LECTURE VIII

WORDSWORTH—*continued*

I FINISHED in my last lecture our discussion of the early education which Nature had given Wordsworth, and traced its influence on his poetry of Nature. But Wordsworth was as much, if not more, the poet of Man as of Nature, and the poetry of Man took in his hands as great a development as the poetry of Nature. My task to-day will be to show—always taking the *Prelude* as our guide—how the love of Man grew up in his soul.

I begin by a quotation from an Essay of Wordsworth's in *The Friend,* which resumes a great part of that which we have been saying in the two last lectures with regard to the teaching of Nature.

"We have been discoursing of infancy, childhood, boyhood, and youth, of pleasures lying in the unfolding intellect plenteously as morning dewdrops, of knowledge inhaled insensibly like a fragrance, of dispositions stealing into the spirit like music from unknown quarters, of images uncalled for arising up like exhalations, of hopes plucked like beautiful wild flowers from the ruined tombs that border the highways of antiquity, to make a garland for a living forehead; in a word, we have been treating of Nature as a teacher of truth, through joy and through gladness, and as a creatress of the faculties by a process of smoothness and delight. We have made no mention of fear, shame, sorrow, nor of ungovernable and vexing thoughts; because, although these have been, and have done mighty service, they are overlooked in that stage of life when youth is passing into manhood, overlooked or forgotten. We now apply for succour, which we need, to a faculty which works after a different course; that faculty is Reason; she gives much spontaneously, but she seeks

for more; she works by thought, through feeling; yet in thoughts she begins and ends."

The way in which Nature works, then, is this: She makes an impression on the poet's mind, an impression of calm, for example. That after a time insensibly touches his sympathies, and the thought of his father's serene old age or his child's peaceful sleep is awakened in his heart; and led on in this process of soothing thought now quickened by human tenderness, he thinks of other things that belong to the sphere of calm—of the quiet balance of the powers of his own being, of the mighty rest of God; and these in turn create the resolve to attain calm of heart, to reach, through endeavour and watchfulness, the peace which passeth all understanding. "This is Nature," as Wordsworth says, for I have used a different illustration from that he uses, "teaching seriously and sweetly through the affections, melting the heart, and through that instinct of tenderness, developing the understanding."

"Let, then, the youth go back, as occasion will permit, to Nature and solitude, thus admonished by reason, and relying on this newly acquired support. A world of past sensations will gradually open on him as his mind puts off its infirmities: and he makes it his prime business to understand himself. In such disposition let him return to the visible universe and to conversation with ancient books—and let him feed upon that beauty which unfolds itself, not to his eye as he sees carelessly the things which cannot possibly go unseen, but to the thinking mind; which searches, discovers, and treasures up, infusing by meditation into the objects with which it converses an intellectual life, whereby they remain planted in the memory, now, and for ever."

This was the point which Wordsworth had reached when we left him. He had realised, through the affections which Nature had awakened, his own reason in its relation to God and Nature, and he had felt the immense delight of redoubling the charm and sublimity of Nature by throwing upon it the force of his own mind. By this work the interest of more than half of his life was

concentrated round the growth of his own being, and he studied himself with eagerness. But he did this in connection with the influences of Nature upon him, not in connection with the influences of Man. From these he was, at this time, nearly altogether free, or at least not consciously influenced by them. Nature and God were first, Man second.

But the transition from the contemplation of his own being as a man to the contemplation of mankind itself was an easy one, and it now began to be made. His residence in London, in the midst of this great hive of workers, laid upon his soul the weight of humanity: the residence in France which followed finished the work. Man became the first, and Nature the second.

This was the great change, and he was bound to explain it. It seemed sudden. Was it really so? And he looked back on his life in order to answer the question. To say that it was sudden would have contradicted his philosophy. For no one has seen more clearly than Wordsworth that the operations of the soul are gradual, that ideas do not spring to life at once, but grow, so that when they are recognised as conscious possessions we find that they have been already for years developing themselves. We recognise them when they flower; we are not conscious of them in shoot, and stem, and leaves. But when they have flowered, we can go back and trace their origin and their growth. And Wordsworth now made it his business to ask how this idea of Man as the centre of the universe grew up in his mind; and to describe the religious aspect it finally took.

Looking back, he sees that it began in his childhood, and that just as interest in his own being was stirred in him by the love of Nature, so in this case also it was the love of Nature which from the earliest times led him onwards to the love of Man. His childhood was passed among magnificent natural scenery, not so enchanting as the Eastern paradises which he describes, but in this far lovelier that, unlike their gorgeous landscapes, its sun and sky and seasons found Man a worthy fellow-labourer among them; free, working for himself, led by all that

surrounded him to individual and social ends of his own frank choosing, and educated through the simple gracious life of home. The men and mountains were at one in noble character. For the beauty of a country is elevated by the freedom of its inhabitants. No one can walk through Switzerland without feeling that the long, almost unbroken, liberty of soul which marked her people, that the grave republicanism which marks them now, add a new element of greatness to her scenery. It is something to stand in the churchyard of Altdorf, as I stood two years ago, and look up the lake glittering blue in the morning light, and say to oneself, "This land has never been otherwise than free." It made wretched to many the loveliness of Italy, and Arnold records the feeling in his letters, to think that man was daily degraded there by a vile oppression; it adds a new brightness now to her appealing beauty to think that she is mistress of herself. So to Wordsworth the meadows beneath Helvellyn were lovelier far than the Paradise of Gehol, because, in one, the freedom of Nature's heart was in harmony with human freedom; in the other, her freedom was ceaselessly jarred by human slavery.

It was in this free pastoral life that the roots of Wordsworth's love for Man struck deep. Shepherds were the men who pleased him first, not the Arcadian shepherd, nor such as Spenser fabled, but men "intent on little but substantial needs," whose life was yet full of beauty that the men had hearts to feel. In such a rude life imagination had much food from things connected with Man, for there was continually presented to the child (however unconscious of what he felt) the awful problem of the seeming helpless subjection of mankind to the wild powers of Nature. There was not a rock or stream or deep valley in the hills which was not vocal, in the traditions of the neighbourhood, with some tale of human suffering or human daring. Wherever the boy roamed, Man and his battle with Nature spoke to him. For here, where he lived, it was no "smooth life" the shepherd led, no piping by rivulets among sunny meadows, but a toilsome struggle for existence among hills where the snow buried

sheep and shepherd, and where the winds howled around the companionless man who daily waited on the storms. Wordsworth saw him frequently when

> the lingering dews of morn
> Smoke round him, as from hill to hill he hies,
> His staff protending like a hunter's spear:

And followed him in thought throughout the day, till he felt

> his presence in his own domain
> As of a lord and master, or a power
> Or genius, under Nature, under God,
> Presiding: and severest solitude
> Had more commanding looks when he was there.

In certain aspects he became to the imagination like an elemental genius, seen through the thick mist a giant form stalking on the hill; or as he stepped from the shadow of the rock, glorified "by the deep radiance of the setting sun;" or descried in distant sky,

> A solitary object and sublime,
> Above all height! like an aerial cross
> Stationed alone upon a spiry rock
> Of the Chartreuse, for worship.[1]

In this way Man became ennobled outwardly before his sight, his heart was introduced

> To an unconscious love and reverence
> Of Human Nature.

"The sanctity of Nature was given to Man:" and yet

[1] It is interesting to find the origin of this passage in the *Prelude* in Miss Wordsworth's diary. She and her brother are walking to Tarbert in mist and rain, and hear suddenly a loud hooting in the fields. "It came from a little boy whom we could see on the hill between us and the lake, wrapped up in grey plaid. He was probably calling home the cattle for the night. His appearance was in the highest degree moving to the imagination: mists were on the hill sides; darkness shutting in upon the huge avenue of mountains; torrents roaring; no home in sight to which the child might belong; his dress, cry, and appearance, all different from anything we had been accustomed to: it was a text, as William has since observed to me, containing in itself the whole history of the Highlander's life; his melancholy, his simplicity, his poverty, his superstition, and, above all, that visionariness which results from a communion with the unworldliness of nature."

this creature so glorified by the imagination was a man with the most common, a husband, father, one who worked, rejoiced and suffered; and there was as much poetry in him, and his simple human relations, as there was in his relations to the imaginative world of Nature. It is one of Wordsworth's poetic customs to see things in the ideal and the real, and to make each make the other poetical. He places the lark in a "privacy of glorious light," but he brings him home at last to his "nest upon the dewy ground." It is the very thing that he always does for Man.

This was the first step whereby love of Nature led to love of Man. To some it may seem far-fetched, but Wordsworth blessed God that in his childhood he started with faith in the nobleness of Man, that he began with an ideal of human nature. Were it otherwise, he says:

> And we found evil fast as we find good
> In our first years, or think that it is found,
> How could the innocent heart bear up and live!

It was well for him that he first saw his race through beautiful and noble objects, that he read the first pages of the book of man through Nature. For he had thus a safeguard against too rapid a disillusion of the sanctities of faith in human nature; he could resist

> The weight of meanness, selfish cares,
> Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in
> On all sides from the ordinary world.

His face was turned towards the truth that though Man is base and sinful, yet that he is greater than his baseness and his sin; that though at times we may despise him as the slave of his meaner self, yet that we must reverence him as destined to triumph over it, and claim his inheritance of Heaven. For true knowledge of human nature is the product, first, of a lofty but undefined ideal of Man; secondly, of that ideal disappointed; and thirdly, of that disappointment corrected by the calm judgment of a life which has never let love go, nor faith in a God who is the Father and the Saviour of men.

This was the root of Wordsworth's love of Man. But as we have seen, Nature was at first pre-eminent. Man was only an "occasional delight, an accidental grace" among the passion and the rapture in which Wordsworth moved, inspired by the beauty of the world. As he passed on from childhood and left its sports behind, and began to directly commune with natural objects, another step in this love of Man was made. When an inner impulse first urged him to embody in words his feelings, Fancy awoke and linked to Nature and her scenes human sentiment and human pictures. He could not see a grave without placing a widow there to weep; nor the fox-glove dismantled of its bells without thinking of a vagrant mother whose children, careless of her sorrow, played around her; nor a rock, water-wet with springs and sparkling in the sunshine, without fancying it the silver shield of a knight hung over his tomb, or an entrance into some fairy palace. Thus "wilful and busy Fancy"

> Engrafted far-fetched hopes on feelings bred
> By pure imagination—turned
> Instinctively to human passions.

And though Wordsworth did not understand the cause of this, nor see that he was being slowly led towards that which he calls the point

> Of sound humanity to which our Tale
> Leads, though by sinuous ways—

he had now arrived through these earlier and later impressions at a vague ideal of Man, in which he unconsciously reverenced and loved him as sublime or good, and threw around his vague ideal the brilliant or pensive drapery of Romance. It was at this stage in his progress that he went to Cambridge, and found in the university life a point of transition between his early remoteness from social life and the great human disturbance into which he was soon to plunge. It was, as he calls it, something that resembled "an approach to human business, a privileged world within a world, a midway residence with all its intervenient imagery, that suited far better

his visionary mind than to be thrust out at once into the conflicts of substantial life." He saw in it an image of the great world, and it touched him into that distant interest in humanity of which I have already spoken. But it was not at Cambridge, but afterwards, on his return to the mountains, that the interest took a conscious form. The power and the life which lay in Man, as the crown of Nature, broke upon him at the very moment when he became through Nature a dedicated spirit. You will remember the passage already quoted, in which he describes the deep religious impression made on him by an early morning, his first clear realisation of his mission in life. In an after passage in the *Prelude* he refers to the intense emotion of that hour. We then find that he not only realised himself, but also—in the excitement of the hour, being uplifted by the strength of the emotions that had wrought in him—rose into that conception of Man, as an ideal Whole, which a boy often conceives from history and poetry. Recall, he cries,

> My song! those high emotions which thy voice
> Has heretofore made known; that bursting forth
> Of sympathy, inspiring and inspired,
> When everywhere a vital pulse was felt,
> And all the several frames of things, like stars
> Through every magnitude distinguishable,
> Shone mutually indebted, or half lost
> Each in the other's blaze, a galaxy
> Of life and glory. In the midst stood Man,
> Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,
> As, of all visible natures, crown, though born
> Of dust, and kindred to the worm; a Being
> Both in perception and discernment, first
> In every capability of rapture,
> Through the divine effect of power and love;
> As, more than anything we know, instinct
> With Godhead, and, by reason and by will,
> Acknowledging dependency sublime.

With the dream of this conception in his mind he went for the second time to Cambridge, and there a more practical contact with Man dispelled his ideal. Vice and

folly were thrust upon his view, and he lost much of his early faith in human goodness: small characters, and the little bustling passions and the isolated aims of university life broke up the large impersonated idea of mankind. Yet the ideal was not quite lost, for first, Antiquity threw its solemn shadow over the present college life, and filled it with the shapes of the great men of the past, by whose life human nature was dignified; and secondly, the very vice and folly he beheld showed how lofty must be the nature which could fall so low. Nor was it possible for him to think of human life in its career to sorrow and guilt without a deeper and similar sense of that old indefinite terror and dismay which once the storms and angry elements had wrought within him. He began to see mankind as he had seen Nature. Though then the old imaginative ideal of simplicity and joy in human life had passed away, yet, through this new awfulness, another and a vaster thought of Man began to grow, which took to itself from the terror in it a touch of sublimity.

The journey to the Continent, through France and Italy trembling with the first revolutionary excitement, added something to his interest in Man, and balanced, by the passing joy which he felt in that glorious time, the unhappy impression he had received at Cambridge. But Nature was still "sovereign in his mind" when he arrived in London. There his ideal was further shattered. The exposure of innocent life to shame, the degradation of womanhood, the tragic sufferings of men, the vast follies, the triviality mixed with horror, the vulgar thought, the mean interests, the sight of men unfaithful to their work—these broke down the unsubstantial palace of his ideal. But even as it was broken down, another building began to be raised. At his very first entrance a truer, loftier thought of Man arose—a tremendous sense of power as belonging to mankind—

> A weight of ages did at once descend
> Upon my heart—no thought embodied, no
> Distinct remembrances, but weight and power—
> Power growing under weight.

The "endless stream of men and moving things," the everyday appearance of the mighty city, and its wonder and awe, the "quick dance of colours, lights and forms," all the multitude of hurrying men, with every character of form and face, so that he could say, the face of every one

> That passes by me is a mystery;

the sight of the great men who moved mankind; the orator, Burke, as he thundered against abstract rights; the peace of the London night, when all was still, and the business of the coming day was yet unborn; these were the things which, in this "theatre and burial-place of passions," moved him to the heart with that passion of the poet which answers the appeal of mankind for his interest and his love.

Daily and hourly, knowledge of Man poured in upon him from a multitude of scenes, and he found (to his delight in the strength and glory of his youth) that he had power to grasp the whole. It was less knowledge of particular phases of human nature, than the impression of a vast spirit of humanity diffused through time and space, which he gained. It was the sense of all that had been done and suffered, was doing and suffering now in the great city and in the world, which brooded over him like a vast shadow and filled his soul with thought. A solemn, awful ideal of the majesty and power of humanity now began to replace the vague ideal of his boyhood, the shattered ideal of his youth. To him London now was thronged; and the comparison is one of those sublime flights of imagination of which Wordsworth alone among modern poets has been capable:

> With impregnations like the Wilds
> In which my early feelings had been nursed—
> Bare hills and valleys, full of caverns, rocks,
> And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
> Echoes and waterfalls, and pointed crags
> That into music touch the passing wind.

And the analogy which he felt is not obscure, for Nature, like mankind, bears the traces of a suffering past. Every

rock-strewn valley tells of centuries of endurance and agony from storm and frost and lightning, in the rent channels of its streams and in the shivered peaks above it. And if in the past Nature has suffered, there is no moment of the present which does not tell of its intense activity; we cannot linger by the sea or in the woods without an impression, almost irritating, of unmitigated work and waste and reproduction. The same feelings as these were Wordsworth's in the city, when he passed through the forest, and wandered by the ocean, of humanity.

And as he had received higher ideas of God in spite of Nature "red in tooth and claw," and seen love underneath its awful forces and the apparent ruin that they worked; so in the city, owing to this early training, he was able, in spite of misery and guilt, to grasp the higher view of mankind, and to love mankind. He dwelt upon the real, but it led him to a new ideal. He saw what Man was, went down into the depths of his vice and guilt, and yet his trust in that which mankind might become was not overthrown. And when he turned from the darker to the lighter side, he saw that the Divine in Man was still Divine, nay, more beautiful even from the gloom through which it flashed to speak of Heaven in the hearts of men.

One more sublime idea came upon him and exalted the thought of Man. It was the idea of his unity. There was one Brotherhood held in one Father,—

> One Spirit, over ignorance and vice
> Predominant, in good and evil hearts:

one conscience shared by all alike, "as one eye for the sun's light." In this idea, among all the confusion of men, and whirl of good and ill, Wordsworth found rest, and in the rest and the blessedness of it he found God, and saw Him as the Master of mankind. He had reached the third stage in our thought of Man of which I spoke, when the disappointment we suffer from the overthrow of our youthful ideal of Man is accepted and corrected.

Thus from his boyhood, his thoughts—

> by slow gradations had been drawn
> To human-kind and to the good and ill
> Of human life—.

Nature had led him on; through her he had found the love of his race. But still, though the love of Man was growing day by day, it had not as yet reached that point at which it became predominant. He still was able to fly from humanity to her, to find refuge in her mighty calm from the guilt and anarchy of men.

> The world of human-kind outweighed not hers
> In my habitual thoughts; the scale of love
> Though filling daily, still was light, compared
> With that in which *her* mighty objects lay.

And for a short period in this year, 1791, he went to Wales and revived and sanctified his soul by communion with the hills. But the enthusiasm of Humanity, once awakened, is not a passion that goes to sleep again, and now the songs of liberty and the glory of the efforts France was making rang with a more alluring murmur in his ear. He was irresistibly drawn to the theatre of the Revolution, where the great questions which most deeply move the race and all their passions were playing the first act in that mighty drama in whose development we are now involved. To this, and the questions it involves, I shall devote my next lecture.

LECTURE IX

WORDSWORTH—*continued*

At the beginning of these lectures we traced that which is called the Poetry of Man from Pope to the close of the life of Cowper. We found in his poetry a number of new ideas on the subject of mankind, the main characteristic of which was, that they all rested on the thought of an universal mankind, which in itself supposed the equality of all men in certain realms of thought and act. The ideas were new and revolutionary, but in Cowper they took no clear form. They floated in solution, they were not crystallised; they were the product of insensible not recognised influences of the time; mere green shoots of things which were to become mighty trees; the substance in faith of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; sparks of a kindling fire scattered only here and there, but full of a life whose first property was the will and the power to devour things too old and too corrupt to live. No one suspected then that they would burst into flame with such accumulating rapidity; but a few years only had passed by when they rose into a conflagration which, in the French Revolution, ran over the European world. In England the fire did not fall upon the State, but its inspiration, and the passionate emotion which attended it, fell upon the poets; and out of the hearts of Coleridge and Wordsworth the poetry of universal Man, of freedom, of equal rights, of infinite promise, of the overthrow of tyranny, leaped full-grown into a manhood which has never endured decay. It is the history of its influence on Wordsworth's mind which we have now to trace and to explain.

We have seen that this development of the poetry of Man in Wordsworth was preceded by that of the poetry of

Nature. I have worked out that in the previous lectures, and an astonishing growth it is—so astonishing in comparison with the work on the same subject done by Cowper, Crabbe, and Burns, that it seems, at first sight, inexplicable. But the first explanation of its rapidity is one already alluded to in the history of the growth of the poetry of natural description. It was in reality no swift creation, but the flowering of a plant that had already clothed itself with leaves and had nothing more to do but flower. It is true that the whole plant was covered almost in an instant with a mass of flowers, and their extraordinary richness of flowerage needs a further explanation. It is supplied when we realise that the long European movement which so suddenly took form in the French Revolution had reached in Wordsworth's early life that point of expansion which only needs a touch to cause the outburst. For at such a time there is that profound but latent excitement in which the minds of the poets, who are the first to feel excitements, become swiftly creative on all subjects within their range; when the work of a century is often done in a year. Supply a new and quickening element to the soil of the poet's thought, let the air which it breathes become nipping and eager, and things which have only been in leaf within him will cover their every spray with flowers.

One more explanation of this apparent rapidity is that the revolutionary movement contained within it a particular excitement on the subject of Nature. It took form in France in Rousseau's love of wild nature, in his thought that Nature was wiser, simpler, and greater than Man; but in him it was mixed with the ugliest imposition of his own diseased feelings on Nature. It took form in Germany in the songs of the young poets who stormed and raged in verse till Goethe, who had himself in his youthful time out-thundered the others, raised his tranquillising head above the waves. It had been growing into form for the last hundred years in England; and we find that, partly influenced by Rousseau, it preferred, shortly before Cowper, the wild and lonely landscape in which men could feel sentimental; next, it preferred the

wilder and lonelier scenes for their own sake, and having felt them profoundly, it then became connected with the poetry of Man. The poets transferred their love of this wild nature to the men who lived in it, and looked on them as certain to be nobler and more independent than they could be in cities and the artificial world. It was there we ought to seek for the primæval and pure feelings of men: and Wordsworth, in the love which he bore to the shepherds, and the honour he paid to his own dalesmen, was following up to its legitimate conclusion that excitement on the subject of wild nature which was now one of the elements of the European disturbance.

We have thus been led, in thinking of the revolutionary movement as it bore on the idea of Nature, to the very point at which we left Wordsworth in the last lecture, when he had been led by the love of Nature to the love of Man. He had arrived, in solitude, and following his natural individuality, at the same point to which the world was being led by its new impulse, but the impulse had of course its insensible influence upon him. He was now fitted to become a part of it, and to consciously join in it. He had been led by the love of Nature to the love of the simple men among whom he lived. Passing into the world and mingling with men, he carried with him the teaching of Nature, and applied it to his conception of mankind. The self-investigation that Nature had forced upon him; the sense of the pre-eminent dignity of the human soul that he had learnt from her; and the previous conception he had formed of Nature as One, led him to investigate human nature, to recognise then its pre-eminent dignity, and finally to see mankind as One Being whose life and rights and powers and place in the world, whose origin and whose destiny he was above all bound to study. The revolutionary idea of one universal humanity began to germinate in his mind. A multitude of vague, formless thoughts on this subject were floating in the air. He breathed them, but as yet neither he nor any one had been able to realise them, for they were not made clear by being arranged under a few leading thoughts.

It was this which the French Revolution did for him and for the world. It gave sudden, clear, and terrible form to the long-prepared ideas of Europe; it placed the movement in which all had been sharing on lines on which it could run along to a known end. It did the work of the Prophet for the world; it gave voice to the voiceless passion of a million hearts. It said, Man is one and indivisible, and it attempted to carry out that idea and all its resulting thoughts in politics and society. How far it had anything to do with Christianity, and how it influenced Wordsworth, is the subject of my lecture.

It did not, as I have hinted, come on Wordsworth unprepared. He was himself a natural republican. He had been born in a poor district, in a primitive homely corner of English ground, and he had rarely seen, during his schoolday time, the "face of one vested with respect through claims of wealth or blood;" and when he passed to the university it was, he says, one of its benefits that it held up to his view something of a republic. All stood there on equal ground, men were brothers there in honour; distinction lay open to all alike, and wealth and title were less than industry and genius. Moreover, he had learnt obedience to the presence of God's power in the sovereignty of Nature; and again, fellowship with venerable books had sanctioned—

> the proud workings of the soul
> And mountain liberty.

It could not be, he says—

> But that one tutored thus should look with awe
> Upon the faculties of man, receive
> Gladly the highest promises, and hail
> As best, the government of equal rights
> And individual worth.

And to this natural republicanism he traces his first indifference on the outbreak of the Revolution. It did not seem so wonderful to him as the rest; for he had breathed unconsciously its air from the beginning. He was scarcely dipped at first, he says, into the turmoil, and

the result was that he then possessed a sounder judgment than those who lived in the full rush of the excitement. Even afterwards when, having fully shared in the excitement, his mind subsided, he recovered quickly the cooler judgment he had possessed; and for a long time, when other men in England despaired, retained his faith in freedom in spite of the Terror. He had never been swept upwards on the shore so violently as others; he never was swept back to far as others in the reflux of the wave.

At the same time, and this is important for the comprehension of Wordsworth, there was a distant conservatism in his nature, that which belongs to the artist and poet who love the past for its romance, or for the nobleness it once possessed. In the very midst of earnest dialogues with Beaupuis in the forests of the Loire, his imagination carried him away from the turbulent present; and he saw the woods full of the forms of old Romance, that Romance the Revolution was destroying. Nor could he be unmoved when things, which had sacred or chivalrous associations growing round them like ivy round a ruin, were desecrated by the destroying element in the Revolution. Hence arose a conflict in his mind between delight in new-born freedom and its overthrow of corrupt states, and his sorrow for the many things which, once the origin of high emotions, went down in the same shipwreck. But the conflict itself was productive of that mental and imaginative excitement in which fine poetic work is done; and the slight tinge of conservatism acted as a kind of sobering restraint on the imagination, so that his sanity as a poet of Man was preserved in a time of furious excitement. And again, the imaginative work his poetic temper wrought around the old things of the past—a convent, a *château*, a hermitage—served also to balance the revolutionary passion.

> Imagination, potent to inflame
> At times with virtuous wrath and noble scorn,
> Did also often mitigate the force
> Of civic prejudice, the bigotry,
> So call it, of a youthful patriot's mind;
> And on these spots with many gleams I looked
> Of chivalrous delight.

But these feelings were only slight weights in the opposite scale. His hatred of absolute rule, and of the barren pride and oppression of the *noblesse*, and his longing for the redemption of the people at almost any cost, grew till they outweighed everything else, and in the first half of his artist-life his republican ideas were always predominant. Living in these ideas, and in the excitement of that contest in his own mind which I have pointed out, his work was marked by a wonderful freshness and life. In the second half the contest ceased—he was shocked back into conservatism; the little germ of it in him grew into an overshadowing tree under whose shade ideas died. Maxims and formulas replaced them, and, being essentially unpoetical, they all but killed his poetic nature. With the passing away of his revolutionary ideas, passed away the divine spirit of song, the strength of his thought, the majesty of his style, the emotion which thrilled through his verse and gave the kindling impulse to his style. He became pedestrian and contemplative, and we can no longer say of him, that he spoke *non verba, sed tonitrua.*

Nor is it difficult to account for this. The poet who is now to say great things of Nature or of Man, who is to be more than the mere describer of Nature, or the mere analyser of human nature, produces nothing worthy if he be not at heart influenced by the larger republican ideas.

To one holding no longer the great ideas, and feeling no longer the passions embodied in the words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Nature could not speak as she did of old. For she is, to her core, republican. It is by the consent of all, and by its full value being given to the work of each, that her great community exists and moves and grows. Each thing, bird, and brook, and tree, sings and flows and clothes itself with its own beauty, by its own divine vitality, and at its own sweet will; all have equal rights in sun and earth, in rain and dew; all choose freely the dwelling-place most fitted for their self-development, and no one says them nay; and the seeming violations of this are nothing as against the rule, and indeed

belong to the rule. All are brothers one of another and live and die for one another, and those things which have the mastery, like the sun, have it because they give away their life to others. They rule because they are the best givers.

And she deals with us with the same republicanism. We turn from the oppression of the world, from the selfishness of caste and the exclusiveness of wealth, to the blessed equalities of Nature; and find comfort in the knowledge that sunlight and rain fall as richly on the poor as on the wealthy, that her beauty is poured out on all, that she does not reserve the glory of the sunrise for the cultivated classes, nor the freshness of the dew for the nobility. It was this spirit of freedom, of the brotherhood of universal love, of unlimited life and beauty bestowed on all, contradicting by silent and hourly act the theories of the Tory, which strove in vain in later years to recover its early power over Wordsworth. He could not receive its teaching, and his poetry of Nature decayed as his life decayed.

As to the poetry of Man, it suffered still more. For in what high vein can he write in whom the spirit of prophecy is replaced by the spirit of mere teaching, infinite hope for Man by melancholy moaning over his fate, belief in the future by belief in the past? These are not the things which kindle the life of song, but depress it; they throw no consecrating light, but gloom, upon the landscape of Man; the sorrow born of them does not humanise the soul, but shuts it up within itself—and Wordsworth's verse suffered from their presence in his mind. He ceased to give voice to the deepest longings and hopes of men who cared for Man; and the poet loses the very breath and impulse of song when men, listening to his words, no longer send back to him a wave of sympathy and joy.

It is most pitiful when the poet, whose highest business is to hope and prophesy for Man, gives himself up to the melancholy pipe, and hymns only his own sorrow and the sorrow of the race by the riverside of time, as some of our modern poets do. There is no enduring life in such

poetry, and so far as Wordsworth fell into despair of the Present and regret of the Past, his poetry lost its power and its life. He was saved from the worst form of this evil by that calmer judgment of which I spoke, which enabled him to resist the full force of the shock he received; but he was chiefly saved by his Christianity, for in the belief in a redeeming God and in a divine future he could still abide in hope, and live in faith of a diviner freedom, for the race. But he was only partly saved, for in rejecting the primary thoughts of the Revolution he rejected half the ideas of Christianity. If Christianity has any politics, they are democratic. It is very well to say that it has been the servant of tyrants over the body and the soul, because it has been made such by priests and kings. But the reason is not far to seek. They saw that it was the most dangerous element in the world for them and their power, and their one effort has been to prove that it was upon their side. But they could not do this without denying or travestying its primal ideas, and this they set themselves to do. They took out of it its universality, its love, its socialism; its proclamation of spiritual equality and of equal rights and duties before God; its contempt for wealth, its hatred of oppressors; its love for the poor, the ignorant, and the low-born. And they made an aristocratic, exclusive, oppressing phantom of it, and said to the world, believe in this, or you are lost for ever. And men not only believed in it, but believed that it was Christianity. It followed that when the thoughts of the Revolution swept away the political and ecclesiastical Christianity, men cried out that Christianity itself was dead and buried for ever. But it was not so. It rose again into a new life; it found its true home among the new ideas; it showed, as it grew, that it was not that thing which men had long believed it to be; but the supporter of freedom, of equality, of brotherhood, the most real force in this world against tyranny and superstition, the asserter, nay, the creator of the idea of an universal humanity, and of all the thoughts which are the children of that idea and of that of an universal Father. It is one of

the most distinctive marks of Christianity that it has never failed to commend itself—not as a dogmatic system, but as a spirit which influences by great thoughts and stirs deep emotions—to free states. It is equally characteristic of it when it has been degraded by despots into a political engine, and treated by the people as such, to rise out of its degradation and overcome the popular hatred, and re-assert itself, undecayed, and with fresh hopes in its eyes, as the religion of Democracy. Even in France this was the case; in proportion as the political work of the Revolution grew firm, its irreligious work decayed. The Christian Church found its life renewed in republicanism; and if France is now un-Christian, that is not due to republicanism, but to the ceaseless despotism which, prevailing under various forms to the present hour in France, has again undone the religious work of the Revolution, and again travestied Christianity, so that men must hate it as an enemy.

If there is one thing which above all we need now, it is that there should be some who should boldly say that a Christianity which denies the root thoughts of the Revolution is not Christianity at all, but an odious idol which takes its name. Only we must also say that Christianity is more than these thoughts; that it takes in, for example, not only the rights of men, but as Mazzini said, hitting fairly the great omission of the Revolution, the duties of men as the masters and the limits of their rights. With this addition—it being understood that I speak here of Christianity in its relation to the whole of mankind as a social being, not in its relation to personal feelings and wants, which forms a separate study—the leading ideas of Christianity are the same as the leading ideas of the Revolution, only in the one case they are applied in the religious, in the other in the political sphere: or, to express it otherwise, the revolutionary ideas are the Christian ideas applied to the relation of men to one another, and to the state.

But we must look further into this thought, for it enables us at once to show the theology that naturally belongs to Wordsworth's poetry of Man. "The Revolu-

tion," says De Tocqueville, "had no peculiar territory, it was not made for France alone, but for the world, and its result was in some sort to blot out of the map all the ancient frontiers. In spite of laws, traditions, character, and language, it brought men together on a common ground, changed enemies into compatriots, and formed above national peculiarities an intellectual country common to all, of which all men of all nations could become citizens." That is as true of Christianity as of the Revolution, if we change the word intellectual into spiritual; because both started from the one idea of a common humanity which made all men brothers, and therefore claimed for all men equal rights to freedom, to self-development, and to the enjoyment of the common gifts of the earth and sky. Both Christianity and the Revolution built their foundation on human nature itself.

"It brought together," De Tocqueville continues, "nations which scarcely knew one another, and united them by interests common to the race. It was disengaged from every special bond to a people or a form of government, or a society, or an epoch, or a race; it had no particular national end, no special French aim: its end was the general rights and duties of all men in political and social matters." That also was as true of Christianity as of the Revolution, if we leave out political matters with which Christianity did not directly meddle; and it is true of both, because they started alike from the one great thought, that there was only one nation, the nation of mankind, and that all its citizens were bound to sacrifice themselves for one another. In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, German, French, or Englishman, but the one universal humanity which is all, and in all, and in which all men are one, equal, free, and brothers.

The ideas are the same in both, and whether politically, socially, or spiritually applied, they are Christian ideas. The difference lies in this, that the ideas of the Revolution were applied only to Man as Man, the Christian ideas sought for a higher unity than the mere basis of a common humanity. They found it in the common Fatherhood of

God and in the union of all men in the humanity of Christ; and until the ideas of the Revolution, as they have sometimes done, complete themselves in those two higher thoughts, they will fail to do their work. They cannot conquer of themselves that selfishness in man which supports exclusiveness, ensures oppression, and hates the freedom which equalises men. They cannot prevent revolution from ending in despotism.

Naturally, along with these great thoughts of an universal mankind, of natural equality, of the brotherhood of the race, were two other lines of thought—one which went forward with passion to overthrow all institutions which repressed the growth of Man or kept him in any slavery; another which went forward with equal passion to prophesy a glorious future for mankind—and in both these lines of thought, Christianity and the Revolution were at one. They were both the work of God in the hearts of men, and they both became leading poetical ideas in the new poetry of Man in England.

These were the principles of the Revolution, and the great religious English poet took them up and supplemented them at once with their analogous Christian ideas. Wordsworth could not help it; he did it almost unconsciously. He found the doctrine of an universal Man and an universal brotherhood in the doctrine of an universal Father. He saw in God the source of the rights of men to equality and liberty. It was God who was the avenger of slavery, the vindicator of Man against the evils of caste, of enforced ignorance, poverty, and despotism over the bodies or souls of men; and he looked forward through God, because He was eternal Justice and Love watching over Man, to a glorious time of universal joy and mutual love, when the race should be regenerated. It was he who made the poetry of Man in England not only revolutionary but theological.

It was thus the Revolution came on the hearts of young and imaginative and religious men in England. But we, who live upon the broad river of its thought, can scarcely realise what it was to men when first it broke, a living fount of streams, from its rock in the desert,

to quench the thirst of those who longed, but knew not, till it came, for what they longed. We who live in times which, though not dull, are sad coloured, can scarcely imagine the glory of that awaking, the stream of new thoughts that transfigured life, the passionate emotion, the love and hatred, the horror and the rapture, the visionary glories, the unutterable hopes, the sense of deliverance, the new heavens and the new earth, brimful of promise, which dawned on men:

> Before them shone a glorious world
> Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
> To music suddenly.

In that early morning of hope, the love of liberty seized on men with a power, almost a violence, which prophesied a reaction, and forced itself forth in the young in violent poetry. I have already spoken of the uncontrolled and tempestuous verse of Coleridge on this subject. In his view also it was God who had awakened liberty. Freedom in France

> From the Almighty's bosom leapt
> With whirlwind arm, fierce minister of love.

Southey and Lloyd felt the same; vague expectations, wild schemes, flitted through their minds; they projected a socialist communion on the Susquehanna to which they gave the name of Pantisocracy, where all things were to be in common, and the " cluster of families, bound together by congenial tastes and uniform forms rather than in self-depending and insulated households," were to solicit their food from daily toil, a thing which De Quincey says might have been fortunate for Coleridge. But none felt the enthusiasm of the time more intensely, nor expressed it more nobly than Wordsworth. He was the true human poet of the time. He felt every pulse of the movement in his own heart, and responding to that he felt—

> From hour to hour the antiquated earth
> Beat like the heart of man.

He describes its effect in the *Excursion* on a sorrow-stricken, lonely man. He was roused from his grief by the crash of the Bastille, and from the wreck rose a golden palace, as it seemed, of equitable law and mild paternal sway.

> The potent shock
> I felt: the transformation I perceived,
> As marvellously seized as in that moment
> When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
> Glory—beyond all glory ever seen,
> Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
> Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
> In every grove were ringing, "War shall cease;
> Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured?
> Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to deck
> The tree of Liberty."—My heart rebounded;
> My melancholy voice the chorus joined;
> —" Be joyful all ye nations; in all lands,
> Ye that are capable of joy be glad!
> Henceforth whate'er is wanting to yourselves
> In others ye shall promptly find—and all
> Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth
> Shall with one heart, honour their common kind."

He was reconverted to the world in the general joy. He haunted all assemblies where busy men, inspired with universal hope, met to unite nations. In the victory of mankind over wrong he found his faith in God again. He returned to public worship, and felt a new meaning in the Hebrew Prophets when they thundered against oppression, when they foretold a reign of peace.

Nor when Wordsworth describes its effect upon himself is he less enthusiastic—

> O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
> For mighty were the auxiliars that 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,
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, subtlety, 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,
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!

That was written in 1805 as he looked back on all he had felt, and the enthusiasm of the time is not dead in its noble verse. It was a dream, but it is a dream which hour by hour is fulfilling itself; and dream or not, it did a mighty work on Wordsworth. It built him into a man; it added the enthusiasm of Man to the enthusiasm of Nature; it took him away from contemplation of his own soul to live in the hopes, to proclaim the faith, to seek the love of mankind; it gave him the impulse to write some work which should give form to the faith he now possessed in the glory of the future, and in the majesty of the powers, of Man. It led him all his life

long—even when his Conservatism got the upper hand—to be the champion of liberty, the hater of oppression in the present—however in his imaginative Toryism he might glorify the past. It made him the singer of simple life, of honest manners, of poverty and its sorrows, of the honour of humanity in all ranks—it taught him to see the face of God in every man.

It gave, De Quincey say, " to the whole system of his own thoughts and feelings a firmer tone, and a sense of the awful *realities* which surround the mind," of the awful sorrows and guilt and the still more awful goodness which belong to Man in times of profound emotion, and underlie his nature always. And in this new and lurid but absorbing light, the passion for Nature was quenched. It reawoke afterwards, and how, we shall hereafter see; but at present, the destiny of Man, his origin, his duties, his rights, his possibilities, the agony of his battle, and the God with him—these were all in all to Wordsworth. He saw through a glass darkly, he only knew in part, but he had put away childish things for ever. He had entered on the dignity and sincere thinking of matured manhood. He was now trained not only to be the revealer of Nature, but also the Poet of Man.

LECTURE X

WORDSWORTH—*continued*

THE Revolution with which Wordsworth came into contact in France made a revolution in his mind. It carried him forward from a life with Nature to a life with Man. I discussed last Sunday some of the ideas that seized on him, and I traced their relation to theology, and their effect on Wordsworth. I propose to-day to continue the subject, and to connect what is to be said, partly with Wordsworth's life in France during 1791-92, and partly with his poetry.

We have seen that in 1789 the influence of Nature was predominant; but after his stay in London, where he was brought into closer contact with mankind in mass, the revolutionary movement sucked him into its whirlpool with amazing force, and shortly after Louis XVI. had taken the oath of fidelity to the new Constitution, he went to France to find the whole nation mad with joy. At first his ardour for freedom was more a sentiment than one of those profound convictions which create an enduring passion. In the guise of an enthusiast, he made a relic of a stone picked up where the Bastille had stood; but things of this kind seemed to touch him less than the sentimental paintings in the Louvre. He was not as yet conscious of the power which had begun to move within him. But, passing on to live in Orleans, the passion of the time soon developed it. On his arrival, he haunted society where politics were tabooed; but he was soon wearied, and withdrew to a noisier world.

At first he associated chiefly with the officers stationed in the city, who were bent on restoring the old régime, their only wish being to undo that which had been done. One among them, however, who became his special friend, was of a different type, and his case is important as

illustrating how the awful temper of the time mastered men who would otherwise have been frivolous. He had been a noted gallant, but now—in the conflict which raged within him between old feelings, traditions of caste and honour, and the new ideas and the revelation of the wrongs of mankind—his person, spirit, and character changed. He was like a man ravaged by inward pain. With every post from Paris—

> the fever came,
> A punctual visitant, to shake this man,
> Disarmed his voice and fanned his yellow cheek
> Into a thousand colours; while he read,
> Or mused, his sword was haunted by his touch
> Continually, like an uneasy place
> In his own body.

Such agitation in others soon awoke the same in Wordsworth. Indeed none could long remain at peace, for

> The soil of common life was, at that time
> Too hot to tread upon . . .
> The land all swarmed with passion, like a plain
> Devoured by locusts.

Small men, unheard of now, became, for the time, powers; the fire ran from Paris to the provincial towns, and from them to the remotest nook and village of the land; and Wordsworth, resisting the arguments of those who supported the past, threw himself into the arms of the republicans.

> Became a patriot, and my heart was all
> Given to the people, and my love was theirs.

He and his friend Beaupuis, who was rejected with hatred by his brother officers, lived almost together. Both were enthusiastic, both were full of hope, and the description which Wordsworth gives of him is in itself so beautiful, and illustrates so well the best type of the men of the earliest times of the Revolution, that I cannot refrain from quoting it,—

A meeker man
Than this lived never, nor a more benign,
Meek though enthusiastic. Injuries
Made *him* more gracious, and his nature then
Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly,
As aromatic flowers on Alpine turf,
When foot hath crushed them. He through the events
Of that great change wandered in perfect faith,
As through a book, an old romance, or tale
Of Faery, or some dream of actions wrought
Behind the summer clouds. By birth he ranked
With the most noble, but unto the poor
Among mankind he was in service bound,
As by some tie invisible, oaths professed
To a religious order. Man he loved
As man; and, to the mean and the obscure,
And all the homely in their homely works,
Tansferred a courtesy which had no air
Of condescension; but did rather seem
A passion and a gallantry, like that
Which he, a soldier, in his idler day
Had paid to woman: somewhat vain he was,
Or seemed so, yet it was not vanity,
But fondness, and a kind of radiant joy
Diffused around him, while he was intent
On works of love or freedom, or revolved
Complacently the progress of a cause
Whereof he was a part: yet this was meek
And placid, and took nothing from the man
That was delightful.

They talked together, while France stood on the brink of its great trial, of Man and his noble nature, as it was in itself; of the abstract political theories founded on the conception of an universal mankind; and of the oppression and tyranny that had for centuries hindered Man's development. On these three lines of thought I shall build what I have to say in this lecture and the following one.

I. And first with regard to Man, Wordsworth approached, he tells us, the shield

Of human nature from the golden side,

and would have fought even to the death to attest that it

was gold. And charmed with the golden view, he was led to ponder, first on the individual man, on what was best in him—

> Wise in passion and sublime in power,
> Benevolent in small societies
> And great in large ones.

And he did this, stripping him of all adventitious ornaments, of rank and wealth, and traditional honours—looking at him as he was in himself, not as he was by that which he possessed. This habit which had grown upon him among the hills, but which he did not then consciously possess, became now the conscious habit of his life, and to express its results one of the principal objects of his poetry.

It was rooted in him by that which he saw at this time in France, when the whole nation sprang, as it were, into new being. He and Beaupuis rejoiced together, when, after long conversations on "the honourable deeds and noble spirits of ancient story," on the rise of sects and nations, and the natural union of men under the influence of forming ideas, they turned to the movement going on around them, and beheld, responding to the aspirations of their own minds—

> A living confirmation of the whole
> Before us, in a people from the depth
> Of shameful imbecility uprisen,
> Fresh as the morning star. Elate we looked
> Upon their virtues; saw, in rudest men,
> Self-sacrifice the firmest; generous love,
> And continence of mind, and sense of right,
> Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.

It was this that he carried back to England with him and wrought into his poetry. He moved among men, he says, with genial feelings; when erring, erring in the better part, and in the kinder spirit; indulgent to their weakness, rejoicing in their goodness; as much a child of Nature as before, only now giving to Man a stronger affection than he gave to Nature.

> Diffusing only those affections wider
> That from the cradle had grown up with me,
> And losing, in no other way than light
> Is lost in light, the weak in the more strong.

Trusting in the grandeur of the one human heart that he had learnt in France belonged to all, he made it his main subject, but he turned from it as seen in cities to its more natural aspects among the poor. He was the first in England—not excepting Crabbe, whose sternness, even whose cynicism of portraiture, leaves too little of that tenderness and pity, or of that reverence for the men which is necessary for poetic treatment of the poor—he was the first who threw around the lives of ordinary men the glory and sweetness of song. He was the first who poured around the dalesmen's cottages, and the wandering life of the pedlar, and the unheard struggles of the country and the mountain folk, the consecration and the poet's dream. He was the first who isolated life after life in tender and homely narrative, and made us feel that God was with simple men and women; that in their lives were profound lessons; that the same equal heart beat in the palace and the hamlet hidden in the hills; that all men were brothers in the charities which soothe and bless, in the moral duties which God demands, in the feelings which nature awakens in their hearts; that a spirit of independence and stern liberty is the birthright and the passion of the poorest shepherd, as well as of the patriots who fill the pages of history.

One of the best examples of this is the way in which he sympathised with the love of the *statesmen* for their land. In his *Repentance*, a pastoral ballad, he describes the misery, the consuming dullness of the small farmer's life who has parted with his estate, and lost with it the tie that bound him to his ancestors. In *Michael*, when misfortune comes on the shepherd, Wordsworth describes, and in lines that show how deep his sympathy was with the humble feeling, how strong it was—

> Isabel, said he,
> 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 hands, I think
> That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
>   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.

Nor did he in after-life lose this close sympathy with the independence of the individual. The last book of the *Excursion* is full of passages that maintain the rights of men to individual development, to freedom from the oppression of unremitting toil, to all the means of education that the State can give. The worst fate that could befall a poor as well as a rich man, was to be turned into a mere instrument,—

>   Our life is turned
> Out of her course, wherever man is made
> An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
> Or implement, a passive thing employed
> As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
> Of common right or interest in the end;
> Used or abused as selfishness may prompt.

Lines which might be taken as a motto by the Trades' Unions.

This was the practical way in which he carried out the revolutionary idea that each man was to have the freest room for self-development, to be considered separate from the rest, not lost in a class. And he embodied these views in his poems. The first book of the *Excursion* will never let us forget the power, the simple dignity, the capacity for refined feeling which may be in the poorest whom we meet. Two neglected poems, the *Brothers*, and *Michael*, are exquisite from the sense they leave in us of the human reality and passionate tenderness which are to be found in the humblest lives. It was indeed republican to gather round the sorrows of children and their innocent talk, round names like " Matthew, " and " Lucy Fell, " and the " Idiot Boy," the interests and the feelings of England. His very theory of poetic diction—that it should be that which men commonly use when in rustic life they express

themselves simply, and in accordance with which the *Lyrical Ballads* were written—was itself due to his republican opinions. Both the theory and the poems astonished men at first; but they made their way, till a truer sentiment of equality and fraternity knit together the rich and the poor. He felt, and truly felt, that his writings of this kind "would co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society; that they delineated not merely such feelings as all men sympathise with, but revealed such feelings as men may sympathise with, and such as there is reason to believe they would be better and more moral beings if they did sympathise with;" he wrote with "a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes may feel deeply; that the spirit of resolution and independence was rooted in many parts of the country, and that the State should endeavour to support and not eradicate it;" with the design to "recover for the poor the rights of the human family, and the franchise of universal brotherhood, of which they had been robbed by the wealthy and the noble; to impress the world with a sense of their dignity in suffering, and the moral grandeur of their honest poverty."

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie.

Connected with the whole of this love for the lives of common men was his love for the lowlier flowers. We see the influence of this element of his republicanism in the thoughtful and tender poems that he wrote about the common people of the fields and hedgerows—the daisy, the celandine, the daffodils, the primrose, and the snow-drop. These also he exalted by the influence of his imagination as much as the poor who loved them, and it was his delight to make them and their ways the image of mankind.

Nor did he neglect the lower ranges of mankind. None was so low as to be scorned without a sin, none without offence to God cast out of view. The old beggars who wandered uselessly about Cumberland awoke his poetic pity. In describing one of them, Wordsworth saw in him a man who, though he perhaps did no good himself,

was yet the cause of good in others, and to whom at least Nature was always kind.

> Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
> And while in that vast solitude to which
> The tide of things has borne him, he appears
> To breathe and live but for himself alone,
> Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
> The good which the benignant law of Heaven
> Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
> Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
> To tender offices and pensive thoughts,
> —Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
> And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
> The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
> Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
> And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
> Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
> . . . .
> Be his the natural silence of old age!
> Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
> And have around him, whether heard or not,
> The pleasant melody of woodland birds.

He saw in the idiots who roved about the villages those whose life was hidden in God. He had compassion on the immoral; the gipsies who idly went through the country were the children of free Nature: the farmer of Tilbury Vale who had run away from his debts was one in whose frank ease of heart, and in whose simple affection for Nature, good lay hidden. And with an exquisite touch of loving-kindness he brings around those whom society had cast aside the gentleness and love of Nature, till, learning from her, we feel pity and kindness for the outcast. Every one knows the *Reverie of Poor Susan*, but the description of the old farmer in London and of the love of Nature for him, is not so well known, and is characteristic of Wordsworth's tenderness to the erring.

> In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
> Like one whose own country's far over the sea;
> And Nature, while through the great city he hies,
> Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

This gives him the fancy of one that is young,
More of soul in his face than of words on his tongue;
Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
And tears of fifteen will come into his eyes.

'Mid coaches and chariots, a waggon of straw,
Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam can draw;
With a thousand soft pictures his memory will teem,
And his hearing is touched with the sounds of a dream.

Now farewell, old Adam! when low thou art laid,
May one blade of grass spring up over thy head;
And I hope that thy grave, wheresoever it be,
Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.

Nor did this reverence for "the power he served, the sacred power, the Spirit of Humanity;" nor his love of the simple poor, and his sense that Nature loved them though man might not, cease to abide with him as he grew old. There is a sonnet, written in 1831, which embodies this continuous interest. It ought to be read along with another written nearly thirty years before on the same kind of subject, not only for the interest of comparing the same thought in different expressions, but for the interest of comparing the change of style—the earlier one being in his best manner.[1] Even later, in

[1] I place these Sonnets opposite one another:—

ADMONITION.

Well may'st thou halt—and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply: with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode:—forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf with harsh impiety.
Think what the Home must be if it were thine,

HIGHLAND HUT.

See what gay wild flowers deck this earth-built Cot,
Whose smoke, forth-issuing whence and how it may,
Shines in the greeting of the sun's first ray
Like wreaths of vapour without stain or blot.
The limpid mountain rill avoids it not;
And why should'st thou?—If rightly trained and bred,
Humanity is humble, finds no spot
Which her Heaven-guided feet refuse to tread.
The walls are cracked, sunk is the flowery roof,

1842, when he is mourning over the state of England, he feels himself the apostle of humanity. He describes his poems as coming from one whose voice

> —Devoted to the love whose seeds
> Are sown in every human breast, to beauty,
> Lodged within compass of the humblest sight,
> To cheerful intercourse with wood and field,
> And sympathy with man's substantial griefs—

he hopes will not be heard in vain.

These were the results of the reverence for human nature which he had learnt from the Revolution, and to which he had added the strong religious element I have sufficiently indicated. I quote, in conclusion of this first part of my subject, and as resuming and confirming much that has been said, a passage from the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* :—

"The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential

ADMONITION.

> Even thine, though few thy wants! — Roof, window, door,
> The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
> The roses to the porch which they entwine:
> Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
> On which it should be touched, would melt away.

HIGHLAND HUT.

> Undressed the pathway leading to the door;
> But love, as Nature loves, the lonely Poor;
> Search, for their worth, some gentle heart wrong-proof,
> Meek, patient, kind, and, were its trials fewer,
> Belike less happy. — Stand no more aloof!

passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified, indeed, from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust), because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation."

II. With regard to the second point, Wordsworth found France steeped in the abstract political theories which her literary men had poured out upon her for half a century. They were not politicians in the sense of mingling in political action, but they occupied themselves almost altogether in writing about government, the origin of society, the natural rights of man, the limits of authority, the true principles of laws, the relations of man to man.

Every man had a different theory, but one general idea lay beneath them all—" the substitution of some simple

and elementary rules of government in accordance with reason and the law of nature, for the complicated and worn-out traditions which directed their present society." That was the political philosophy of the eighteenth century, as De Tocqueville reads it.

These writings spread everywhere. All France read and thought, and by-and-by there grew up in the imagination of the people an imaginary society, in which all laws were simple, conformed to reason and nature; in which all men were equal, were brothers, and were free. It was a dream that seized on the hearts and minds of all men. They lived in an ideal city, the palaces of which were built by theory; and when what they dreamt was realised, as they thought, in America, the Revolution took substance. And Wordsworth with his friend took up these theories, and discussed with the ardour of youth the government of nations, what it ought to be, and how far the weal or woe of a people depends "upon their laws and fashion of the State." In long talks with Beaupuis he argued

> about the end
> Of civil government, and its wisest forms;
> Of ancient loyalty, and chartered rights,
> Custom and habit, novelty and change;
> Of self-respect, and virtue in the few
> For patrimonial honour set apart;
> And ignorance in the labouring multitude.

The noble passage I read last Sunday, in which he describes the romantic ardour with which all men were rapt away into schemes that did not then seem Utopian for the regeneration of mankind, is a picture of his own impassioned hopes at a time when the "senselessness of joy was sublime." He looked forward and saw Liberty building her palace upon strong foundations, and sending from her council-chamber laws which should make

> Social life,
> Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,
> As just in regulation, and as pure
> As individual in the wise and good.

How far these political theories and hopes entered into and formed part of Wordsworth's mind is now our subject. They made him ever afterwards interested in men, not only as persons, but as citizens of a State. They made him take the greatest interest, far greater than any other English poet of the time, in all political and national movements in England and Europe. Living apart from the world, retired as a noontide grove in the solitudes of Grasmere, he yet threw himself, and that with the passion of a poet, into the fate of France, of Switzerland, of Spain, of St. Domingo, of the war on the Continent. He wrote a long pamphlet on the Convention of Cintra, and cast the main thoughts of the pamphlet into poetic form in his sonnets. The internal government of England and the duties of the State to English citizens were continually before his mind. Every one remembers the dreary discussion in the *Excursion* upon Education; few have read his long essay on the Poor Law, in which he treats of the state of the paupers, of the workmen congregated in manufactories, of joint-stock companies, of the relation of capital and labour, and of the Church and Dissent. They were strange subjects for a poet, and he threw many of them into poetical form; and at least they prove that the seed sown in his mind on the banks of the Loire when wandering with his friend Beaupuis had grown into a tree. But the whole of its growth was modified by Wordsworth's individuality. After a gloomy passage in his life, when disappointed in France, he gave himself wholly up for a time to mere social theories—an experience of his that I shall speak of in another lecture—the theoretical element was cast aside, and the practical English sense of the man brought his early dreams to the test of fact. Nothing can better illustrate the difference between the two nations than the experience of Wordsworth. For a short time he was wholly French, indulging in those theories which, applied without political knowledge, make violent revolutions; returning to this country he became, though still re-publican, practical. Wishing for the overthrow of the monarchy and the aristocracy, believing that " hereditary

distinctions and privileged orders of every species counteracted the progress of human improvement," he yet spoke strongly against the hasty destruction of them, and "recoiled from the very idea of a revolution." In 1814 his theory of equality, as we see from the last book of the *Excursion*, was based, not on the vague phrase of the rights of Man, but on the facts that God has given the same gifts to all alike—love of natural beauty, reason, imagination, freedom in the will, conscience, death, immortality, the primal duties, the common charities of life. He who works from this ground will come to a very different conclusion from that which landed the French Revolution in a new and enthralling despotism. For it is the ground of common duties making common rights among men, and the common duties are founded on the common Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood and Equality of men in Him. This is exactly the principle which, in my last lecture, I said needed to be added to those of the Revolution to secure their permanence; and it is a theological idea which Wordsworth added to the poetry of Man.

As to the right to political liberty which was then contended for in France, and based on the theory of the rights of Man without any distinct reference to God, indeed, afterwards with a distinct repudiation of God; it was supported by Wordsworth, as we have seen, with all his heart, but it was supported as the will and work of God. In the *Descriptive Sketches*, written in October as he was wandering on the banks of the Loire, all Nature is made more beautiful to him by his dreams of the advent of perfect liberty; a milder light fell from the skies, the river rolled with more majestic course, the foliage shone with richer gold. But as he wrote he heard the gathering of the enemies of freedom, he foresaw that the land would soon be wrapt in fire, and that all the promise in his heart could not be fulfilled. Yet, undespondent, he appealed to God as the source and protector of the work that France was doing against the oppressing kings of Europe.

Great God! by whom the strifes of men are weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do thou preside
Over the mighty stream now spreading wide:
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like wings!
And grant that every sceptred child of clay
Who cries presumptuous, "Here the flood shall stay,"
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand;
Or, swept in anger from the insulted shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no more!

As to the various theories of government of which he heard, we do not find that they had much influence on him. He did not care for indulging in Utopias upon paper; and the only place where we meet cut and dry systems of government is when he began, in and after 1832, to put forward a kind of strong Conservative programme in opposition to Reform, in such pieces as the *Evening Voluntaries*, and the *Sonnets dedicated to Order*, and the *Warning to England*. In the early times, however, from 1801 to 1813, he put forward no political theories at all, either of government or of liberty. He turned from them to ask more practical questions, as he thought; to discover by what inward forces a nation was free, by what moral powers a state grew into the best organisation. The complete breakdown of theory in France, when the whole nation without a word gave itself into the power of one man, "of men the meanest too," forced him into this inquiry; and no wiser or nobler answer exists on the subjects than in that magnificent series of sonnets dedicated to national independence and liberty. They begin with 1802, when he was again in France, and found the nation bending before Napoleon as First Consul. He looked on the people and found them wanting in all that could establish true political greatness or true liberty, and the lines in which he characterises France have only too much meaning now. Speaking of A. Sidney, Marvel, Harrington, and Vane,

as those "who knew how genuine glory was put on," he adds—

> France, 'tis strange
> Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
> Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
> No single volume paramount, no code,
> No master spirit, no determined road;
> But equally a want of books and men.

Their master spirit was himself a slave (and nothing is finer in Wordsworth than his consistent scorn of Napoleon), and the nation that obeyed him must be without the true elements of political liberty. They could not exist where power was worshipped as mere power. Unless it was applied for ends useful and kindly to men, it was not great, but an idol whose service debased and enslaved a people. It was even worse when it was founded on warlike glory or force.

> 'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
> The governors who must be wise and good,
> And temper with the sternness of the brain
> Thoughts motherly and meek as womanhood.
> Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
> Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
> Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
> Of the mind's business; these are the degrees
> By which true sway doth mount; this is the stalk
> True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

For under a power founded on mere glory in war, a nation lost its own liberty and combined to take liberty from others. This was the sight he saw in France, and he turned within himself and to history to find the contrast. The liberty and greatness of a nation, he answered, were in its harmony with the laws of God, such moral laws as the prophets of Israel laid down; the ground of its existence and success was a moral ground, the test of its liberty was in the virtue and unselfishness of its citizens. By the soul only, by patience and temperance, by

> Honour that knows the path, and will not swerve;
> Affections which, if put to proof, are kind,
> And piety towards God;

by lives given to labour, prayer, to nature, and to heaven, by virtuous homes, and political wisdom founded on moral law, are nations great and free. It was not riches, which were akin, " to fear, to change, to cowardice, and sloth," for did not ennobling thoughts depart " when men changed swords for ledgers and the student's bower for gold? "— but " plain living and high thinking " that were the vital power in a people against oppression. It was not in warlike force, but in the patience, temperance, hope, and fortitude of men who loved liberty for the sake of men and not of themselves, that a people found power to win their freedom against oppresson. Not from

> fleets and armies and external wealth,
> But from within proceeds a nation's strength—

Nor is it intellectual power, or scientific research which in evil days does most for the cause of Man, but simple moral force and the strength of natural human feeling towards things loved by all.

> A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
> Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
> More for mankind, at this unhappy day
> Than all the pride of intellect and thought.

He sought for these in England, and in 1802 he could not find them. One knows the sonnet in which, deploring the evils of his country, he asserts the necessity of the opposite qualities for the greatness of a people.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1802.

> O Friend! I know not which way I must look
> For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
> To think that now our life is only drest
> For show; mean handy-work of craftsmen, 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.

More even than this negative hope they dreamed—

> I with him believed
> That a benignant spirit was abroad
> Which might not be withstood, that poverty
> Abject as this would in a little time
> Be found no more, that we should see the earth
> Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
> The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil:
> All institutes for ever blotted out
> That legalised exclusion, empty pomp
> Abolished, sensual state and cruel power,
> Whether by edict of the one or few;
> And finally, as sum and crown of all,
> Should see the people having a strong hand
> In framing their own laws; whence better days
> To all mankind.

When Beaupuis left him and afterwards "perished in supreme command" in the war against La Vendée, Wordsworth went to Paris at the end of 1792. The September massacres were just over, the King in prison, and the quarrel between the Girondists and the Mountain in full swing. It was a time well calculated to excite to a higher level the mind of Wordsworth, and the passage in which he describes the intensity with which he felt the passion of the whole city is one of the finest in the *Prelude*.

> But that night
> I felt most deeply in what world I was,
> What ground I trod on, and what air I breathed.
> High was my room and lonely, near the roof
> Of a large mansion or hotel, a lodge
> That would have pleased me in more quiet times;
> Nor was it wholly without pleasure then.
> With unextinguished taper I kept watch,
> Reading at intervals; the fear gone by
> Pressed on me almost like a fear to come.
> I thought of those September massacres,
> Divided from me by one little month,
> Saw them and touched: the rest was conjured up
> From tragic fictions or true history,
> Remembrances and dim admonishments.
> The horse is taught his manage, and no star
> Of wildest course but treads back his own steps;

> For the spent hurricane the air provides
> As fierce a successor; the tide retreats
> But to return out of its hiding-place
> In the great deep; all things have second birth;
> The earthquake is not satisfied at once;
> And in this way I wrought upon myself,
> Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried,
> To the whole city, "Sleep no more." The trance
> Fled with the voice to which it had given birth;
> But vainly comments of a calmer mind
> Promised soft peace and sweet forgetfulness.
> The place, all hushed and silent as it was,
> Appeared unfit for the repose of night,
> Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam.

His very inmost soul was agitated, but not for a moment against the principles of the Revolution. He took the side against Robespierre, but felt that Robespierre was the strongest; and a hundred hopes and desires went rushing through his mind, as he thought how the earlier form of the movement might be preserved. Would not all nations come and help France to carry out her first great resolutions? Will not some one man, trusting in ideas and strong in such trust, self-restrained, nobly trained for rule, arise and dominate the struggle, even though he met with death? Would not death be nothing to such a man, for he would gladly obey the sovereign law that calls for sacrifice? For one thing was only to be sought for—the overthrow of tyrants. One thing was sure—for he had no doubt of the end—freedom must win the day as against oppression. He threw himself into the party of the Brissotins, and it was only "by the gracious providence of Heaven," or, as it seemed then to him, "dragged by a chain of harsh necessity," that, compelled to leave France, he escaped the fate of his friends. From thence he watched the growth of the Reign of Terror in France, but though he hated its excesses, he was not shocked by it into any retreat from his opinions. He saw in it all, though he confessed its enormity, the necessary work of vengeance—the vengeance of God Himself upon the guilty. However done, these long cruelties had to be expiated, and the abuses which caused them crushed,

and if there were men who still supported them, so much the worse for the men. They must die who innocently or guiltily subserve oppression; nor should war be avoided with those who from without hindered the march of freedom, even though his own country took part in such a war. Therefore it was that when he returned to England, and war, after the execution of the king in 1793, was declared by England against France, he received a blow which shocked his whole moral nature. Was it possible that his country was on the side of oppression against the destroyers of oppression; and so deep was the feeling that he, than whom none was a truer patriot, but who yet was more a prophet of humanity than a patriot, wished and prayed that the arms of England might fall lifeless in the battle, and her hosts be scattered by the young Republic? He exulted in the victories of the Republic, he followed them with as great delight as was the sorrow with which he groaned over the insults heaped on liberty by the crew of Robespierre. But even the Reign of Terror at its worst did not make him lose hope; when the tyrant fell, he prophesied a new deliverance for France.

But when the career of Napoleon began, though his ardour for liberty did not alter, it changed its form. Oppressed France became the oppressor, and the work of Napoleon stirred into a warmer flame the hatred of oppression which the Revolution had awakened in Wordsworth. In wrath and pity he threw himself into the cause of distressed nationalities; he remembered the starving people —the cruelty which came of irresponsible will and greed, and he saw in Napoleon the concentration into one man of all the elements of the evil which had darkened the old *régime*. All men, all people who fought against him, were on the side of God, even though they had been on the side of the devil for years before. An indignant sonnet recorded his horror at the attack upon the Swiss, another mourned for the fate of Venice, once the eldest child of liberty; another poured its pity upon Toussaint, imprisoned by Napoleon, and in a noble outburst bid him

live and take comfort, for the worlds of Nature and of Man fought upon his side.

> Thou hast left behind
> Powers that will work for thee: air, earth, and skies,
> There's not a breathing of the common wind
> That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
> Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

A whole series followed with eager hope and encouragement the struggle of Hofer and the Tyrolese; another series records his passionate interest in the efforts of Spain against the oppression of France. One of these I quote, partly because it was a favourite of Wordsworth's, but chiefly because it hits sharply the vile falsehood by which Napoleon most defamed the Revolution when he declared that he came as the apostle of freedom to the nations over whom, the moment they were lured into his hands, he set up an exhausting tyranny. It is entitled *The Indignation of a High-minded Spaniard.*

1810.

> We can endure that He should waste our lands,
> Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame
> Return us to the dust from which we came;
> Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands:
> And we can brook the thought that by his hands
> Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,
> For his delight, a solemn wilderness
> Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands
> Which he will break for us he dares to speak,
> Of benefits, and of a future day
> When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway;
> *Then*, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak;
> Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
> That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear.

At last, the year after the *Excursion* was published, the long contest closed at Waterloo, and the oppressor was overthrown. Two *Thanksgiving Odes* show how greatly he was moved, and both bear that deep religious stamp which marked his work; both prove how closely he knit

together the fate of nations with the government of God; both are full of genuine enthusiasm for his country and of joy at her success, but it is an enthusiasm and a joy which are gathered together in humble gratitude to God, in faith that it is He who has done the work of liberty against tyranny by the hands of England.

Our greatest poet since Milton was as religious as Milton, and in both I cannot but think the element of grandeur of style which belongs so pre-eminently to them flowed largely from the solemn simplicity and the strength which a dignified and unbigoted faith in great realities beyond this world gave to the order of their thoughts. Coleridge was flying from one speculation to another all his life. Scott had no vital joy in his belief, and it did not interpenetrate his poetry. Byron believed in Fate more than in God. Shelley floated in an ideal world, which had not the advantage of being generalised from any realities—and not one of them possesses, though Byron comes near it now and then, the grand style. Wordsworth alone, combining fine artistic power with profound religion, walks when he chooses, though he limps wretchealy at times, with nearly as stately a step as Milton. He had the two qualities which always go with the grand style in poetry—he lived intensely in the present, and he had the roots of his being fixed in a great centre of power—faith in the eternal righteousness and love of God.

And he had this, I believe, more than any other poet of the time—more practically far than Shelley—because the cause of Man was so dear to him, and because he saw that the cause of Man was the cause of God. That truth, the profoundest truth of Christianity, he had grasped with his greatest strength. His poetic work did not enthral him—did not in itself alone possess its own desire; he bent it to larger ends than those of giving transient pleasure. He not only reflected faithfully the feelings of human nature, he went further. A great poet, he says, ought to do more than this; he ought "to rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feeling, to render their feelings more sane, pure, and permanent; in