short, more consonant to Nature, that is, to eternal Nature and the great moving spirit of things." And he has proved by his work that the great poet ought to do more than even this; he ought to expand men's sympathies over the great interests and movements of nations, to beautify the great truths on which the moral and political progress of nations rest, to add emotion to the ideas of liberty and brotherhood, to bid men look forward and labour for not only their own country's highest good, but for the restoration of all things, to keep the hope and faith of a millennium ever before our eyes, to be the prophet of mankind. And this was something of Wordsworth's work, only it was not done by vague prophecies like Shelley's; it was done by taking up the events of the day and applying to them principles which led him to give as much interest and emotion to the struggles of distressed Europe with an overwhelming imperialism as he gave to the struggles of the dalesmen of Grasmere with the overmastering forces of Nature.

The pity of it is, that this power did not last till the very close. After Napoleon's overthrow he grew somewhat sick of the present, and for the first time turned to the past for his subjects. It was then that such poems as *Laodamia* and *Dion* were written. As time wore on, he became less widely human and more Wordsworthian: the intense one-sidedness with which he always treated his subjects grew more conscious of itself, and at last pleased with itself; the want of living in the world, among men and movements, the want of being himself moved by any great impulse such as had transported him in youth, fixed him down into illiberal opinions at last. He still maintained his hatred of oppression, his love of liberty, but in practice both the hatred and the love broke down. The moral, temperate element in him, the abhorrence of violence and disorder, the love of the old—which in the first part of his life had formed a useful check upon his revolutionary enthusiasm, so that he always kept his head, grew—now that the Revolution and the Empire itself had horrified him—into devouring prominence, and he lost in his old age that balance of

opinions which mark sanity of mind. It is not strange to find him opposing the bill for admitting Nonconformists to the Universities without any subscription or declaration of conformity to the Church, but it is strange that he should think that this would endanger the monarchy and social order. It is strange to find him maintaining that civil disabilities ought to be removed from every class, and yet that they ought not to be removed from the Roman Catholics, because to give liberty to them promoted the cause of spiritual tyranny. It is curious liberality which in order to promote liberty violates liberty. It is stranger still, when we look back to the enthusiast of the Revolution, to find him saying in 1832 that the Constitution of England would be destroyed by the Reform Bill, and writing letters on the subject which are even duller than such poems as the *Warning*, and the *Sonnets to Order*, and that is saying a great deal. What a change from the earlier dignity of his poetry, how curiously infelicitous the phrases, how meagre the style —a kind of poor extemporary prayer in verse—are the following lines:—

> O for a bridle bitted with remorse
> To stop your Leaders in their headlong course!
> Oh may the Almighty scatter with his grace
> These mists, and lead you to a safer place,
> By paths no human wisdom can foretrace—
> May He pour round you, from worlds far above
> Man's feverish passions, His pure light of love!

Nevertheless it is but right to say that Wordsworth's dislike to the liberal movements in 1832 and afterwards was in his own mind founded on love of constitutional liberty. It is the statement of the Conservative, but still it would be unfair to call him a bigoted Conservative. He wished, for example, that representation could be thrown more fairly into the hands of the property of the country, and less into the hands of the great proprietors. It was a change from the time when he thought it degrading to human nature to set up property in preference to person as a title to legislative power, but it was not a

bigoted change. He could speak plainly even in 1844 as to the duties of the great landowners and manufacturers to the poor. "One would wish," he writes, "to see the rich mingle with the poor as much as may be on a footing of fraternal equality. The old feudal dependencies and relations are almost gone from England, and nothing has yet come adequately to supply their place. Why should not great landowners look for a substitute for what is lost of feudal paternity in the higher principles of Christianised humanity and humble-minded brotherhood?" It was on these principles that the old man himself lived among the poor that surrounded him, when young and old met at Rydal to keep his birthday.

Nor was it change he disliked, but reckless sweeping change; and the changes wrought by the Reform Bill seemed such to him. We must remember that he was then sixty-two years old, and had lived too much apart from men. Much may be pardoned to old age that one does not pardon to youth, and Wordsworth himself says that he had lost "*courage* in the sense the word bears when applied by Chaucer to the animation of birds in spring time." He had seen a Revolution in a foreign country, and he had not courage now to face another in his own. He expected that something of the same violence which had made him recoil from France, would prevail in England after the Reform Bill, and he advocated, if change was necessary, a slower, wiser change. The following sonnet, not so poor poetically as others of the same period, is interesting as embodying his views and referring to the French Revolution.

> Long-favoured England! be not thou misled
> By monstrous theories of alien growth,
> Lest alien frenzy seize thee, waxing wroth,
> Self-smitten till thy garments reek dyed red
> With thy own blood, which tears in torrents shed
> Fail to wash out, tears flowing ere thy troth
> Be plighted, not to ease but sullen sloth,
> Or wan despair—the ghost of false hope fled
> Into a shameful grave. Among thy youth,
> My Country! if such warning be held dear,

> Then shall a Veteran's heart be thrilled with joy,
> One who would gather from eternal truth,
> For time and season, rules that work to cheer—
> Not scourge, to save the People—not destroy.

When things, however, were not so close to him, when he came into contact with the struggle of liberty in a foreign country, his sympathy with the oppressed seems to have been nearly as strong as ever. One would scarcely conceive Wordsworth, when almost seventy, as a supporter of the Carbonari, but such was the case, and those who love Italy and Wordsworth cannot but be pleased to bring them together. In 1842 he mourned over the decay of Italy, and saw in the Lago Morto its emblem. "Be its depths quickened," he cries out with some return of his ancient energy—

> What thou dost inherit
> Of the world's hopes, dare to fulfil: awake,
> Mother of Heroes, from thy death-like sleep!

And in another sonnet, the last part of which I quote, he breaks into a prophecy which God has fulfilled in our own time—

> Fallen Power!
> Thy fortunes, twice exalted, might provoke
> Me to glad notes prophetic of the hour
> When thou, uprisen, shalt break thy double yoke,
> And enter, with prompt aid from the Most High,
> On the third stage of thy great destiny.

But in the case of Italy also, taught, as he held, by the fate of France, he was against all rash schemes and popular passion. Writing about the insurrections in Bologna in 1837, he declares that by no mere fit of sudden passion is freedom won, and urges gradual progress, noiseless pains, and moderation. And the advice he gives is noble enough and characteristic of him, nor is it one which the Italians would despise. It was at the root of all Mazzini's later teaching to his people. "O, great Italian nation," Wordsworth writes,—

> Let thy scope
> Be one fixed mind for all: thy rights approve
> To thy own conscience gradually renewed;
> Learn to make Time the father of wise Hope;
> Then trust thy cause to the arm of Fortitude,
> The light of Knowledge, and the warmth of Love.

It has seemed to me worth while, though at some length, to look into the question of Wordsworth's later Conservatism, and to show that he did not merit the violent expressions used about his change. Apostate, renegade, were terms equally unjust and unworthy to be applied to one who had done so much for Man. Still he suffered from the change. I have already said that with the decay of his natural republicanism, and with the loss of the ideas of republicanism as the leading thoughts of life, decayed his poetical power when he spoke of Man, even to a certain degree when he spoke of Nature. With their overthrow decayed also that larger Christianity in him, which is not personal, but human; but at the same time his personal Christianity grew deeper. Nor must we blame him much for this. 'Twould have been better had he been as before, the prophet of liberty and right, the declarer that the cause of Man is the cause of God; but it is but natural that, as age grows on, our thoughts should centre more round the relation of God to our own soul than our relation to the world of men, that the *Evening Voluntaries* should succeed the *Sonnets dedicated to Liberty and Independence*.

LECTURE XII

WORDSWORTH—*continued*

In my last lecture, I was carried far forward to the close of Wordsworth's life by my wish to bring under one theme his earlier and later feelings with regard to the Revolution. It is necessary now to return to his personal history, as it touches on the poetry of Man and of Nature. In doing so there will be some unavoidable repetition, but that which is repeated will be used in a different connection and for a different purpose. I have in this lecture to trace how the failure of his hopes for Man impaired his love of Nature and his love of Man; how they were restored, and, finally, how that marriage of his human mind and Nature, to which we have been looking forward for so long, was at last fulfilled.

I must, therefore, in order to arrive at the causes which impaired his love of Nature and Man, return to his personal history. We left him when he was driven by stress of circumstances from France to England in 1793. He had nearly been involved in the fate of his friends the Brissotins, and he followed with intense eagerness the progress of affairs in France. He refused to seek the country, and remained in London. It is characteristic of him at this time, that he took but little interest in the movement for Negro Emancipation, for he felt that if France prospered, slavery must perish. The principles there fought for, if established, would strike at the root of all oppression, and with the destruction of the root, all the branches of the tree of human slavery would be destroyed, negro slavery among the rest.

But as he watched in passionate desire, two things deprived his watch of all delight and threw him into almost despair. The first was the union of England with the confederate powers against France; the second

was the Reign of Terror. He never heard the sunset cannon from the English fleet, as he watched it riding in the Solent, ere it went to war,

> Without a spirit overcast by dark
> Imaginations, sense of woes to come,
> Sorrow for humankind, and pain of heart.
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. x.

It was this first threw him out of his love of Man and soured his heart. It was misery to him to sit among the worshippers who gave praise for his country's victories, "like an uninvited guest whom no one owned, to sit silent, and to brood on the day of vengeance yet to come." It was still worse to be tossed between love of England, and delight that she was beaten by her enemies because she was false to liberty: a woeful time which those who afterwards attacked Wordsworth had never gone through.

Nor did he ever cast his eyes on France without misery: misery because God seemed to have forgotten Man, because liberty seemed to have forgotten herself and to wear the robes of tyranny, because the deeds then done would be brought in charge against her name. For years his dreams were haunted with the ghastly visions of that time; he saw the dungeons, the executions, the unjust tribunals, and in sleep he seemed to plead in long orations before their judges,

> With a voice
> Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
> Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt
> In the last place of refuge—my own soul—

Moved in this way to the very centre of his being with the passion of humanity, troubled, even tortured, with conflicting emotions, he compared this new love of Man with his early love of Nature, and both in their relation to God.

His love of Nature, whose veins were filled from the fountain of the grace of God,

> Was service paid to things which lie
> Guarded within the bosom of God's will.
> Therefore to serve was high beatitude;
> Tumult was therefore gladness, and the fear
> Ennobling, venerable; sleep secure,
> And waking thoughts more rich than happiest dreams.
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. x.

But this new love of Man, how unspeakably unlike! With what a different ritual did one serve, through it, the Power Supreme who made Man divine! Faith and calmness seemed to leave his heart when he felt how full of doubt, dismay, and sleepless trouble, how sorrowful the tumult, how dreadful were the dreams, which belonged to this new service of mankind.

Yet, as he looked deeper—and that he could do this marks the temperate courage of Wordsworth as a thinker, and the mastery of his intellectual will over mere emotion —he saw no reason to despair of Man. As the prophets, who in their highest inspiration worked with a human heart troubled for the woes of man, wanted not consolation in that they saw God in the punishment of evil, and the triumph of moral law, so Wordsworth saw beneath the misery of France God in moral retribution, and God educating the nation. That was one theological aspect in which he viewed events.

He looked again, and saw another star of hope for Man in the self-sacrifice and virtues of those who suffered. He saw in a hundred instances that God had not forsaken human nature. Green spots appeared in the desert, bright islands of "fortitude, and energy, and love," of honour, faith, and sanctity,

> And human nature faithful to herself,

amid the dark and stormy seas of the time. For a time he was thus kept true to his belief of God in Man, in spite of repeated shocks: his worship and his love, though dark, were touched with breaks of sunlight.

Then came to support this hope the news that Robespierre was dead. He heard it as he crossed the estuary

of the Leven, and hope revived within him, more than hope—enthusiasm.

> Great was my transport, deep my gratitude
> To everlasting Justice, by this fiat
> Made manifest. "Come now, ye golden times,"
> Said I, forthpouring on those open sands
> A hymn of triumph; "as the morning comes
> From out the bosom of the night, come ye—
> Thus far our trust is verified."
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. x.

The world would now, he thought, go forward to righteousness and peace and liberty.

But he was still doomed to disappointment. Preserving amid the weakness of the new government his trust in the people, he found it slowly ebb away; and when Frenchmen changed "the war of self-defence for one of conquest, and lost sight of all they struggled for;" when, finally, to close her gains, a Pope

> Was summoned in to crown an Emperor;

when he saw a people, that once looked to Heaven for manna,

> take a lesson from the dog
> Returning to his vomit,

then the crash was too great; he lost faith for a time in God, in moral right; the old miseries returned to add their weight to the new; the hopes that had risen again against the shocks he had received, died now finally; and he lost his true love of Nature, his true love of Man, or rather he lost the true foundations on which they were based. It will be my business to trace how these two affections were impaired, and how they were restored, and how, after passing through this trial, they mingled into one.

In the account given of this mental crisis in the *Prelude*, in books xi., xii., and xiii., the two subjects of the Love of Man and Nature are mingled up together as poetic emotion led him to speak of each. For the purposes of the lecture we must isolate them from each other, but it must be

always remembered that they went on together, *pari passu*, in his mind. With regard to the love of Nature, it lost its natural, intuitive quality; it became a business of the intellect as stimulated by sensible images, more than of the heart as impressed by the same. The first step towards this impairing of his love of Nature—and it shows how the two things were mingled up in his mind—was made when he lost hope for and love of Man in the present and began to look beyond it, in a merely critical spirit, for a coming race. He became absorbed in the picture of an ideal mankind in the future, wholly different, he hoped, from the wretched creature he knew in the present. He looked back also to the sages, patriots, and heroes of the past, and it seemed to him, so dark his mind, that their "best virtues were not free from taint." He went to the poets to find purer creatures, but if "Reason be nobility in Man," can anything, he asked, be more ignoble than the creature they delight to picture,

> the miserable slave
> Of low ambition and distempered love.

This was the wretched carping condition into which he fell; he judged mankind by the intellect alone, and shut out the heart as co-assessor with the intellect. It was by the understanding alone that he tried to solve those mysteries of being that make of the human race one brotherhood, and in so doing he cut himself off from his poetic nature, and

> From all the sources of his former strength.

He even, by the exercise of his critical faculty on Man, lost the power of conceiving Man as a whole, for it is only in belief in things not subject to the critical faculty working alone, such things as the universal sense of right and wrong, of truth, of common and natural emotions, of a God, that we have any absolute grounds for holding the doctrine of an universal humanity.

The slave then of this critical faculty, he could not help applying it to Nature. Long ago he had believed in a soul in Nature, and looked beneath her outward forms in order

to feel this soul and its "impassioned life," with heart and intellect at one in the work, and the Soul of Nature answered to his love and told to him her secrets.[1] But now he had abandoned the thought of a soul within the world, and love could no longer rule his life with her. He criticised its surface beauty like an art critic, "even in pleasure pleased unworthily." He liked here and disliked there as artistic rules led him, applying rules of art "to things above all art." He compared landscape with landscape, to the disadvantage of one—

> Bent overmuch on superficial things,
> Pampering myself with meagre novelties
> Of colour and proportion—to the moods
> Of time and season, to the moral power,
> The affections, and the spirit of the place
> Insensible.
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. xii.

In this way that spiritual imagination was impaired which penetrates to the living heart of Nature, and feels it beating against the human heart.

Another phase of the same thing also beset him. The eye took despotism over the rest of his senses and powers, and held his mind in slavery to its special pleasure. It had vivid but not profound pleasure in roving from one landscape to another, and in craving new combinations

[1] I place the passage here in order that it may be read in connection with the lecture in which I have maintained that Wordsworth gave a life to Nature different from ours.

> O Soul of Nature! excellent and fair!
> That didst rejoice with me, with whom I, too,
> Rejoiced through early youth, before the winds
> And roaring waters, and in lights and shades
> That marched and countermarched about the hills
> In glorious apparition, Powers on whom
> I daily waited, now all eye and now
> All ear; but never long without the heart
> Employed, and man's unfolding intellect:
> O Soul of Nature! that, by laws divine
> Sustained and governed, still dost overflow
> With an impassioned life, what feeble ones
> Walk on this earth! how feeble I have been
> When thou wert in thy strength.
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. xii.

of beauty. Still worse, it took pride in this power, and began to think it nobler than the power of feeling, so that, at last, it grew so important to him that it laid the inner faculties asleep.

It is an experience which we see repeated at the present day, and its lesson should not be lost on us. A more complex worldly life creates often, and is creating now among us, a worldliness of the eye. It lusts after mere outward beauty, harmonies of colour, picturesqueness, exquisiteness of form. And in its insatiable pursuit of these, which only touch the senses, the influence of Nature on the heart is lost. It cannot rest quiet and content with any beauty; nor assimilate the teaching Nature gives to the heart and conscience: for it has no true love of Nature, and without that it only looks long enough to satisfy the eye. It is only love which enables us to dwell on a thing without weariness. And this delight in mere outside beauty soon finds satiety, and flies to something else, and, flying thus incessantly, it never remains long enough by anything to be able to comprehend it. For a time this was Wordsworth's failing, and the cause of it lay not only in that of which I have spoken, but also that the troubles of human life in which he was now involved overrode the silent influences of Nature, and made his life with Nature share in the excited life he was leading with Man. He contrasts this " thraldom of the sense "—this feverish worldliness of the eye—with the life which his sister lived with Nature. In her—

The eye was not the mistress of the heart;
Far less did rules prescribed by passive taste,
Or barren intermeddling subtleties,
Perplex her mind: but wise as women are
When genial circumstance hath favoured them,
She welcomed what was given, and craved no more;
Whate'er the scene presented to her view
That was the best, to that she was attuned
By her benign simplicity of life,
And through a perfect happiness of soul,
Whose variegated feelings were in this
Sisters, that they were each some new delight.
Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field

> Could they have known her, would have loved; methought
> Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,
> That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,
> And everything she looked on, should have had
> An intimation how she bore herself
> Towards them and to all creatures. God delights
> In such a being; for, her common thoughts
> Are piety, her life is gratitude—.
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. xii.

So it was with him of old, when he "worshipped among the depth of things," without criticising overmuch; but now it was different. Yet the evil did not last long; the poet was too strong in him and Nature herself too close. She fought, he held, against the tyranny of any one sense over the others—

> Summons all the senses each
> To counteract the other, and themselves,
> And makes them all, and the objects with which all
> Are conversant, subservient in their turn
> To the great ends of Liberty and Power.
>
> Bk. xii.

There is an exact analogy to this in Christianity. It employs all the virtues, and by insisting on a harmony of them all in the character, endeavours to thwart the tyranny of any one virtue, which dwelt on exclusively passes into a vice. But the harmony of all, each doing its own work in mutual service, makes action free, and gives to the will power towards righteousness.

But what redeemed him chiefly were the recollections of early impressions which he had received from certain scenes in Nature. He had known, in youth, too forcibly,

> Visitings of imaginative power,

for this evil habit to endure their remembrance. Youth and its powers return to the true heart, however troubled it has been; the memory of passionate feeling waked by the influences of grandeur or beauty in Nature, inspires such joy that we cannot but return to win from her again the same passionate feeling as of old. For there are certain spots of time, and I analyse here a long

passage, the recollection of which possesses a renovating virtue; there are passages of life which give

> Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,
> The mind is lord and master—outward sense
> The obedient servant of her will. Such moments
> Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
> From our first childhood.
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. xii.

In these moments Nature impresses herself as a living force of passion on the soul. The impressions are deepest when we are alone and Nature is dreary. For when we are alone the soul is most receptive, and when she is dreary there arises in us, aroused by her touch, a wild, involuntary, apparently causeless sorrow. It is, in Wordsworth's thought, the spirit mourning in itself for that imperial palace whence it came, the recollection of a time of disembodied joy and purity, before it came to earth. These are the intimations of our immortality in childhood. Nature, working on us from without, sends a kindling touch that awakens the slumbering powers of the soul. We are lifted beyond our life of thoughtlessness, and feel, half unconsciously, the greatness of the soul. To these hours we look back, and there is in them, all sorrowful and vague as they are, virtue to recall us—when they are refashioned by association and added to by experience—to higher thoughts, to nourish and repair imagination when it has been dulled by the wear and stress of life; to lead us, through their memories, to find beauty again in the commonplace, the ideal in the dull reality of life, and the presence of the soul and the passion of the heart in communion with the life of Nature. Such regenerating memories were Wordsworth's, and they wrought in him that "working of the spirit," those "inward agitations," which carry us beyond ourselves into that region of the spiritual which we always touch but so seldom enter, into that region of the heart which lies so close to us, but which too often we despise for the region of the understanding.

Influenced by them, the poet escaped at last from the

critical, analysing spirit with which he had for a time confronted the soul of Nature. I shook the habit off, he says—

> Entirely and for ever, and again
> In Nature's presence stood, as now I stand
> A sensitive being, a *creative* soul—

with power as of old to receive sensitively all impressions from Nature, with power to create, by the working of imagination on the impressions, new images of thought. So was it with his love of Nature.

The trial through which his love of Man went ran on much the same lines. As in the love of Nature so in the love of Man, he slipt out of the region of intuition in which the poet most keenly lives, into the region of speculative opinion. It is not difficult to understand how he got into that region; for it is characteristic of human nature in youth, when enthusiastic opinions which have been loved have received a shock from the contradiction of events, to fight against that contradiction, even though the heart is failing under the blow it has received. This was the case with Wordsworth. Events seemed to prove that the principles he would have laid down his life for were null and void, and a vague despair began to move in his heart. Along with this was combined the sneer of men who had hated the Revolution from the beginning. They turned on Wordsworth with ridicule and mocked his opinions. And he replied indignantly: he fought for his views, clung to them as a man clings to religious opinions of which he has an inner doubt, saying to himself, "If I am wrong, then all is lost" But having this inner doubt, his heart and conscience were forced to cease to take part in his battle against the world, and his intellect alone was engaged. And then, in the heat of contest, opinions became all he cared for, till round his mind

> They clung, as if *they* were its life, nay more,
> The very being of the immortal soul.

He threw himself into speculative schemes of socialism, formed an ideal of Man, exalted his reason as the sole

lord of his acts, and strove to conceive a community in which, like Robert Owen's, social liberty should be built on personal, laws should be wholly directed by circumstances, man live by his intellect alone, and, shaking off all degrading pursuits, be absolutely free,

> Lord of Himself in undisturbed delight.

But before realising this scheme it was necessary to make an accurate study of society, and he did this by the help of the understanding alone. He brought all systems, creeds, and laws before the bar of the reasoning faculty and asked them to prove their rightness. He demanded that the soul should give formal proof of its powers. How did it know that it could distinguish between right and wrong, how did it know it was immortal? Had morality or religion any ground in fact?

What was the result? It was, that looking into these things without love, and leaving out of the investigation the imagination and the spirit as means of judging, he saw not life but death in the world; he lost all certainty. As one piece of evidence was strong he believed in the greatness of the soul, as one piece was weak he disbelieved in it. He found himself endlessly perplexed with questions about impulses and motives, whether what seemed wrong was not sometimes right, and what seemed right, wrong. He could not decide whether there was any eternal rule of duty, whether it had any ground in the nature of things, whether what seemed its sanctions were sanctions, or whence the sanctions came; till at last he became a sceptic, and yielded up all moral questions in despair. Man was either—

> The dupe of folly or the slave of crime.
>
> Bk. xii.

This was the lowest depth he reached, and from this he was saved, first, by the common sense so characteristic of him among the poets. It led him to employ his puzzled reason on some subject whose elements were not disturbed by human passion. He took to the study of abstract science, and in realising its calm realities his mind grew

calm. He was saved, secondly, by the influence of human love, which restored to him that reverence for the heart which he had lost. It was through his sister's influence that this sacred work was also wrought. She who lived from the heart, moved ever by his side; she believed for him when he disbelieved; she saw that his scepticism was more the flight of clouds across his mind than any vital change in his mind itself; she went with her own eager sympathy through all his trouble,—

> Then it was—
> Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good—
> That the beloved Sister in whose sight
> Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
> Of sudden admonition—like a brook
> That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now
> Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,
> Companion never lost through many a league—
> Maintained for me a saving intercourse
> With my true self——
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. xi.

she "whispered still that brightness would return," and herself, loving Nature intensely, as her delightful Diary proves, not only restored to him his ancient love of Nature, but also opened to his heart again the fountains of human love and bade him drink them and be whole; brought him back to his real work,—

> preserved him still
> A Poet, made him seek beneath that name,
> And that alone, his office upon earth.

It was thus he began to find his love of Man again.

But another power now joined in his sister's work. He had refound, as we have seen, his love of Nature, and Nature led him now again, as she had done of old, to the love of Man. In his youth he had seen in her Beauty and Sublimity; he now, influenced by his study of Science on the one side, and by desire to be freed from confused opinions on the other, saw in her not only Beauty and Sublimity but divine and quiet Order. She seemed to him the image of right reason, the witness to calm obedi-

ence to eternal Law; she held before his eyes no disturbing passion, but a "temperate show of objects which endure." It was a view which sank deep into his troubled human heart; he took it with him to the world of Man, and it taught him to seek in it, beneath the wild disturbance of the surface sea of life,—

> Whate'er there is desirable and good
> Of kindred permanence, unchanged in form
> And function, or, through strict vicissitude
> Of Life and Death, revolving.
>
> *Prelude*, Bk. xiii.

And having found these things in human life, he turned again to Nature, and in feeling his brotherhood with Man, felt his brotherhood with her complete. Those "watchful thoughts" were re-established which had early tutored him—

> To look with feelings of fraternal love
> Upon the unassuming things that hold
> A silent station in this beauteous world.

Both had been fully regained—the love of Man, the love of Nature.

Freed thus from unregulated emotion, he sought with quiet judgment to find the great truths which underlie human life, and the permanent feelings of human nature, and to rest on these amid the storm of passions and opinions, for there, among much evil, was the abiding good in Man, the dwelling-place of God.

> Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
> Once more in Man an object of delight,
> Of pure imagination and of love——

but it was now a wiser love; it had given up theories of Man, it only sought now a humbler object—to find out what Man was when unspoilt, through the power of a sympathising human heart. And seeking thus, he recovered his clear belief in right, his clear sight of wrong, his faith in the eternity of pure feelings and the divine nature in the human. Sanguine schemes, ambitious projects for the regeneration of mankind, pleased him

less; the wild dream of promise which had flown before him in the Revolution, " retired into its due proportion." " I sought," he says,—

> For present good in life's familiar face
> And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

Where now was he to seek this present good, where find the divine wealth of pure feeling and honest life of which he was now convinced? Where, he answered, but among the natural abodes of simple men, the men among whom my life was passed; thither I turn from national interests to individual, and perhaps in finding there personal lives true to duty, the heart, and conscience, I may best learn what makes the true worth and dignity of Man, and why this glorious creature should not be counted by thousands, not by one only in ten thousand. I will " inspect the basis of the social pile, and ask how much of mental power and genuine virtue they possess who live by bodily toil,"—

> therefore did I turn
> To you, ye pathways and ye lonely roads;
> Sought you enriched with everything I prized,
> With human kindnesses and simple joys.

There he learnt the wisdom of the poet, the wisdom to feel deeply and to know things and men through love; healing and repose came to his wounded heart as he wandered over the moors, or sat on the cottage bench, or by the well-spring, and talked with all he met. This was his school, it was here he read the passions of mankind, and the depths of the human heart, and heard

> From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
> Replete with honour.

He sketches such a life in the character of the Pedlar, in the first book of the *Excursion*, and he drew it from himself. It was the life he would have chosen, and no words can describe better than the following—a few lines being excepted—the character of Wordsworth at this time:—

> He wandered far; much did he see of men,
> Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,

> Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
> Essential and eternal in the heart,
> That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
> Exist more simple in their elements,
> And speak a plainer language. In the woods,
> A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
> Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
> The better portion of his time; and there
> Spontaneously had his affections thriven
> Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
> And liberty of nature; there he kept
> In solitude and solitary thought
> His mind in a just equipoise of love.
> Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
> Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
> By partial bondage. In his steady course,
> No piteous revolutions had he felt,
> No wild varieties of joy and grief.
> Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
> His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
> And constant disposition of his thoughts
> To sympathy with man, he was alive
> To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
> And all that was endured; for, in himself
> Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
> He had no painful pressure from without
> That made him turn aside from wretchedness
> With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
> With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
> That in our best experience he was rich
> And in the wisdom of our daily life.

It was thus for a time he lived, till at last, inspired by such communion with "men as they are men within themselves," he resolved, seeing what holy worship was offered unto God in the wayside chapels of humble and loving hearts among poor and simple men, to make his song of these. This, then, was his work, this the aim he had at last found for his poetic life; to

> Deal boldly with substantial things; in truth
> And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
> That justice may be done, obeisance paid
> Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,
> Inspire, through unadulterated ears

Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope,—my theme
No other than the very heart of man,
As found among the best of those that live,
Not unexalted by religious faith,
Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,
In Nature's presence: thence may I select
Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight;
And miserable love, that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to humankind, and what we are.

Prelude, Bk. xiii.

It was a work to which men "accomplished for communion with the world, most active when they most are eloquent," but needing admiration to develop them, might not care to listen. But there were others who would; men who uphold themselves, and by their own solitary might and joy create—others, too, and those chiefly found among the walks of homely life—

men for contemplation framed
Shy and unpractised in the strife of phrase;

who cannot speak, nor tell their secret heart, but whose

is the language of the heavens, the power,
The thought, the image and the silent joy:
Words are but under-agents in their souls;
When they are grasping with their greatest strength
They do not breathe among them—this I speak
In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
For His own service; knoweth us, loveth us,
When we are unregarded by the world.

Bk. xiii.

This was his work, to make unworldly men listen to the beating of the heart of natural humanity.

And now having taken the world of humanity into himself, the world of Nature, which he had received and loved before, united itself to the world of humanity within him, and the marriage of the Mind to the Universe, of which we spoke so much, was complete in Wordsworth. He saw how Nature consecrated and made grand the human life which was lived among her beauty and sublimity. He felt also that the visible world and all its

forms gave teaching and pleasure to the mind in proportion as human passion worked upon them, and that, in turn, the forms

> Of Nature have a passion in themselves,
> That intermingles with those works of man
> To which she summons him; although the works
> Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;
> And that the Genius of the Poet hence
> May boldly take his way among mankind
> Wherever Nature leads; that he hath stood
> By Nature's side among the men of old,
> And so shall stand for ever.

And he dares to hope

> That unto him hath also been vouchsafed
> An insight that in some sort he possesses,
> A privilege whereby a work of his,
> Proceeding from a source of untaught things,
> Creative and enduring, may become
> A power like one of Nature's.
>
> Bk. xiii.

Feeling, hoping thus, he looked into the world of Nature, and felt within it a living spirit, moving unseen, but making all its life. He looked again, and below the surface of the world of Man he gained sight of a new and living world also, a world ruled by those fixed laws

> Whence spiritual dignity originates,
> Which do both give it being and maintain
> A balance, an ennobling interchange
> Of action from without and from within;
> The excellence, pure function and best power
> Both of the object seen and eye that sees.

Hence, when these two spiritual worlds were bound together in holy wedlock in the poet's heart, he could speak from both of them alike, and reveal the mutual action on each other of Nature and the human mind, and his work, issuing from such origins, not only be a creation of the human mind, but also a power like one of Nature's, speak to men, as the winds and ocean speak; move them as the beauty of the evening moves them; and make them thrill, as does the thunder in the tempest, with a sense of

grandeur; soften, soothe, and bless, as the quiet of the stars or the ripple of the water. For the poet is the living voice of Nature as he is the expressing voice of Man.

Profoundly, then, impressed with Man, he did not desert his first love, Nature. He threw on her the light and emotion he had won from knowledge of the sorrows, passions, battles, and destiny of Man, till she trembled not only with her own emotion but with his. He saw in her—thus infinitely sympathetic to those who loved her, and brought the power of humanity to her—the teacher, the guide, and yet the servant of Man. And in this light, the intercourse he had with her was not as in boyhood a wild passion, nor a solitary one—it had now a softer, gentler, more enduring feeling, as if felt to a lover or a friend. She was no longer apart from Man, but thrilled through all her veins with sympathy for Man in good: no longer apart from God, but a life whose life was that of God; and as such the external master, guide, and anchor of his being.

This new position of Wordsworth's mind is, perhaps, worth illustrating at some length from his poetry, and I will sketch some of its phases. It appeared in the very first poems he published after his return from France, in the *Descriptive Sketches* in 1793. In them the natural landscape and those who lived in it were knit together, so that Nature was conceived of as inspiriting Man, and Man as making Nature more sublime and fair. In 1795 he illustrates in the lines written near the yew-tree on Esthwaithe Lake the opposite state of mind—in the case of a man so absorbed in himself as to lose the good of the influences of Nature and to be separated from mankind. In 1798, in the lines written when visiting Tintern Abbey, the union of Man and Nature in his mind is complete. The beginning of it is a condensation of all that we have gone through with him in the *Prelude* as to the education and influences of Nature on his life. There he looks back on what he was five years before when Nature was all in all to him, and her forms were " a feeling and a love "

> That had no need of a remoter charm
> By thought supplied, nor any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.

Now it is different, he loves not Nature less; but mankind and its vast interest is wedded to her; and beyond both and yet in both, in the universe without and the mind within himself, there is an all-pervading divine spirit. Well-known as they are the lines must be quoted:—

> For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
> A lover of the meadows and the woods,
> And mountains; and of all that we behold
> From this green earth; of all the mighty world
> Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
> And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
> In nature and the language of the sense,
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.

The same position of mind, only marked with less of joy and more of sober sadness is expressed in the latter part of the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.*

Of the poetic result of this marriage in himself of Nature and his human mind I have already given an instance in speaking of the stanzas on the picture of Peele Castle, and explained how the imaginative creation of the poem was not the result only of an impression received from Nature, or of his own thought, but of the blended might of both embracing to produce a child different from both, but having something of the nature of both. I give another instance now in the most imagi-

native of his poems, *Yew Trees.* He walks in the shade of the yews of Borrowdale, those "fraternal Four, joined in one solemn and capacious grove," and there flows into his passive mind from Nature a vivid impression of gloom, of darkness and silence. Then his mind springs into activity, fastens on the impression, knits round it thoughts that are similar but different, thoughts of the sacred groves such as that where the Eumenides were worshipped, of groves where ancient powers were seen by wandering men, of death, of all those solemn moral powers that brood silently over Man. At last, out of both these working together, is born the imaginative Creation, and there rises before his eyes an ideal grove in which the ghostly masters of mankind meet, and sleep, and offer worship to the Destiny that abides above them; while the mountain flood, far, far away, as if from another world, makes music to which they dimly listen. Nothing can be more intense in imagination, nor is there anything more unique in English poetry:—

> But worthier still of note
> Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
> Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
> Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
> Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
> Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
> That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
> Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
> By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
> Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
> Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
> With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
> May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
> Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
> And Time the Shadow;—there to celebrate,
> As in a natural temple scattered o'er
> With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
> United worship; or in mute repose
> To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
> Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

In this case it was chiefly thought alone which acted on

the images received, but for the most part in Wordsworth the natural impressions are met by thoughts connected with human love, and the creation which ensues in the poem is one which is obedient to the sympathies of Man, and yet not forgetful of gratitude to Nature, so that both are honoured and exalted. There is a little sonnet written in later life, and one of his best, which illustrates the whole method of work, and yet marks how unconsciously —as it was bound to be—it was followed.

XLVIII.

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

Finally, the last book of the *Prelude* has this same position of mind towards Nature as its under-thought. It begins by a magnificent description of the ascent of Snowdon by night, at first in mist, and then as a light fell upon the turf, he looked up, and lo! [1]

[1] I insert this passage, not that I want it particularly, but because it is one of the finest specimens of Wordsworth's *grand style*. It is as sustained and stately as Milton, and here and there one catches the note of Milton as in the two lines beginning, "Not so the ethereal vault," but it is different from Milton's style in the greater simplicity of diction, in the more feminine and gliding motion of the verse, and in the want, therefore, of the solemn chords of mingled sound and thought with which Milton clashes in again and again in a long passage, making the reader halt to breathe. It differs, also, considered as an illustration, from Milton's manner in this, that Milton uses his illustrations for the purpose of making the thing illustrated more real to the sight, whereas in this one feels beforehand in reading it, that it is being prepared to serve a moral or intellectual purpose. It is a feeling which somewhat spoils the passage from the artistic point of view.

The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none
Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift—
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place—
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

Prelude, bk. xiv.

Out of this vision of the night, when it was wedded to Thought, he creates the image of a majestic intellect, "what in itself it is and would become." Nature had shadowed forth in the whole scene the emblem of such a mind, with all its functions; and he saw, through the power of his own soul, the ideal substance the shadow of which lay before him. But the possibility of this interaction lay in the original harmony which he believed had been established by God between the Mind of man and the outward Universe, whereby things in the one were certain to resemble things in the other.

On these resemblances he dwells, always working, observe, on the same large idea. And the analogy which he makes illustrates another part of his theory—the distinct and active personality of Nature. She is said to exercise a power over the face of outward things, so that moulded, joined, abstracted, and endowed,

With interchangeable supremacy

they make men feel the life that is behind them.

The power that the highest minds bear with them is "the express resemblance" of this power that Nature exhibits. Their mind works as if it were Nature herself, and in a like manner. They also send forth power from themselves which changes, moulds, abstracts, and endows with life the objects of sense, and the thoughts of others; which creates new existence out of the impressions and thoughts it receives; the least suggestion enables them to build up great things in Thought and Act; they are equally willing to receive passively impressions, or to work on them; and often when God sends to them from Nature a new idea—something, as Wordsworth thinks, created for them—they catch it, or are caught by its "inevitable mastery." It is a ceaseless play, a ceaseless interaction between the world of their mind and that of the universe, and both the worlds are living. The imagination of lower minds—for of course this power of which he speaks is imagination, imagination

> Which, in truth
> Is but another name for absolute power
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood—

is enthralled by the sensible impressions, and therefore their mind is not wedded to the universe; but in the loftier souls, the imagination seizes like a master on the sensible impressions and feels through them the vivid spiritual life in Nature; and this life united to their own inward life quickens them.

> To hold fit converse with the spiritual world
> And with the generations of mankind.

They pass, that is, beyond the bounds of their own mind, and of the outward universe, into a higher world than either, a world which is, as it were, the child of these two parents, but a child greater than either of its parents.

And the result of having attained this higher region is a noble moral life, a life of liberty and blessedness.

> Such minds are truly from the Deity,
> For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss

> That flesh can know is theirs—the consciousness
> Of Whom they are, habitually infused
> Through every image and through every thought,
> And all affections by communion raised
> From earth to heaven, from human to divine;
> Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
> Whether discursive or intuitive;
> Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,
> Emotions which best foresight need not fear,
> Most worthy then of trust when most intense.
> Hence, amid ills that vex, and wrongs that crush
> Our hearts—if here the words of Holy Writ
> May with fit reverence be applied—that peace
> Which passeth understanding, that repose
> In moral judgments which from this pure source
> Must come, or will by man be sought in vain.
>
> Bk. xiv.

But the result is not only a noble moral life, but also a deep religious one. Wordsworth brings out this by returning a little on his past, and asking in reference to the passage just quoted, whether he has in his own life gained this moral freedom. It is a humbler destiny, he answers, that he has pictured. He has had his visitations in the solemn temples of the mountains, from careless youth to conscious manhood; he had been a suffering man and suffered with mankind, but he has never tampered with conscience, never yielded in any public hope to selfish passions, never been enslaved by worldliness, never allowed the tendency

> Of use and custom to bow down the soul
> Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,
> And substitute a universe of death,
> For that which moves with light and life informed,
> Actual, divine, and true.

It was fear and love that had done this—and here he is referring to his boyish time—but only love at last, in which fear was drowned; love by which "subsists all lasting grandeur, without which we are dust;" love such as in early spring all things feel for one another; love such as the lover feels for her who is "his choice of all the world;" love which soars beyond all earthly love, but

which contains it, the spiritual love that adoring finds its end in God. Here, where the medieval Platonists ended, Wordsworth ends. The life he had found in his own mind, the life he has found in the outward universe, mingling together "in love and holy passion," have led him finally to the source of the life of both in God. The delight of earthly passion is pitiable:—

> Unless this love by a still higher love
> Be hallowed, love that breathes not without awe;
> Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer,
> By heaven inspired; that frees from chains the soul,
> Lifted, in union with the purest, best,
> Of earth-born passions, on the wings of praise
> Bearing a tribute to the Almighty's Throne.

And then he resumes the whole of this history of his mind. The organ of this spiritual Love is Imagination, and it has been the "feeding source" of his long labour:—

> We have traced the stream
> From the blind cavern whence is faintly heard
> Its natal murmur; followed it to light
> And open day; accompanied its course
> Among the ways of Nature, for a time
> Lost sight of it bewildered and engulphed;
> Then given it greeting as it rose once more
> In strength, reflecting from its placid breast
> The works of man and face of human life;
> And lastly, from its progress have we drawn
> Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought
> Of human Being, Eternity, and God.

And he who has reached this point, and has the expressing power of the poet, is to be the prophet of Nature and of men, to tell them of the Manhood that is greater than Nature;—and the revealer in his own life through the power of God whom he adores within him, of a more beautiful and unworldly time, of a world where the heart of Man may become more free and full of purer thought. This is the duty of the poet—this ought to be the poet's life. Two passages contain it, one at the end of the *Prelude*; the other at the end of the preface to the

Excursion. I throw them both together, and close my lecture with them:—

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,
Others will love, and we will teach them how;
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which 'mid all revolution in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.

And if with this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was,
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision; when and where, and how he lived;—
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power!
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination—may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners:—nurse
My Heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!"

LECTURE XIII

WORDSWORTH—*continued*

It was natural to Wordsworth, self-removed, as he was, from the crowd of men and from the more everyday interest of the world, that much of his religion should cluster round two things; one of which was the larger interest and vocation of the whole of mankind, and the ideas which push forward or backward the growth of Man; and the other, the interests and affections and duties that belong to the natural relations of parents and children, brothers and sisters, friend and friend, wife and husband. The former I have already treated of, showing how this secluded man threw himself with ardour into the general struggle of Man for liberty and right, and even in his later conservatism, preserved his vivid interest in human doings. The latter, however, I did not touch on, and my subject this afternoon is the religious thoughts which Wordsworth collected round the days and life of childhood, and, in connection with this, his view of Immortality.

And first, whatever may have been his stated creed, he laid aside as poet the severer doctrines of Original Sin, which stains the child with evil from its birth, and brings it into the world as the child of the devil. He compares his infant daughter who makes her "sinless progress," through a world

> By sorrow darkened and by care disturbed,

to the moon "that through gathered clouds moves untouched in silver purity,"

> Fair are ye both, and both are free from stain.

And instead of being far away from God, the child is

nearer to Him than the man; its first faint smiles, of which we cannot tell the cause, are to Wordsworth—

> Tranquil assurances that Heaven supports
> The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers
> Thy loneliness.

And this is supported by the well-known ode in which we find the isolated Platonic doctrine of reminiscence, which Wordsworth partly modified by Christianity. To understand that ode, to understand hundreds of allusions in Wordsworth's poems, it is necessary to have some clear idea of this doctrine, a doctrine seriously held by Plato throughout a great part, if not the whole, of his philosophic life. Its proof rested on the truth of his doctrine of abstract ideas. These had an eternal existence; justice, temperance, knowledge, love, truth, and the other things of God are real existences, and are the glorious and blessed sights of Heaven, and the divine life of the gods is in beholding them; they visit them day by day, and draw life and power from their contemplation. Now the soul of each man before it comes on earth has lived in the train of the gods, and gone up with them to look upon the vision of absolute truth, gazing with the gods on that divine landscape of abstract ideas which make up Eternal Being. But it has only looked on it imperfectly; glancing at it, as it were, over the hill; seeing it for a moment, and then departing. At some time or other then it comes to earth in human shape, and there its nature is threefold. It is rational, sensual, and moral or spiritual. Then comes in the doctrine of reminiscence. For the whole of after existence is spent in regaining by a series of recollections, and through a continual struggle, the glorious vision which has been lost—the vision of absolute ideas; and the regaining of it will be entrance into true being. Of these ideas, the only one that has any visible form on earth is Beauty. Now, whenever we see earthly beauty, the memory of the heavenly comes back, faintly, but enough to excite the soul; and the germ of the wings the soul once possessed and lost begins at the sight to push itself forth. It is then that

the struggle begins. The sensual soul, which Plato images as a large, misshapen horse, of a dark colour, beholding beauty, rushes blindly to enjoy it, and sees only and desires only the earthliness of beauty. But the spiritual soul, imaged as a white and immortal steed, looks beyond the earthly beauty to the heavenly that it images—and the intense struggle between the two is only settled with difficulty, in those who truly aspire, by the continued dragging back and subduing of the black horse by the rational soul, who sides with the white horse and is the charioteer. At last, after many efforts, the sensual soul is wholly brought under sway, and the vision of true beauty is reached, and with it the vision of the other noble ideas of wisdom, temperance, justice, and the rest. It takes ten thousand years, Plato thinks, before the soul can regain the imperial palace whence it came.

But it is not only the inward sensual desires that dim the light, and hold back the true soul from attaining ideas, but the world of the senses also, the material world, hampers its efforts and confines it. The only world in which the soul can truly live is the world of ideas; and the immortal steed is depressed and languishes in a sensible unreal world which has no harmony with it. But the effort ends at last. Again and again the vision of the eternal world, of the ancient glory, flashes before the soul, and recalls the pre-existent life: at each time the soul either falls away from it or draws nearer to it; and finally in those who do not continue falling, the wings the soul had once are entirely reformed, and it rises to abide among the gods, and daily to see the divine landscape of ideas, and to live by the sight of it. The soul re-enters eternal life.

Hence, the doctrine of pre-existence, and that of reminiscence, are in Plato connected with the doctrine of immortality as a necessary fulfilment of the two former. We have been once in union with absolute life; we recall in many lives here on earth that past, and grow gradually into union with it; and at last having recalled it all through effort and conquest of the animal nature, we resume it again for ever.

This is the philosophic doctrine a portion of which Wordsworth modified after his own fashion in the *Ode on the Intimations of Imortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.* He draws from it the conclusion, a conclusion Plato would not have drawn, that the child is nearer to God and to the vision of glory and loveliness than the man. Plato, on the contrary, would have made the grown philosopher more conscious of it than the child. But Wordsworth was really nothing of a Platonist; he only liked these ideas of pre-existence and reminiscence, and made his own thought out of them. Coming in childhood fresh from God, all the world seemed to his soul—since the heavenly light still lingered in it—

> Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory and the brightness of a dream.

But now, as man he can see this glory no longer; yet in the season of May, when the heavens laugh and the earth adorns herself with joy, he recovers something of the recollections of childhood, he remembers at least that there was a visionary gleam, a glory and a dream that now are fled. And he explains it thus by the main ideas of the Platonic opinion:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar:
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

But soon the sensible world begins to do its work and drags us away from the vision of beauty and life. The growing boy feels the shades of the prison-house closing round him—the youth travels further from it, but is still attended by it:

> At length the Man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day.

Even Earth herself, the kindly mother, bringing her natural pleasures of sense and affection, of human ties, and with no unworthy aim, lures the child away from, and makes the man forget

> the glories he had known
> And that imperial Palace whence he came.

This, you will see, may be called modified Platonism. The next remarkable passage, however, is not Platonism, and indeed, as expressed, it runs close to nonsense. We can only catch the main idea among expressions of the child as the best philosopher, the eye among the blind, that deaf and silent reads the eternal deep, and is haunted for ever by the eternal mind, the mighty prophet, the seer blest—over whom his immortality broods like the day, a master o'er a slave—expressions which, taken separately, have scarcely any recognisable meaning. By taking them altogether, we feel rather than see that Wordsworth intended to say, that the child, having lately come from a perfect existence, in which he saw truth directly, and was at home with God, retains, unknown to us, that vision—and because he does, is the best philosopher, since he sees at once that which we through philosophy are endeavouring to reach; is the mighty prophet, because in his actions and speech he tells unconsciously the truths he sees, but the sight of which we have lost; is more closely haunted by God, more near to the immortal life, more purely and brightly free, because he half shares in the pre-existent life and glory out of which he has come.

The child is not conscious of this vision. He does not know that he sees God; that he is, as he speaks, revealing the truths of the world in which he half lives; that his common thoughts and feelings have their beauty from his directer sight of the glory he has left: that the glory and beauty which he sees in the world of Nature is the reflection of the glory and beauty he saw in another life—that he himself carries with him some of that celestial light. He knows nothing of it. But we, looking back on our childhood, or looking at childhood itself, from an age out which has faded the light we had, remember the light of

this vision in our own childhood, and recognise its results and quality in children. We know that what we then felt and now see in children was and is divine, know it from the bitter contrast, for

> The things which we have seen we now can see no more.

We are conscious that they were, because we have lost them.

Many of the slighter poems of Wordsworth have this thought as their root. He is thinking of it when he describes the characteristics of a child of three years old, and dwells upon her utter gladness, her self-sufficingness, on the unexpectedness of her words and actions. For she has companions, he would say, that we wot not of. She is living in a world that we cannot see, and acts from impulses derived from it of which we know nothing. Here are the lines:

> Even so, this happy Creature of herself
> Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
> Is blithe society—who fills the air
> With gladness and involuntary songs.
> Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
> Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched,
> Unthought of, unexpected, as the stir
> Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers;
> Or from before it chasing wantonly
> The many-coloured images imprest
> Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

His sister is thinking of the same, when she speaks of the child who is unconscious of the limits of our thoughts of time and space:

> Who, worn out with the mystery
> Of time and distance, night and day,
> The bonds of our humanity.

Wordsworth is thinking of the same in his little poems of *We are Seven*, and in the *Anecdote for Fathers*. The child in the first has no idea of any severance between earth and heaven; her dead brother and sister are still a part of the family; death is nothing to her knowledge;

and she speaks, in saying, We are seven, one of those "truths which we are toiling all our lives to find," and the recollection of which, as felt by us when a child, is an intimation of our immortality. In the second poem, Wordsworth questions his little sons, as to the reason he should like one place more than another, and drives the boy at last into finding a reason in the existence of a weather-cock in one place and not in the other. The boy had no real reason to give, and the father felt that he had forced the child to say what was untrue. But in the saying of it, he, unconsciously, made Wordsworth conscious of the wrong he had done. He felt that he was reproved, as it were, by the God in the child; and the poem, which is a poor one, and only interesting from our being able to refer it to the same thought that prompted the great ode, closes thus:

> O dearest, dearest boy, my heart
> For better love would seldom yearn,
> Could I but teach the hundredth part
> Of what from thee I learn.

No lovelier expression of that thought exists than in the last lines of the sonnet composed by the seaside:

> Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
> If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
> Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
> Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
> And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
> God being with thee when we know it not.

Still more strongly does the same thought appear in the little poem to Hartley Coleridge, then six years old. The first ten lines are steeped in the philosophy of the ode:

> O thou! whose fancies from afar are brought,
> Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
> And fittest to unutterable thought
> The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
> Thou faery voyager! that dost float
> In such clear water that thy boat
> May rather seem
> To brood on air than on an earthly stream;

Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery;
O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.

And once more, in speaking of presentiments, he falls back also on this thought, and says:

The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
Were mine in early days.

As the boy grows, this innocent unconscious life in the eternal is more and more invaded by the outward life of which he becomes directly conscious. His games, his father's love, the outward scenery of nature and of human life, all enthral him, and the vision grows dim and dimmer. The conscious life of earth replaces the unconscious life of heaven.

But he is not left without visitations. Nature takes up the work, or rather the divine life in Nature makes itself felt again and again, and thrills the boy who has forgotten his immortal life with a vague sense of it. In the midst of his eager earthly life, he is suddenly checked, the beauty, or the terror, or the mystery of Nature touching him for a moment. It is a sudden recalling—a shadowy recollection of the childish glory; only it is now often linked with fear, since it has become unknown. For an instant he feels as if the outward world had no reality, and is forced to make things real to him by touching them; it misgives him that things are as they seem; mysterious feelings of fear beset him in solitude, as if a Presence that he could not put by were there; he has dreams, instincts of things greater than he can grasp, that break suddenly in upon him in the midst of wild enjoyment, and which make him thrill with excitement, surprise, and dread. They come to him, he knows not how, brought by

A rainbow, a sunbeam,
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds;
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.

Their origin from Nature, we have already traced in speaking of the *Prelude*.[1] Certain natural impressions caused in his brain the sense of unknown modes of being. Certain motions of the sense made him conscious through their ministration of a world beyond this world, of something in him which he had lost and suddenly remembered. They were, he says, "gleams like the flashing of a shield," that lit for an instant the mind with memory of the ancient glory, and brought with them a touch of subdued sadness and surprise.

Such is the thought at the root of the lines on the boy of Winander; such is the thought which gives its special quality to the poem on the *Cuckoo*, where the far-off wandering voice of the bird made it the image of a mystery, and woke a dim sense of mystery; to the poem of *Nutting*, when in the midst of the exulting destruction that a boy delights in, a dim reproach creeps in as if he had done harm to living things. It belongs to many other poems, where Nature is represented as touching into momentary consciousness of life the sleeping forms of the ancient life of the soul before it came on earth, as sometimes in our more common life some slight event will bring back during the day a dream we had dreamt, but had wholly forgotten.

These are the things which, whether coming unannounced to the soul itself, or led to it by Nature, are, when remembered in after years, powerful to put the mind into a world different from this; to reprove, exalt, and give light by bringing to our mind our immortal birth; to support us in hours of obscure distress by the high thought that we belong to God, and are born to regain the truths that once we had—and they come again and again till even in manhood we get back through the memories of childhood to the imperial palace whence we came.[2]

[1] See Lectures vi., vii.

[2] In my last lecture I touched on this subject, and the passage in the *Prelude*, Book xii., which I analysed there, ought to be read along with the ode. I insert one passage here for comparison:

> Oh! mystery of man, from what a depth
> Proceed thy honours. I am lost, but see

There is the noblest expression of all this in the ode:

> Not for these I raise
> The Song of thanks and praise,
> But for those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings;
> Blank misgivings of a Creature
> Moving about in worlds not realised,
> High instincts before which our mortal Nature
> Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
> But for those first affections,
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
> Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal Silence; truths that wake,
> To perish never;
> Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
> Nor Man nor Boy,
> Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
> Can utterly abolish or destroy!
> Hence in a season of calm weather
> Though inland far we be,
> Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the Children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Such things grow less and less as years go on; as middle age touches us, it is only the memory that we

> In simple childhood something of the base
> On which thy greatness stands; but this I feel,
> That from thyself it comes, that thou must give,
> Else never canst receive. The days gone by
> Return upon me almost from the dawn
> Of life: the hiding-places of man's power
> Open; I would approach them, but they close.
> I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
> May scarcely see at all; and I would give,
> While yet we may, as far as words can give,
> Substance and life to what I feel, enshrining,
> Such is my hope, the spirit of the Past
> For future restoration.

have had such visions that keeps us true to our immortal destiny; as to the visions themselves, they leave us altogether, and the light is only the light of common day. Still, now and then the vision does arise, and it came to Wordsworth in 1818, on an "evening of extraordinary splendour and beauty." He sees the wonderful effulgence of the sun setting over hills, the silent spectacle of glory and radiance on the earth below; and he is swept beyond the earthly beauty to aspire to the heavenly—nay, half of the beauty is itself of heaven, out of the heart of the perfect life.

> Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
> But long as godlike wish, or hope divine,
> Informs my spirit: ne'er can I believe
> That this magnificence is wholly thine;
> From worlds not quickened by the Sun
> A portion of the gift is won.

The mountain ridges seem a golden ladder, on which one might ascend to heaven; "wings at my shoulders seem to play"—the very Platonic expression—he calls on drooping old men to come forth, and see to what fair countries they are bound; he bids the genii wake the traveller that he may meet the dower God gives him in such beauty.

Then comes this passage:

> Such hues from their celestial Urn
> Were wont to stream before mine eye,
> Where'er it wandered in the morn
> Of blissful infancy.
> This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
> Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
> For, if a vestige of those gleams
> Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
> Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
> No less than Nature's threatening voice,
> If aught unworthy be my choice,
> From Thee if I would swerve;
> Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
> Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
> Which, at this moment, on my waking sight,
> Appears to shine by miracle restored;
> My soul, though yet confined to earth,
> Rejoices in a second birth!

Thus, felt in childhood, often recollected, sometimes renewed in middle age, he prays in another place that his old age may keep to its latest breath these visions of the soul, these dreams of an immortal life; that he may rejoice, with quickened spirit, in the admonitions of God's voice given in the quiet of the heart, or suddenly flashing on him from Nature—till he feel secure of life in God, and pray the prayer of one whose immortality is sure.

> Breathe through my soul the blessing of Thy grace:
> Glad through a perfect love, a faith sincere,
> Drawn from the wisdom that begins with fear,
> Glad to expand, and for a season, free
> From finite cares, to rest absorbed in Thee.

This is the growth of the faith in immortality. Direct vision of the eternal world and life in it, during infancy—recollection of the glories of that vision when the world has hidden it from our eyes; frequently repeated recollections, all leading us back to the heavenly life and accustoming us to trust in it—sudden outbursts of actual vision such as childhood possessed, when moved by some splendid sight or inspired act; rarely coming, but when assisted by the recollections intensely convincing—quiet philosophic faith in the intuitions of the soul that tell of eternal life, so that

> though nothing can bring back the hour
> Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
> We will grieve not, rather find
> Strength in what remains behind;
> In the primal sympathy
> Which having been must ever be;
> In the soothing thoughts that spring
> Out of human suffering;
> In the faith that looks through death,
> In years that bring the philosophic mind.

Then, as the old man looks back, he sees that his wish has been fulfilled; the same divine remembrance of beauty that made his heart leap up when he beheld a rainbow in the sky is with him still. That which was his as boy, has been his as man, is his, now that he is old. The child has

been Father of the man, his days have been "knit each to each in natural piety." The piety is the piety of immortal hopes; the old man's vision of the future life is co-incident with the child's vision of the pre-existent life. Age is not desolate then. The unutterable dewy light of joy is gone, it rests no longer on Man or Nature. But the love which has come of suffering, the long union with the human heart, the sad but hope-lit experience, do not make him love Nature less than when he tripped as lightly as the brooks that fret their channels, but more; he can still enjoy the innocent brightness of a new-born day; the beauty of all things is not less, but more, because touched with the sentiment of mortal sorrow and mortal victory; they take a sober, but not less lively colouring; and the meanest flower that blows, to a heart so trained, leads him beyond itself to live in the eternal, in the land where men weep not for either joy or sorrow, for the thoughts that are there are too deep for tears.

Abiding then in old age we look back to our childhood. We were nearer then to the divine life, and there the soul recognises most clearly its immortal features:

> Ah! why in age
> Do we revert so fondly to the walks
> Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
> The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
> Of her own native vigour; thence can hear
> Reverberations; and a choral song,
> Commingling with the incense that ascends,
> Undaunted, toward the imperishable heavens,
> From her own lonely altar?

We look forward also, that we may see the life to come, the resurrection of that we once possessed; we have not really lost, but gained, by age, if we have been true to the divine gleams that we could not wholly lose. Old age is then great—raised above the thraldom of the passions that beset guilt, the ambitious worldliness which made the light such common day, the very world of sense that made us forget our ancient spiritual home.

> Rightly it is said
> That Man descends into the Vale of years;

Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
As of a final Eminence; though bare
In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 'tis not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power,
A throne, that may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those
High peaks that bound the vale where now we are.
Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,
With all the shapes over their surface spread:
But, while the gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems
All unsubstantialised—how loud the voice
Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river in the vale below,
Ascending? For on that superior height
Who sits, is disencumbered from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged
To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air
That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves,
Many and idle, visits not his ear;
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,)
By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied; and the Soul, that would incline
To listen, is prevented or deterred.

And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
In like removal, tranquil though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss;
But for some favour, suited to our need?
What more than that the severing should confer
Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude, whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

Excursion, Bk. ix.

It was in this faith that Wordsworth lived and died. It was in deep belief in God and Immortality, and in a Saviour from sin, that he passed his quiet days, and found peace far from the strifes of men. It was in the calm—alike removed from stormy passion, and from the disturbing lusts of the world—that this faith gave him, that he wrought out and lived, the high morality which he has given to us in the *Ode to Duty*, in the fine strain of the *Happy Warrior*, and in many noble passages in the *Excursion*. It was in this faith that he quietly reposed in his domestic life, and by it enhanced all the faithful affection for wife and sister, children and brother, that nowhere in English poetry burns with a lovelier or a purer light. As age grew on, his calm deepened, he had "the silent thoughts that search for steadfast light;" he wished, and realised the wish, to present to God his life as a "pure oblation of divine tranquillity." Nor was he without joy in the midst of calm; there was no stagnant water in the deep lake of his heart; such poems as the *Ode to Duty* and others are filled with a resolute and exalted joy; and there were times when, as the old man prayed, his delight was transfigured:

> I bent before Thy gracious throne,
> And asked for peace on suppliant knee,
> And peace was given—nor peace alone,
> But faith sublimed to ecstasy.

Nor can I better close these lectures upon him than by the sonnet in which he looks back and looks forward in a strain, where clear knowledge of what Man is in himself alone, is mingled with quiet faith in what he is in God.

AFTER-THOUGHT

> I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
> As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
> For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
> I see what was, and is, and will abide;
> Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
> The Form remains, the Function never dies;

While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

LECTURE XIV

ROBERT BURNS

When speaking at the beginning of these lectures of theology in the earlier poets of the Natural School, in Cowper and Crabbe who preceded the great outbreak of song, I omitted Robert Burns. I now fill up that gap, which was left for a sufficiently good reason—that though the influences which came on England at that time did have their result upon Burns, they had far less result than on others, because he was essentially the creation of his own land, and of another poetic descent than that of England. With regard to the poetry of Nature, he only carried on in a more vivid and tender way, and on precisely the same lines, the same sort of natural description which had been worked by the Scottish poets from the time they began to write. With regard to what I have called, along with others, the poetry of Man, he was less universal and more national than the English poets who followed him. But when we look at his work on this subject, and compare it with that of the English poets who preceded him, or with that of his contemporaries, Cowper and Crabbe, we find in him a peculiar quality which gives him a distinct rank in the history of English poetry, of which I may as well speak in this connection. He restored passion to our poetry. It had not belonged to it since the days of Elizabeth. No one would guess, who began to read our poetic literature shortly after the death of Shakespeare, how rich the veins of nature and emotion had been in our country. He might read through the whole of our poetry, with the exception of a few songs and sonnets, down to Burns, and not find any poetry which could truly be called passionate. So, when the fire broke out again in Burns, it was like a new revelation; men were swept back to the age of Elizabeth, and heard

again, though in different chords, the music which had then enchanted the world. And since his time, our poetry has not only been the poetry of Man and of Nature, but also of Passion. And it sprang clean and clear out of the natural soil of a wild heath, not out of a cultivated garden; it was underived from other poets, for Burns read nothing but a collection of English songs; it was unassisted by the general culture of a literary class, for it was born when he was reaping in the fields, and when he held the handles of the plough; it came direct out of a fresh stratum of popular life. It was as if the Muse had said, I am weary of philosophy and satire, weary of faded sentiment, of refined and classic verse, and of stern pictures of misery, and I will have something fresh at last; and had driven a shaft down through layer after layer of dry clay, till she touched, far below, a source of new and hidden waters, that, loosened from their prison, rushed upwards to the surface, and ran away a mountain torrent of clear bright verse, living and life-giving. Burns added passion to the poetry of Nature and Man.

But independent of the poetry that has to do with these two subjects, and the theology of which I shall speak of in this lecture and the following, there is in Burns a poetry of personality. On this, in its religious aspect, I shall speak in my third lecture.

Our subject to-day is the Poetry of Man from a theological point of view, as we find it represented in Burns.

The poetry of Man began distinctly in England with the first coming to the light of the ideas of the Revolution. Before the great singers came we can trace these ideas in English poetry, and I have traced them in Cowper and Crabbe. They appear also in Burns, but in by no means so full a form. They influenced him insensibly; he does not recognise their power. But in one point he was consciously at one with them, in their claim that the poor should be thought of as men; in the placing of Man—apart from all consideration of caste and rank and wealth and race—foremost. How far he was touched by this, and how far it was specially modified in him, we

have now to consider, and it is part of our subject, for it either flowed directly from a new and larger idea of God, or was creative of a larger view of Him.

He was born in 1759, and the first edition of his poems was in 1786. His first work and his youth preceded, then, the outbreak of the Revolution. We cannot therefore say that he was revolutionised, but he was a born revolutionist, in the sense of being ready, when he thought it needed, to take the part of his own class against selfish rank and wealth; and to appeal for his right to do this to the common duties and rights of man as man. Not in Cowper, not in Crabbe, not in any of the after poets, was the cry of the Revolution more clearly heard than in the whole of the fine song—

> Is there, for honest poverty,
> That hangs his head, and a' that?
> The coward slave, we pass him by,
> We dare be poor for a' that!
> For a' that, and a' that,
> Our toils obscure, and a' that;
> The rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The man's the gowd for a' that.

Being thus himself poor, "following his plough along the mountain side," and having in him, not discontent with his poverty, but a heart framed to enjoy and love all beauty, and to feel all that was human, and being insensibly influenced by the spirit of the time, he threw into tender and humorous song the sorrows and affections of his own class, their religion and their passions, their amusements and their toil, till all the world laughed and wept with Ayrshire ploughmen. As in England, so in Scotland, we now find something better than the distant sentimental view which we found the poets took of the poor. Burns did in 1786 the work which Crabbe began in England in 1783 and Cowper in 1785. Mark the dates, how they all run together. And I have often wondered in looking at these lines of Gray's, which Burns put as motto to the *Cottar's Saturday Night*—

> Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
> Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
> Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
> The short but simple annals of the Poor—

whether he recognised in them the note of distance, and meant to make his own vivid, lifelike description of a poor man's home a contrast to the fine-gentleman sentiment of Gray.

One would think so from the preface and the after-dedication to his poems. The passages are interesting, and bear upon the present question.

> "The following trifles are not the production of the poet who with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegances and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these, and other celebrated names their countrymen are, at least in their original language, a fountain shut up and a book sealed. Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language."

And in the Dedication—

> "The Poetic Genius of my country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the Plough, and threw her inspiring Mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native tongue: I tuned my wild, artless notes as she inspired."

At home, then, among the poor, he gave them his best work, and it was done, as all the highest work is done, with passion.

In the movement of thought and feeling towards the recognition of the poor and working men as sons of God, and as made of one blood with the rich and learned, there was as yet no natural passion. Cowper and Crabbe, though their sympathy with the lower class was deep, spoke for it and of it, not out of it; and naturally there was no personal passion in their work. They led men to feel with the poor, but it was as men feel with the sorrows and joys of a different race. But when Burns came, it was a different business. I have said that he restored passion to our poetry. He brought it now into this movement.