAT! you are stepping westward?—*Yea.*

"'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,

If we, who thus together roam
In a strange land, and far
from home,

Were in this place the guests of chance :
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on ?

The dewy ground was dark and cold ;
Behind, all gloomy to behold ;
And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny :

STEPPING WESTWARD

I liked the greeting ; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound ;



Stepping Westward.

And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

WORDSWORTH

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake :
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy :
Its power was felt ; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing sky,
The echo of the voice inwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

THE SOLITARY REAPER



BEHOLD her, single in the
field,
Yon solitary Highland lass !
Reaping and singing by her-
self ;

Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
Oh, listen ! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
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,
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 !

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 ;—

WORDSWORTH

I listened, motionless and still ;
And as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

COMPOSED AT — CASTLE



DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the
unworthy lord!

Whom mere despite of heart could
so far please,

And love of havoc (for with such
disease

Fame taxes him) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde
A brotherhood of venerable trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old trees; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

YARROW UNVISITED

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 unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde,
and Tay,
And with the Tweed had
travelled;

And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my “*winsome marrow*,”
“Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow.”

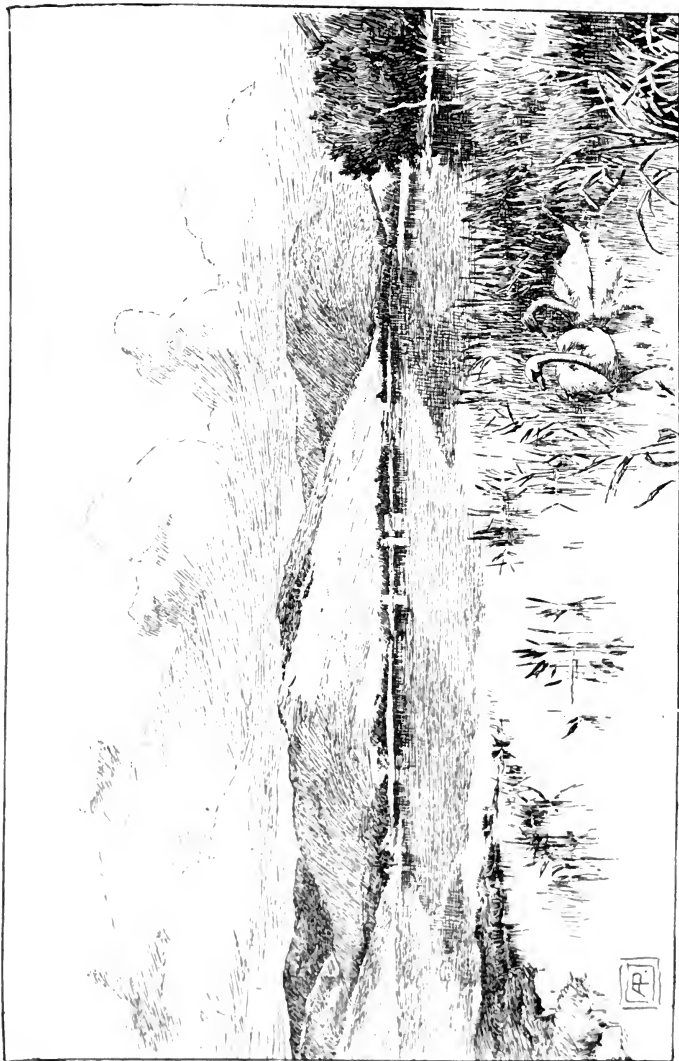
“Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, ’tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!

WORDSWORTH

On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow !
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

“ There's Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us ;
And Dryburgh, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus ;
There's pleasant Teviotdale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow :
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow ?

“ 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 :
My true love sighed for sorrow ;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !



‘The swan on still St. Mary’s Lake.’



YARROW UNVISITED

“Oh! green,” said I, “are Yarrow’s holms
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,*
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
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!
We will not see them; will not go,
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!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?”

* See Hamilton’s ballad, as above.

WORDSWORTH

The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome marrow !
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,
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 ! ”

IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKIE

(AN INVASION BEING EXPECTED, OCTOBER 1803.)



SIX thousand veterans practised in
war's game,
Tried men at Killicrankie were
arrayed
Against an equal host that wore
the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came

YARROW VISITED

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
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
Oh, 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.

YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER 1814.



AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the
stream
Of which my fancy cher-
ished,
So faithfully, a waking dream ?
An image that hath perished !

WORDSWORTH

Oh, 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
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 ;
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,
A tender hazy brightness ;
Mild dawn of promise ! that excludes
All profitless dejection ;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous flower
Of Yarrow vale lay bleeding ?

YARROW VISITED

His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding :
And haply from this crystal pool,
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,
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 ;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow !

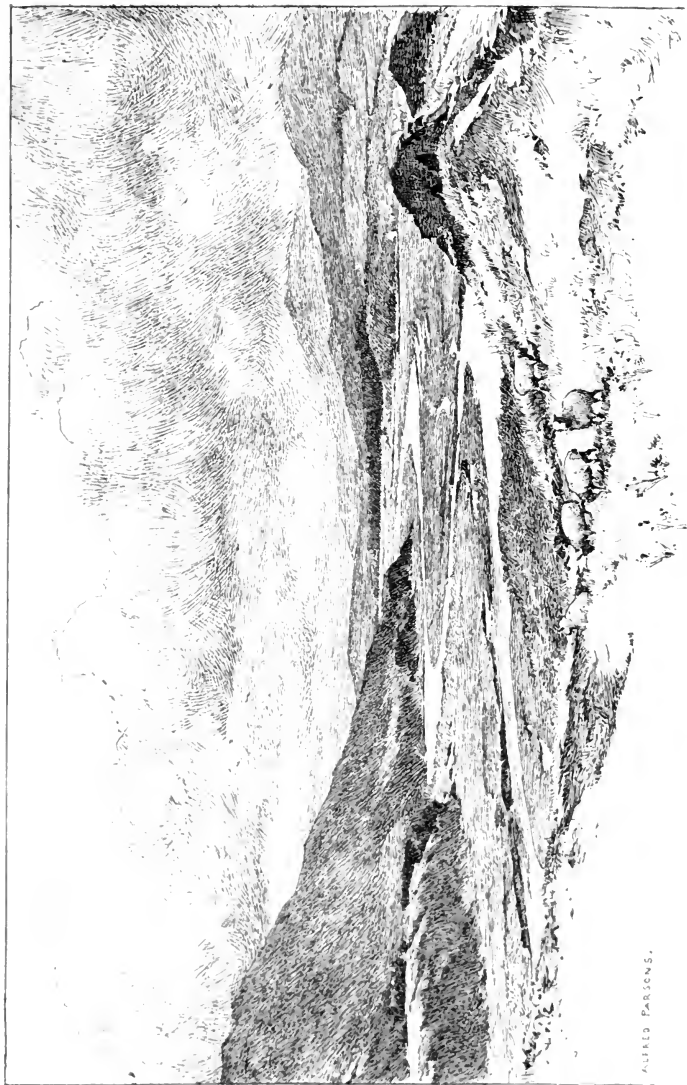
But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation :
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy ;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

WORDSWORTH

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature ;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a ruin hoary !
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 ;
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.

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 !



ALFRED PARSONS.

The Vale of Yarrow.



YARROW VISITED

And what if I enwreathed my own !
'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 !
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,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the heights—
They melt, and soon must vanish ;
One hour is theirs, no more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow !
Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

WORDSWORTH

JONES! AS FROM CALAIS

(COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS, ON THE ROAD LEADING TO
ARDRES, AUGUST 7, 1802.)



JONES! as from Calais southward
you and I
Went pacing side by side, this
public way
Streamed with the pomp of a
too-credulous day,*

When faith was pledged to new-born liberty :
A homeless sound of joy was in the sky ;
From hour to hour the antiquated earth
Beat like the heart of man : songs, garlands, mirth,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh !
And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
“ *Good-morrow, citizen !* ” a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it ! Yet despair
Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare.

* 14th July 1790.

EXTINCTION OF VENETIAN REPUBLIC

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.

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,

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.

WORDSWORTH

INLAND, WITHIN A HOLLOW
VALE

SEPTEMBER 1802. NEAR DOVER.



INLAND, within a hollow vale, I
stood ;

And saw, while sea was calm and
air was clear,

The coast of France, the coast of
France how near !

Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.

I shrunk ; for verily the barrier flood

Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,

A span of waters ; yet what power is there !

What mightiness for evil and for good !

Even so doth God protect us if we be

Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,

Strength to the brave, and power, and deity,

Yet in themselves are nothing ! One decree

Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul

Only the nations shall be great and free !

THOUGHT OF A BRITON

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 !

There came a tyrant, and with holy glee

Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly striven.

Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,

Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.

Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft ;

Then cleave, oh, 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 !

WORDSWORTH

O FRIEND! I KNOW NOT

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1802.



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,
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,
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.

MILTON! THOU SHOULDST BE LIVING

MILTON! THOU SHOULDST BE
LIVING AT THIS HOUR

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,
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 ;
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.

WORDSWORTH

WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN
MEMORY



WHEN I have borne in memory what
has tamed
Great nations, how ennobling
thoughts depart
When men change swords for
ledgers, and desert.

The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled.
What wonder if a poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child?

THESE TIMES

THESE TIMES STRIKE MONEYED
WORLDLINGS

OCTOBER 1803.



THESE times strike moneyed world-
lings with dismay:
Even rich men, brave by nature,
taint the air
With words of apprehension and
despair :

While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
Sound, healthy children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by hope's perpetual breath?
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital.—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death?

WORDSWORTH

TO THE MEN OF KENT

OCTOBER 1803.



ANGUARD 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 !
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,
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 !

LINES ON THE EXPECTED INVASION

LINES ON THE EXPECTED
INVASION

1803.



COME ye—who, if (which Heaven
avert!) the land
Were with herself at strife, would
take your stand,
Like gallant Falkland, by the
monarch's side,
And, like Montrose, make loyalty your pride—
Come ye—who, not less zealous, might display
Banners at enmity with regal sway,
And, like the Pym and Miltons of that day,
Think that a state would live in sounder health
If kingship bowed its head to commonwealth—
Ye too—whom no discreditable fear
Would keep, perhaps with many a fruitless
tear,
Uncertain what to choose and how to steer—
And ye—who might mistake for sober sense
And wise reserve the plea of indolence—

WORDSWORTH

Come ye—whate'er your creed—oh, waken all,
Whate'er your temper, at your country's call ;
Resolving (this a freeborn nation can)
To have one soul, and perish to a man,
Or save this honoured land from every lord
But British reason and the British sword.

ANOTHER YEAR !

NOVEMBER 1806.



ANOTHER year !—another deadly
blow !

Another mighty empire over-
thrown !

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

The last that dare to struggle with the foe.

'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 !

We shall exult, if they who rule the land

THE ROYAL SWEDE

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 honour which they do not understand.

CALL NOT THE ROYAL SWEDE UNFORTUNATE



ALL not the royal Swede unfor-
tunate,
Who never did to fortune bend the
knee ;
Who slighted fear, rejected stead-
fastly

Temptation ; and whose kingly name and state
Have 'perished by his choice, and not his fate !'
Hence lives he, to his inner self endeared ;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven
ordain
That this great servant of a righteous cause

WORDSWORTH

Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.

THE VIRGIN



OTHER! whose virgin bosom
was uncrost
With the least shade of thought
to sin allied ;
Woman ! above all women
glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast ;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost ;
Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast ;
Thy image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
As to a visible power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in thee
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene !

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES

WALTON'S BOOK OF LIVES



HERE are no colours in the fairest
sky
So fair as these. The feather,
whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives
of these good men,
Dropped from an angel's wing. With moistened eye
We read of faith and purest charity
In statesman, priest, and humble citizen
Oh, could we copy their mild virtues, then
What joy to live, what blessedness to die !
Methinks their very names shine still and bright ;
Apart, like glow-worms on a summer night ;
Or lonely tapers when from far they fling
A guiding ray ; or seen, like stars on high.
Satellites burning in a lucid ring
Around meek Walton's heavenly memory,

WORDSWORTH

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE
CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE



TAKE not the royal saint with vain
expense,
With ill-matched aims the architect
who planned,
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed scholars only, this immense
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
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die ;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

YARROW REVISITED

YARROW REVISITED

[The following Stanzas are a memorial of a day passed 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 title *Yarrow Revisited* will stand in no need of explanation for readers acquainted with the author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated stream.]



HE gallant youth, who may have
gained,
Or seeks, a 'winsome marrow,'
Was but an infant in the lap
When first I looked on
Yarrow ;

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,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling ;

WORDSWORTH

But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden ;
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
For quiet contemplation :
No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.

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
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far,
By cordial love invited.

YARROW REVISITED

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
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
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 ;
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
Green Eildon-hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes ;
And leave thy Tweed and Teviot

WORDSWORTH

For mild Sorento's breezy waves ;
 May classic fancy, linking
With native fancy her fresh aid,
 Preserve thy heart from sinking :

Oh ! while they minister to thee,
 Each vying with the other,
May health return to mellow age
 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 !

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,
 Wherever they invite thee,
At parent Nature's grateful call,
 With gladness must requite thee.

YARROW REVISITED

A gracious welcome shall be thine,
Such looks of love and honour
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,
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 ?
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 localised romance
Plays false with our affections ;
Unsanctifies our tears—made sport
For fanciful dejections :

WORDSWORTH

Ah, no! the visions of the past
Sustain the heart in feeling
Life as she is—our changeful life,
With friends and kindred dealing.

Bear witness, ye, whose thoughts that day
In Yarrow's groves were centred ;
Who through the silent portal arch
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.

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,
Dear to the common sunshine,
And dearer still, as now I feel,
To memory's shadowy moonshine !

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SCOTT

ON THE DEPARTURE OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT

FROM ABBOTSFORD FOR NAPLES



TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weep-
ing rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic
light

Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height :
Spirits of power, assembled there, complain
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 ;
Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope !

WORDSWORTH

THE TROSSACHS



HERE'S not a nook within this
solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for
one
Taught by his summer spent, his
autumn gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

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 !
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,
Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
With step prelude to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand,
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay !

WORDSWORTH

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?

“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
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!”

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
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,
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.

"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,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

WORDSWORTH

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING



HEARD a thousand blended
notes,

While in a grove I sate re-
clined,

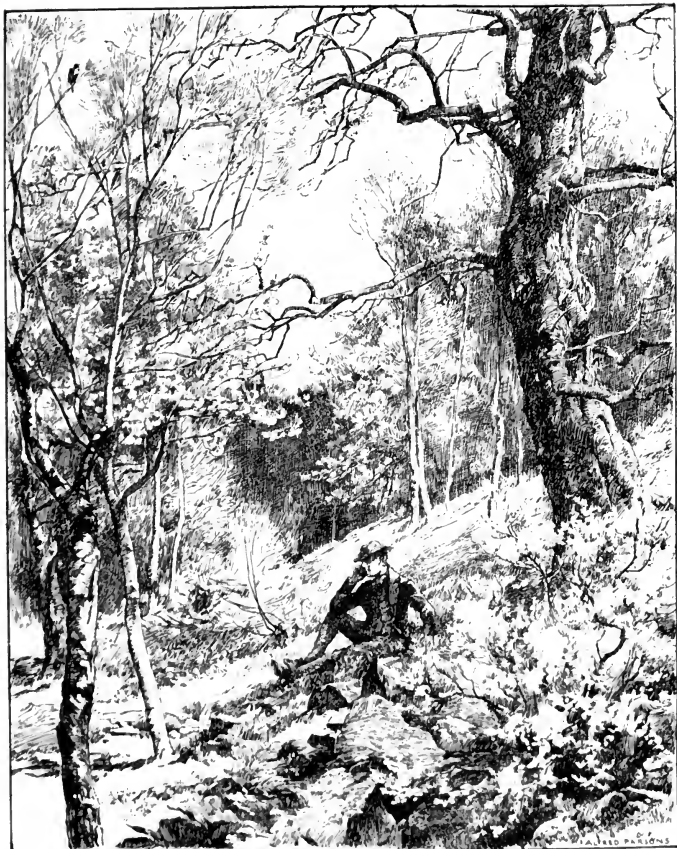
In that sweet mood when
pleasant thoughts

Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths ;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played ;
Their thoughts I cannot measure :—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.



"I heard a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined."

TO MY SISTER

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air ;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from Heaven be sent,
If such be nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man ?

1798.

TO MY SISTER



T is the first mild day of
March :
Each minute sweeter than
before,
The redbreast sings from
the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

WORDSWORTH

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister ! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign ;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you ;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar :
We from to-day, my friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth :
It is the hour of feeling.

TO MY SISTER

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason :
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey :
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls :
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my sister ! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

1798.

WORDSWORTH

SIMON LEE

THE OLD HUNTSMAN ;

WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED



IN the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old man dwells, a little
man,
'Tis said he once was tall.

Full five-and-thirty years he lived
A running huntsman merry ;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee
When echo bandied, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage ;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.

SIMON LEE

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind ;
And often, ere the chase was done,
He reeled, and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices ;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices !

But, oh the heavy change !—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see !
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the hall of Ivor ;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead ;
He is the sole survivor.

And he is lean and he is sick ;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick ;
His legs are thin and dry.

WORDSWORTH

One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door.
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger ;
But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer ?

Oft, working by her husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do ;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.

SIMON LEE

Few months of life has he in store,
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
My gentle reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,
And now I fear that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O reader ! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,
O gentle reader ! you would find
A tale in everything.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must kindly take it :
It is no tale ; but, should you think,
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old man doing all he could
To unearth the root of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.

WORDSWORTH

The mattock tottered in his hand ;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

“You’re overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool,” to him I said ;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,
At which the poor old man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
I’ve heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning ;
Alas ! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener left me mourning.

1798.



THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS



He walked along, while bright
and red
Uprose the morning sun :
And Matthew stopped, he
looked, and said,

“The will of God be done !”

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey ;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

WORDSWORTH

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

“Our work,” said I, “was well begun ;
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought ?”

A second time did Matthew stop ;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply :

“Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

“And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS

“ With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the churchyard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter’s grave.

“ Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale ;
And then she sang ;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

“ Six feet in earth my Emma lay ;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e’er had loved before.

“ And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

“ A basket on her head she bare ;
Her brow was smooth and white :
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight !

WORDSWORTH

“No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free ;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

“ There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine ;
I looked at her, and looked again :
And did not wish her mine.”

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

1799.

THE FOUNTAIN

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.

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
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,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made ! ”

WORDSWORTH

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

“No check, no stay, this streamlet fears ;
How merrily it goes !
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

“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,
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
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

THE FOUNTAIN

“The blackbird amid leafy trees,
The lark above the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
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 :

“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
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,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved.”

WORDSWORTH

“ Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains !
I live and sing my idle songs
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.”

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,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

1799

ODE TO DUTY

ODE TO DUTY

"Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eo perductus, ut non tantum recte facere possim, sed nisi recte 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;
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
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:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread power! around
them cast.

WORDSWORTH

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
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.

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
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,
I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought :

ODE TO DUTY

Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
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 :
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 !
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 ;
The confidence of reason give ;
And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live !

1805.

WORDSWORTH

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
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought :
Whose high endeavours 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 ;
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 ;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower ;

THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives ;
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
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,
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
To evil for a guard against worst ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows ;
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means ; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire ;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim ;

WORDSWORTH

And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state ;
Whom they must follow ; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all :
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
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 ;
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
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 :—

THE HAPPY WARRIOR

'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,
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,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast :
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause ;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause :
This is the happy warrior ; this is he
Whom every man in arms should wish to be.

1806.

WORDSWORTH

IF THIS GREAT WORLD



IF this great world of joy and pain
Revolve in one sure track ;
If freedom, set, will rise again,
And virtue, flown, come back ;
Woe to the purblind crew who fill
The heart with each day's care ;
Nor gain, from past or future, skill
To bear, and to forbear !

1833.

ONCE I COULD HAIL

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone
Wi' the auld moone in hir arme."

—*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence, Percy's Reliques.*



ONCE I could hail (howe'er serene
the sky)
The moon re-entering her monthly
round,
No faculty yet given me to espy
The dusky shape within her arms imbound,
That thin memento of effulgence lost
Which some have named her predecessor's ghost.

ONCE I COULD HAIL

Young, like the crescent that above me shone,
Nought I perceived within it dull or dim ;
All that appeared was suitable to one
Whose fancy had a thousand fields to skim ;
To expectations spreading with wild growth,
And hope that kept with me her plighted troth.

I saw (ambition quickening at the view)
A silver boat launched on a boundless flood ;
A pearly crest, like Dian's when it threw
Its brightest splendour round a leafy wood ;
But not a hint from under-ground, no sign
Fit for the glimmering brow of Proserpine.

Or was it Dian's self that seemed to move
Before me?—nothing blemished the fair sight ;
On her I looked whom jocund fairies love,
Cynthia, who puts the little stars to flight,
And by that thinning magnifies the great,
For exaltation of her sovereign state.

And when I learned to mark the spectral shape
As each new moon obeyed the call of time,
If gloom fell on me, swift was my escape ;
Such happy privilege hath life's gay prime,

WORDSWORTH

To see or not to see, as best may please
A buoyant spirit, and a heart at ease.

Now, dazzling stranger! when thou meet'st my
glance,
Thy dark associate ever I discern ;
Emblem of thoughts too eager to advance
While I salute my joys, thoughts sad or stern ;
Shades of past bliss, or phantoms that, to gain
Their fill of promised lustre, wait in vain.

So changes mortal life with fleeting years ;
A mournful change, should reason fail to bring
The timely insight that can temper fears,
And from vicissitude remove its sting ;
While faith aspires to seats in that domain
Where joys are perfect—neither wax nor wane.

1826.

TROUBLED LONG

TROUBLED LONG WITH
WARRING NOTIONS

(NEAR THE SPRING OF THE HERMITAGE)



TROUBLED long with warring
notions,
Long impatient of thy rod,
I resign my soul's emotions
Unto thee, mysterious God!

What avails the kindly shelter
Yielded by this craggy rent,
If my spirit toss and welter
On the waves of discontent?

Parching summer hath no warrant
To consume this crystal well;
Rains that make each rill a torrent,
Neither sully it nor swell.

Thus, dishonouring not her station,
Would my life present to thee,
Gracious God, the pure oblation
Of divine tranquillity!

WORDSWORTH

NOT SELDOM, CLAD IN
RADIANT VEST



NOT seldom, clad in radiant
vest,
Deceitfully goes forth the
morn ;
Not seldom evening in the
west

Sinks smilingly forsworn.

The smoothest seas will sometimes prove,
To the confiding bark, untrue ;
And, if she trust the stars above,
They can be treacherous too.

The umbrageous oak, in pomp outspread,
Full oft, when storms the welkin rend,
Draws lightning down upon the head
It promised to defend.

THE SMALL CELANDINE

But thou art true, incarnate Lord,
Who didst vouchsafe for man to die ;
Thy smile is sure, thy plighted word
No change can falsify !

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And asked for peace on suppliant knee ;
And peace was given,—nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy !

THE SMALL CELANDINE



HERE is a flower, the lesser
Celandine,
That shrinks, like many more,
from cold and rain ;
And, the first moment that the
sun may shine,
Bright as the sun himself, 'tis out again !

When hailstones have been falling, swarm on swarm
Or blasts the green field and the trees distress,
Oft have I seen it muffled up from harm,
In close self-shelter, like a thing at rest.

WORDSWORTH

But lately, one rough day, this flower I passed
And recognised it, though an altered form,
Now standing forth an offering to the blast,
And buffeted at will by rain and storm.

I stopped, and said with inly-muttered voice,
“It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold :
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old.

“The sunshine may not cheer it, nor the dew ;
It cannot help itself in its decay ;
Stiff in its members, withered, changed of hue.”
And, in my spleen, I smiled that it was grey.

To be a prodigal's favourite—then, worse truth,
A miser's pensioner—behold our lot !
O man, that from thy fair and shining youth
Age might but take the things youth needed not !

1804.

ELEGIAC STANZAS

ELEGIAC STANZAS

(SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A STORM,
PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT)



WAS thy neighbour once, thou
rugged pile!

Four summer weeks I dwelt in
sight of thee:

I saw thee every day; and all
the while

Thy form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air;

So like, so very like, was day to day!

Whene'er I looked, thy image still was there;

It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;

No mood, which season takes away or brings:

I could have fancied that the mighty deep

Was even the gentlest of all gentle things.

WORDSWORTH

Ah! THEN, if mine had been the painter's hand,
To express what then I saw ; and add the gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream ;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary pile !
Amid a world how different from this !
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile ;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years ; a chronicle of heaven ;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife ;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such picture would I at that time have made :
And seen the soul of truth in every part ;
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

ELEGIAC STANZAS

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more ;
I have submitted to a new control :
A power is gone, which nothing can restore ;
A deep distress hath humanised my soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been :
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old ;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, friend ! who would have been the
friend,
If he had lived, of him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend ;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh, 'tis a passionate work !—yet wise and well ;
Well chosen is the spirit that is here ;
That hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !

And this huge castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

WORDSWORTH

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the kind !
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied : for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne !
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

1805.

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION UPON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG



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.

When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed

DEATH OF JAMES HOGG

Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border minstrel led.

The mighty minstrel breathes no longer,
'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 steadfast course,
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,
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

WORDSWORTH

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,
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,
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 her who, ere her summer faded,
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

Nov. 1835.



ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD)

"The child is father of the man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

See page 9.



HERE was a time when meadow,
grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

WORDSWORTH

It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
 Turn whereso'er I may,
 By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

 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
 Are beautiful and fair ;
 The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
 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 :
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,

ODE

The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
 And all the earth is gay ;
 Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday ;—
 Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
 shepherd-boy !

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,
 My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day ! if I were sullen
 While earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
And the children are culling
 On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm :—

WORDSWORTH

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 :
 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 ?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
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,
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,
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,

ODE

And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended ;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
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,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

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,
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,

WORDSWORTH

Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;
 A wedding or a festival,
 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 ;
 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"
With all the persons, down to palsied age,
That life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy soul's immensity ;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,

ODE

That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
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
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 pro-
voke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive !

WORDSWORTH

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
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 :—

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 ;
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,
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

ODE

Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence : truths that wake,
 To perish never ;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor man nor boy,
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
 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.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song !
 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
 Feel the gladness of the May !

WORDSWORTH

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 splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;

 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

 Out of human suffering,

 In the faith that looks through death,

In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,

 Forebode not any severing of our loves !

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 ;

The innocent brightness of a new-born day

 Is lovely yet ;

ODE

The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;
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.

1803-6.

THE END

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