

21ST-CENTURY
OXFORD AUTHORS

William Wordsworth

EDITED BY STEPHEN GILL

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GENERAL EDITOR
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CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	xiii
List of Abbreviations	xiv
Introduction	xv
Chronology	xxxi
A Note on the Selection and Its Ordering	xxxv

FROM *LYRICAL BALLADS* (1798)

Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree	3
The Female Vagrant	4
Goody Blake and Harry Gill	11
Lines Written at a Small Distance from my House	15
Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman	16
Anecdote for Fathers	19
We Are Seven	21
Lines Written in Early Spring	23
The Thorn	24
The Last of the Flock	30
The Idiot Boy	33
Expostulation and Reply	46
The Tables Turned	47
Old Man Travelling	48
Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey	49

FROM *LYRICAL BALLADS* (1800)

Preface to <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> (1800 and 1802)	57
Appendix to the Preface to <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> (1800 and 1802)	78
Hart-Leap Well	83
The Brothers	88
'Strange fits of passion I have known'	102
Song	103
'A slumber did my spirit seal'	103
The Oak and the Broom	104
Lucy Gray	107
The Idle Shepherd-Boys	109
Poor Susan	112
Lines written on a Tablet in a School	113
The Two April Mornings	114
The Fountain	115
Nutting	118
'Three years she grew in sun and shower'	119
The Old Cumberland Beggar	120
A Poet's Epitaph	125
Poems on the Naming of Places	127
Michael	134

OTHER POEMS 1798-1800

The Ruined Cottage [MS B]	149
A Night Piece	162
The Two-Part Prelude	164
Home at Grasmere	188

FROM *POEMS, IN TWO VOLUMES* (1807)

To the Daisy ('In youth')	217
'She was a Phantom of delight'	219
The Sailor's Mother	220
Character of the Happy Warrior	221
To H.C., Six Years Old	223
'Among all lovely things my Love had been'	224
'I travelled among unknown Men'	224
Ode to Duty	225
Beggars	227
To a Sky-Lark	228
Alice Fell	229
Resolution and Independence	230
'Nuns fret not at their Convent's narrow room'	235
'Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?'	235
'With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh'	236
Composed Upon Westminster Bridge	236
"'Beloved Vale!' I said, 'when I shall con'"	237
'The world is too much with us'	237
'It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free'	238
Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais	238
Calais, August, 1802	239
To a Friend, Composed near Calais	239
'I grieved for Buonaparte'	240

Calais, August 15th, 1802	240
On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic	241
To Toussaint L'Ouverture	241
September 1st, 1802	242
Composed in the Valley, near Dover	242
September, 1802	243
Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland	243
Written in London, September, 1802	244
London, 1802	244
'Great Men have been among us'	245
'It is not to be thought of that the Flood'	245
'When I have borne in memory what has tamed'	246
October, 1803 ('One might believe')	246
October, 1803 ('These times touch')	247
'England! the time is come when thou shouldst wean'	247
October, 1803 ('When, looking on the present face')	248
To the Men of Kent	248
October, 1803 ('Six thousand Veterans')	249
Anticipation, October, 1803	249
Rob Roy's Grave	250
The Solitary Reaper	253
Stepping Westward	254
Glen-Almain	255
The Matron of Jedborough and Her Husband	256
To a Highland Girl	259

Address to the Sons of Burns	261
Yarrow Unvisited	262
To a Butterfly ('Stay near me')	264
'My heart leaps up when I behold'	264
Written in March	265
'I wandered lonely as a Cloud'	265
The Sparrow's Nest	266
Gipsies	266
To the Cuckoo	267
To a Butterfly ('I've watched you')	268
The Green Linnet	269
'By their floating Mill'	270
Star Gazers	271
Power of Music	272
To the Daisy ('With little here')	273
To the Same Flower ('Bright Flower')	275
A Complaint	275
'I am not One who much or oft delight'	276
'Yes! full surely 'twas the Echo'	277
Lines. Composed at Grasmere . . .	278
Elegiac Stanzas	279
Ode ('There was a time')	281

OTHER POEMS 1800-1808

'When first I journeyed hither'	289
'Farewell, thou little Nook of mountain ground'	292
Ejaculation at the Grave of Burns	293

To the Daisy ('Sweet Flower!')	294
'I only looked for pain and grief'	296
'Distressful gift! this Book receives'	298
St Paul's	300
The Prelude (1805)	302
FROM <i>THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA</i> (1809)	517
FROM <i>ESSAYS UPON EPITAPHS</i> (1810)	535
FROM <i>THE EXCURSION</i> (1814)	
Prospectus to <i>The Recluse</i>	555
Book One	557
From Book Three	583
From Book Four	585
From Book Seven	599
From Book Nine	601
FROM <i>POEMS</i> (1815)	
From the Preface to <i>Poems</i> (1815)	607
From <i>Essay, Supplementary to the Preface to Poems</i> (1815)	615
Characteristics of a Child three Years old	620
Yew-Trees	620
Yarrow Visited	621
Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture	624
'Surprized by joy—impatient as the Wind'	624

FROM *A LETTER TO A FRIEND OF ROBERT
BURNS* (1816) 625

FROM *THE RIVER DUDDON* (1820)

Conclusion ('I thought of Thee')	641
Composed at Cora Linn	641
To the Rev. Dr. W—. (With the Sonnets to the River Duddon)	643
Ode. Composed Upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendor and Beauty	645
Ode. The Pass of Kirkstone	647
Ode.—1817	650
From Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes	654

OTHER POEMS 1815–1846

To B. R. Haydon, Esq.	685
November 1, 1815	685
Sequel to [Beggars]	686
Bruges ('Bruges I saw attired')	687
Mutability	688
To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge, North Wales	688
'Scorn not the Sonnet'	689
Incident at Bruges	689
Yarrow Revisited	690
On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford, for Naples	693
'Calm is the fragrant air and loth to lose'	694
Airey-Force Valley	695

From 'Postscript' to <i>Yarrow Revisited</i>	696
Extempore Effusion Upon the Death of James Hogg	704
Thoughts. Suggested the Day Following . . . ('Too frail to keep the lofty vow')	705
At Furness Abbey ('Here, where, of havoc tired')	707
'Glad sight wherever new with old'	708
Sonnet. On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway ('Is then')	708
'Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old'	709
At Furness Abbey ('Well have yon Railway Labourers to THIS ground')	709
'I know an aged Man constrained to dwell'	710
Appendix: Wordsworth before <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>	711
Notes	721
Index of Titles and First Lines	795

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Title-page of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). 1
2. Title-page of second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). 55
3. The *Two-Part Prelude*, I, 27–35. Fair-copy MS in the hand of Dorothy Wordsworth, with revision by William Wordsworth. 163
4. Title-page, *Poems, In Two Volumes* (1807). 215
5. *The Prelude*, 1805 text, I, 1–17. Fair-copy MS in the hand of Dorothy Wordsworth, with revision by William Wordsworth. 301
6. *The Prelude*, 1805 text, XIII, 1–16. Fair-copy MS in the hand of Dorothy Wordsworth, with revision by William Wordsworth. 504
7. Title-page to *The Excursion*. 553
8. Title-page to Wordsworth's first collected poetical works, *Poems* (1815). 605
9. Title-page of *The River Duddon* (1820). 639

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- C Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- CL *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols (Oxford, 1956–71)
- DW Dorothy Wordsworth
- JW John Wordsworth
- Journals* Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Grasmere and Alfoxden Journals*, ed. Pamela Woof (2002)
- Moorman Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography. The Early Years* (Oxford, 1957); *The Later Years* (Oxford, 1965)
- MW Mary Wordsworth
- Notebooks* *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (1957–)
- PW *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1940–9)
- Prose* *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford, 1974)
- Recollections* Dorothy Wordsworth, *Recollections of a Tour Made in Scotland*, ed. Carol Kyros Walker (1997)
- Reed Mark L. Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years 1770–1799* (Cambridge, MA, 1967); *Middle Years 1800–1815* (Cambridge, MA, 1975)
- W William Wordsworth
- WL *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*. Generally letters are identified by date only. Texts can be found in *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt; *The Early Years, 1787–1805*, rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford, 1967); *The Middle Years, 1806–11*, rev. Mary Moorman (Oxford, 1969); *1812–20*, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford, 1970); *The Later Years, 1821–53*, rev. Alan G. Hill (Oxford, 1978–88); *A Supplement of New Letters*, ed. Alan G. Hill (1993).
- Wordsworth's Hawkshead* T. W. Thompson, *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, ed. Robert Woof (1970)

INTRODUCTION

(1)

This selected edition opens with poems from *Lyrical Ballads*, the collection jointly produced in 1798 by William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). It was not Wordsworth's first appearance in print. According to jovial testimony in 'The Idiot Boy', he had been bound to the Muses 'by strong indentures' since the age of fourteen and by seventeen, with the appearance of his sonnet 'On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress' in *The European Magazine*, he could boast that he was a published poet. In 1793 he had published two substantial and accomplished works in rhyming couplets, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, but these poems did not signal, any more than the schoolboy sonnet, the emergence of a strikingly original talent or confirm to Wordsworth what his course in life should be. Five years later, by the time *Lyrical Ballads* was with the booksellers, Wordsworth's sense of himself had been transformed. Now he was confident of his vocation: his calling was to be 'The holy life of music and of verse' (*Prelude*, I, 54). This edition opens with poems from the 1798 collection because they were the work of a man who believed himself to be capable of poetic greatness and because they were the first published demonstration that he was right.

It was not the actual publication of *Lyrical Ballads* that was the transforming agent. Earlier in the summer it had looked as if Wordsworth alone would be bringing out some poems—not lyrical ballads—and the business of getting from manuscript to print had been protracted and messy.¹ When it appeared in October 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* at 210 small-format pages was an unimposing volume and the announcement on the title-page that this collection consisted of lyrical ballads 'With a Few Other Poems' carried the faint suggestion that the author had scabbled round to find material to bulk it out. Worse still, the poems' begetters chose not to announce themselves: *Lyrical Ballads* appeared anonymously. Unfanfared though it was, however, the appearance of this little

¹ For full bibliographical details of *Lyrical Ballads* and an account of its complicated publication history see James Butler and Karen Green (eds), *Lyrical Ballads, and Other Poems, 1797–1800* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

book was an important event for both of its creators: for the older of the two, in fact, it was the defining moment of his life.

The moment of *Lyrical Ballads* was important to Wordsworth primarily because the collection represented the poetic first fruits of tumultuous, formative years, which he was to brood over and feed off for much of the rest of his life. As he surveyed the ‘Growth of a Poet’s Mind’—one working title for the autobiographical poem *The Prelude*—Wordsworth realized with an assurance of insight he could not have commanded at the time, just how profoundly the interaction of public affairs and his personal life had combined to mould him during the 1790s. He told an admirer in 1801: ‘in truth my life has been unusually barren of events’, but a bare recital of facts and dates will be enough to show how untrue the statement was.²

Orphaned at an early age, Wordsworth had a gentleman’s education nonetheless, through the efforts of family guardians. The young graduate of St John’s College, Cambridge, however, was wilfully resistant to their expectations as to how he should make a living. An arduous pedestrian trek across France to the Alps and Italy in 1790 not only whetted an existing appetite for physical adventure but germinated an interest in politics, for when Wordsworth walked across France, the country after the revolution of 1789 was, as he put it in *The Prelude*, ‘standing on the top of golden hours, | And human nature seeming born again’ (VI, 353–4). A year later Wordsworth returned to live in France and, deeply affected both by what he saw of the suffering of the peasantry and by the interpretation of it by ideologically committed friends, headily embraced the revolutionary cause: ‘my heart was all | Given to the people, and my love was theirs’ (IX, 124–5). Any notion he might have had of serving ‘the people’, however, was shattered by unforeseen events. Wordsworth fathered a child on Annette Vallon, but he did not see his daughter born: the need to raise money immediately and, in the longer term, to secure a source of income, had driven him home.

He could not have returned at a worse time. He was barely back when war was declared between Great Britain and France. Wordsworth was trapped—he did not meet his daughter, Caroline, until she was ten. He was without an income or career prospects; politically he was alienated from his own country, a psychologically damaging state to be in at any time, but literally a dangerous one after 1793, as the government of William Pitt, now on to a war footing, moved to suppress subversion.

² W to Anne Taylor, 9 April 1801. *WL*, I, 327.

Over the next few years, after a period skirting around radical circles in London, Wordsworth withdrew to the West Country. A legacy eased his financial situation; he was re-united with his much-loved sister, Dorothy; and he met, and was captivated by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. His new friend, one of the two beings, he later declared, 'to whom my intellect is most indebted',³ already had a public identity as a poet and fiery radical orator. Wordsworth did not. In 1793 he had written, as 'a republican', a polemical *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (see below pp. 706–7) and had followed this declaration of political allegiances with the protest poem *Salisbury Plain*—revised into *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*—which concludes by calling on the 'Heroes of Truth' to continue raising 'the herculean mace | Of Reason' in their march against Oppression, Error, and Superstition. A blank verse drama, *The Borderers*, had followed its Shakespearian models in posing questions about the springs of human action; *The Ruined Cottage* was shaping up to be a powerful depiction of how calamitously the sufferings of the poor are intensified in time of war.⁴ None of this writing had been published. But the difference in their public status mattered only insofar as Coleridge feared his notoriety might damage the reception of any joint project; otherwise it was immaterial, so strong was the confluence of interests and anxieties that drew them together.⁵

Coleridge was deeply concerned about how a Christian should, or could, be engaged in public affairs, particularly at a time of national crisis. Wordsworth was struggling to make sense of his life since leaving Cambridge, in relation in particular to politics, to work out how far, if at all, his own experiences enabled him to understand the momentous questions of politics and morality. Both men were united in commitment to a high idea of poetry as a beneficent agent, but were convinced that its vigour needed to be renewed and that its power now more than ever needed to be reasserted through argument and demonstration.

³ W to William Rowan Hamilton, 25 June 1832. *WL*, V, 536. The other being was 'my beloved Sister'.

⁴ For texts and full accounts of these poems see Stephen Gill (ed.), *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); Robert Osborn (ed.), *The Borderers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); James Butler (ed.), *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

⁵ Arguing for anonymous publication Coleridge told the publisher Joseph Cottle, 'Wordsworth's name is nothing—to a large number of persons mine *stinks*' (28 May 1798. *CL*, I, 412).

Just how far Wordsworth was prepared to go in his claims for the importance of poetry in the modern world became apparent when a second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* appeared in 1800, now in two volumes and with Wordsworth's name on the title-page, alone. The brief 'Advertisement' of 1798 had grown into a substantial 'Preface' (see below pp. 55–80) and unlike its predecessor this was an arresting production. The Preface argued the case on both sociological and linguistic grounds that poems dealing with 'low and rustic life' were capable of being 'genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations'. It would be clear to readers that poems newly added to the collection, pastorals such as 'Michael' and 'The Brothers', set in Wordsworth's own rather than Virgil's landscape, were conceived in the spirit of the Preface. The whole Preface, moreover—and by implication the new poems—was addressed to the present. It insisted that so many forces in wartime Britain were combining to 'blunt the discriminating powers of the mind' (p. 59) that a poetry was needed which would be quietly attentive to the fundamentals of human life.

The year of *Lyrical Ballads* was important for Wordsworth, however, in another way. Over the summer of 1798 and into the following year he developed a second poetic identity, but one that was to remain hidden for years to all but his closest friends. Wordsworth had written a lot of poetry before that had not been published for one reason or another—because it was unfinished or because negotiations for publication foundered—but this new situation was different. Now he was working on a large structure that would, he knew, take years to complete and simultaneously on allied material which it would be out of the question to publish until the great structure were revealed to the world.

In March 1798 Wordsworth divulged to a friend that he was engaged on 'a poem in which I contrive to convey most of the knowledge of which I am possessed'. Its title was to be *The Recluse or views of Nature, Man, and Society* and with such a title it is not surprising that he felt able to declare, 'I know not of any thing which will not come within the scope of my plan.'⁶ It is clear from their letters and later recollections that the project for a philosophical poem,

⁶ W to James Webbe Tobin, 6 March [1798]. *WL*, I, 212. For a full account of *The Recluse* project see Kenneth R. Johnston, *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1984).

that would outdo *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* combined in both scale and ambition, was as much Coleridge's as Wordsworth's and, again not surprisingly, given the vagueness of the terms in which it was conceived, it was never realized. Much of Wordsworth's finest poetry, however, did issue from the *Recluse*: version after version of *The Ruined Cottage*, until the poem was absorbed into *The Recluse* as Book One of *The Excursion* in 1814; *Home at Grasmere*, a celebration of Wordsworth's Lake District homecoming that was to remain unpublished in his lifetime; the *Two-Part Prelude*, autobiographical verse that reaches back to infancy in an attempt to establish the grounds of the poet's assurance of his calling. But for the time being all this poetry remained unpublished. *The Ruined Cottage* and *Home at Grasmere* were work-in-progress towards the philosophical opus, and what Coleridge called Wordsworth's 'divine Self-biography'⁷ depended for its legitimacy upon the completion and publication of *The Recluse*. The apparent egotism of publishing an autobiographical poem could only be justified, Wordsworth believed, by substantial achievement in the genre in which he aspired to excel and in which Coleridge was convinced he would excel. Wordsworth, he declared, would 'hereafter be admitted as the first & greatest philosophical Poet'.⁸

All of this poetry, unpublished when composed and some of it remaining unpublished in Wordsworth's lifetime—much of it with complicated compositional history that is discussed in the notes—is grouped in this edition as 'Other Poems 1798–1800'.

(2)

For the next decade the poet Wordsworth (as opposed, that is, to Wordsworth the gardener, traveller, husband, and father) consisted of this two-sided self, apparently bifurcated but actually symbiotic.

The volume of unpublished poetry grew enormously as Wordsworth continued to explore his own past. In developing the figure of the wise Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage* through a lengthy account of his childhood and youth among the mountains, Wordsworth found the language he needed to convey his own experiences of quasi-religious transport—'in the mountains did he *feel* his faith | There did he see

⁷ 4 January 1804. *Notebooks*, I, entry 1801.

⁸ C to Richard Sharp, 15 Jan. 1804. *CL*, II, 1034.

the writing.⁹ The avowedly autobiographical poem went much further. Whereas the work on the Pedlar entailed forays into early years already explored in the *Two-Part Prelude*, the expansion of that poem into five and eventually, by 1805, thirteen books involved exploration of quite new ground—or rather, old ground in a new way.

What Wordsworth undertook as he picked up the autobiographical poem again in 1803 was the interpretation of his formative adult years, 1790–8. Then, he came to believe, youthful idealism had led to error, which had in turn become the catalyst for the slow discovery of truth. The exercise demanded candour and courage as painful memories surfaced, such as the agonizing moment in a village church in 1793 when Wordsworth not only remained silent during prayers for his country's victory but 'Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come!' (X, 227–74). Ten years later, the poet who recollected this earlier, alienated self had become an English patriot, but he would not deny what he had been and in great part the power of the blank verse comes from the intensity of the effort required simultaneously to depict the splendour of the young man's idealism and its potential for folly.

In a Miltonic simile at IV, 247–65, the poet's activity is likened to that of a man who hangs over the side of a slow-moving boat on the surface of a still lake trying to part the shadow from the substance in what he sees beneath him in the bottom of the deep. It is a 'pleasant office', but it was also an extraordinarily demanding one. Throughout the poem Wordsworth is trying to remember honestly; to discern a pattern or patterns intelligently; to explain the past as it seemed then and to explain it again as it seems now; to penetrate, as far as memory and intellect will permit, the meaning of both. And perhaps the most engaging quality of the verse is the way in which it conveys so artfully the sense that composition is itself an act of discovery for the poet as well as for the reader—discovery of the meaning of the accidents of a life; of the purpose of such extended recollection; of the poem's true theme; of the assurance to rise to the height of the argument.

In the last book of *The Prelude* Wordsworth gives grateful thanks to those he loves, but even as the lines were being written he was wracked by grief over the death by drowning in February 1805 of his mariner brother, John, and by anxiety about Coleridge's continuing ill-health. Nonetheless, through an enormous effort of will, the poem was completed in thirteen books, 'an alarming length!', as Wordsworth

⁹ *The Pedlar*, ll. 215–16. See Butler, *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar*, 400 and below p. 558.

confessed to Sir George Beaumont, 'and a thing unprecedented in literary history that a man should talk so much about himself'.¹⁰ In another letter to Beaumont Wordsworth declared the poem 'finished' and indicated that it would be published only when *The Recluse* appeared. In fact the account of the 'Growth of a Poet's Mind' was not 'finished' until 1839, when Wordsworth at last stopped revising it in the light of further lived experience, and, since *The Recluse* was never completed, the poem which was to be 'a sort of portico' to it remained hidden, alluded to over the years but never revealed.¹¹

If the volume of Wordsworth's unpublished poetry increased greatly over the years 1800 to 1805, so, on the other hand, did that of the poetry with which he was determined to make a name for himself in the world. Third and fourth editions of *Lyrical Ballads* were issued in 1802 and 1805, but the contents remained essentially unchanged from 1800. Now Wordsworth was ready to present a new collection, consisting entirely of poems written since his return to Grasmere. Then he had decided to risk all on an experiment in the life of a Poet: the poems of the new collection were its product. A great deal for Wordsworth as Poet—and for Wordsworth the provider for a growing family—rested on the publication in April 1807 of *Poems, in Two Volumes*.

Many of the lyrics arose from experience of life in the Lake District, poems about flowers, birds, butterflies, places, and incidents. One section, 'Poems Written During A Tour In Scotland', draws on the visit Wordsworth made with his sister in 1803. Another, called 'Moods Of My Own Mind', reflects the poet's response to the promptings of small incidents in daily life. Many of the poems suggest the influence of earlier poets, chiefly of the seventeenth century, whom Wordsworth was studying intently for the first time. And all of them are characterized by what a rather alarmed Coleridge described as 'a daring Humbleness of Language & Versification, and a strict adherence to matter of fact'.¹²

In taking such risks with diction, metre, and subject matter Wordsworth was in fact working out an earlier manifesto. When the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was being prepared, Wordsworth made a very striking addition—not to the poems, but to the Preface. In 1800 the Preface had been concerned primarily with questions of diction

¹⁰ W to Sir George Beaumont, 1 May 1805. *WL*, I, 586.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 3 June 1805. *WL*, I, 594.

¹² C to Robert Southey, 29 July 1802. *CL*, II, 830.

and subject matter. Now Wordsworth intervened to shift attention from the created work to the creative originator. What is meant by the word Poet? he asks at one point:

What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them.

Such an eloquent definition of the character of the Poet and of the nature of Poetry serves to advance the claim that Poetry

is the most philosophic of all writing . . . its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature.

Very obviously these are the words of a young poet struggling to maintain his own sense of vocation, but they are also one of the key utterances of Romanticism and their influence, most notably on Keats and Shelley, was profound.

In *Poems, in Two Volumes* Wordsworth sought to make good on these lofty claims. The lyrics convey a variety of moods reflecting the poet's impassioned observation of life, but the primary note is joy. The vivacity of the language, its apparently artless directness, seems to voice the exuberance of one both 'pleased with his own passions' and 'delighted to contemplate [them] as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe'. No one has written more beautifully than Coleridge on the power of such poems. They work, he writes in *Biographia Literaria*, 'by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand'.¹³

¹³ *Biographia Literaria*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), II, 7.

Poems to lesser celandines, skylarks and daisies, on glow-worms and daffodils, seek out for celebration the ‘unassuming Common-place | Of Nature’ (‘To the Daisy’, p. 267). Many poems in the 1807 collection, on the other hand, engage with what loomed too large to need seeking out—portents in the war that had been going on since 1793. There had been a truce in 1802, but it was in reality little more than a chance for both sides to draw breath, and when hostilities resumed it seemed almost certain that the French would invade. Napoleon: ‘Let us be masters of the Straits of Dover for six hours and we shall be masters of the world’.¹⁴

At this moment of national travail Wordsworth found, so to speak, a voice for the nation. Privately, in the emerging autobiographical poem, he was still trying to make sense of his own relation to contemporary politics over the previous decade and he did not flinch from declaring it ‘ten shameful years’ in his country’s history (*Prelude*, X, 178). But in his public utterances—many poems first appeared in newspapers—Wordsworth spoke to the crisis of the present moment. Inspired by Milton’s sonnets, Wordsworth began to assume Milton’s role and voice with increasing confidence. ‘Milton! thou should’st be living at this hour | England hath need of thee’ is the most direct summons to his great predecessor, but its tone is echoed in many of the sonnets Wordsworth composed from 1802 onwards. The invasion threat was a challenge to something more than national resolve: it was a test of national character that demanded self-examination, a return to high ideals, self-sacrifice if needs be. England, though now ‘a fen of stagnant waters’, remains the focus of ‘Earth’s best hopes’ for liberty. Milton’s contemporaries, ‘The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington | Young Vane and others who called Milton Friend’ taught ‘how genuine glory was put on’. And if the nation looks to its best past, it cannot but retain its liberty:

We must be free or die; who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.¹⁵

In all wartime propaganda the fortunate situation of one’s own country is contrasted with the blighted state of the enemy’s. So it is with these stirring poems, but in them Wordsworth’s deployment of

¹⁴ Quoted in Alexandra Franklin and Mark Philp, *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2003), 9.

¹⁵ ‘It is not to be thought of that the Flood’, ll. 11–13. See below, p. 241.

the traditional trope has an edge that comes from recent personal experience. In 1802 the Truce of Amiens enabled him to travel to France. Wordsworth's business there was to meet Annette, to settle affairs prior to his marriage in October to Mary Hutchinson, and to meet for the first time his daughter, Caroline, but in the sonnets that issued from the visit it is national rather than domestic concerns that dominate. As they walked across France in 1790 Wordsworth and Robert Jones had seen everywhere 'garlands, play, | Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh'. Now, in 1802, the one-time republican enthusiast for the French cause detects only fear and hollowness in the greeting, 'Good morrow, Citizen'. It is with relief that he returns home. 'Getting and spending' the people have lost sight of high thinking and plain living, yes, but at least 'Thou art free | My Country!' By the time these sonnets were gathered in *Poems, in Two Volumes* in 1807 the invasion scare was over (though the war would drag on for another eight years), but the poems would, Wordsworth was convinced, be more than just a record of a particular moment of crisis. 'Collectively', he told Lady Beaumont, '[they] make a Poem on the subject of civil Liberty and national independence'.¹⁶

Though unpretentious in format and modestly titled, *Poems, in Two Volumes* was a varied collection and it closed strongly with one of Wordsworth's greatest poems, the 'Ode', later called 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'. Wordsworth had every reason for being proud of this gathering of his recent work and for hoping that it would be well received. But it was not. Far from it. The collection was noticed and reviewers were respectful about the sonnets and some of the lyrics, but the poems which Coleridge had feared were too daringly humble were ridiculed. Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* formulated the objection unequivocally. Wordsworth, he averred, insists on 'connecting his most lofty, tender, or impassioned conceptions, with objects and incidents which the greater part of his readers will probably persist in thinking low, silly, or uninteresting'. Other reviews followed suit: 'language not simple, but puerile . . . namby-pamby'; 'miserable trash'; 'puerile affectation'; 'drivelling nonsense'; 'such flimsy, puerile thoughts, expressed in such feeble and halting verse, we have seldom seen'.¹⁷

¹⁶ W to Lady Beaumont, 21 May 1807. *WL*, II, 147.

¹⁷ For the reviews see *William Wordsworth: The Critical Heritage*, vol. I: 1793–1820, ed. Robert Woof (Routledge: London and New York, 2001), 169–231.

Wordsworth was devastated—understandably. By completing *The Prelude* and composing a lot of verse towards *The Recluse*, he had confirmed to himself the nature of his vocation and the wisdom of returning to the Lake District to pursue it, but the reading public only knew him as the poet of *Lyrical Ballads* and author of crack-pot aesthetic theories. Now his most original work so far, in part an embodiment of those theories, was being sneered at. Wordsworth abandoned plans to bring out a long poem, *The White Doe of Rylstone* (not represented in this selection) and made no further attempt to present his poetic work for seven years. A prose tract, *Concerning the Convention of Cintra*, was published in 1809 (see below pp. 511–28). This passionate disquisition on ‘those Principles, by which alone the Independence and Freedom of Nations can be Preserved or Recovered’, was couched in the style of what Coleridge termed ‘high dogmatic Eloquence’ and struck him ‘as almost a self-robbery from some great philosophical poem’. He was right. But for the time being *The Recluse* proper remained hidden.¹⁸

(3)

When Wordsworth did return to publishing poetry it was in a boldly assertive fashion. Everything about the lavish and expensive quarto *The Excursion* in 1814 and the handsome two-volume collected *Poems* of 1815 was intended to make an impact. In the former Wordsworth revealed for the first time the scale of his ambition. The nine books of *The Excursion*, in which the Poet, the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor debate life’s big questions, constitute in their bulk, as well as in their evident gravity of tone, a serious achievement (for extracts see below pp. 549–98). In a Preface to the poem, however, Wordsworth disclosed that, substantial though it was, this poem was only a part of a ‘long and laborious Work’ called *The Recluse*, ‘a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; . . . having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement’; the present work had been preceded by an autobiographical poem long since finished; and that until the whole should be completed, the ‘design and scope’ of the project overall might be best conveyed by a verse ‘Prospectus’—and in Miltonic blank verse,

¹⁸ The quotation beginning ‘those Principles’ is taken from the full title of the tract. C’s letter is to Daniel Stuart, 13 June 1809. *CL*, III, 214.

(printed below, pp. 549–51) Wordsworth invoked Milton, ‘holiest of men’, only to declare an intention to surpass him in an epic concerned with the human mind and the pursuit of paradise regained:

Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main, why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.

An astonishing and wonderful claim that might stand as the epigraph to Wordsworth’s every volume.

The body of poems in the 1815 collection was similarly accompanied by explanation and claim. The gathering represented Wordsworth’s work from a schoolboy piece of 1786 through to ‘Yarrow Visited’ of 1814, but the poems were presented not chronologically but in arrangements made ‘with reference to the powers of mind *predominant* in the production of them; or to the mould in which they are cast; or, lastly, to the subjects to which they relate’. Having insisted that the poems must be regarded holistically, that is ‘as composing an entire work within themselves’, Wordsworth further advertised them ‘as adjuncts to the philosophical Poem “The Recluse”’, the existence of which he had announced the previous year.¹⁹ The Preface in which these claims were made opened the 1815 volumes with a flourish (see below pp. 601–31), but its combination of literary theory, literary history, and self-promotion did not replace Wordsworth’s earlier disquisition in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*—that was reprinted at the end of volume II. Within two years Wordsworth had both signalled his claim on the future, so to speak, by bringing out a portion of what promised to be a very substantial philosophical work, and had also mapped his past by gathering together at age forty-five his Collected Poems.

Francis Jeffrey, for one, was unimpressed. ‘This will never do’, was the famously trenchant opening to his refutation of what he saw as the

¹⁹ In the Preface to *The Excursion* W had similarly asserted the unity of all his work through the figure of architecture: ‘his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public . . . will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little Cells, Oratories, and sepulchral Recesses, ordinarily included in those Edifices.’

Lake District metaphysical moonshine of *The Excursion*. For Byron and Mary and Percy Shelley the poem was sad proof that Wordsworth the one-time radical had become 'a slave', in thrall to established political and religious structures.²⁰ Keats, on the other hand, delighted in much of *The Excursion*, declaring it in 1818 'one of the three things to rejoice at in this Age'. Firm opinions, which demonstrated at least acquaintance with the poem. Few others made it. Whereas readers clamoured to get copies of Byron's *The Corsair* and Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, two years after publication of *The Excursion* only 331 copies had been sold.²¹

(4)

Publication of *The Excursion* (1814) and *Poems* (1815) marked the close of Wordsworth's most richly creative period and also, as it turned out, the end of *The Recluse* project.²² A coterie reputation had been established, and it grew, though only slowly, over the coming decade with the issue at regular intervals of single volumes, such as *Peter Bell* in 1819, *The River Duddon* in 1820, and *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* in 1822 and of revised and expanded collected *Poetical Works* from 1820 on. The masterpiece of this era, however, the work which completed the identification of Wordsworth as the arch-poet of the Lake District, was, ironically, not in verse but prose.

In 1810 Wordsworth had anonymously supplied the text to accompany a folio volume of *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire*. Ten years later, developed into *A Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes, in the North of England*, it was revealed as Wordsworth's when it appeared as the conclusion to his new volume of poems, *The River Duddon*. From its title onwards the collection is a hymn to the region of the lakes (see below pp. 633–75). The Duddon,

²⁰ *Journals of Mary Shelley*, ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), I, 25.

²¹ For a full account of the poetry market in the period and details of comparative sales figures, see William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²² The title-page to the first, 1814, and subsequent editions of *The Excursion* declared that the poem was 'A Portion of The Recluse'. In 1836 the claim was dropped. In fact the *Recluse* project had died in 1815, after C had revealed how far *The Excursion* fell short of his expectations.

which is celebrated in a sonnet sequence, flows into the sea from the mountains in the south-west; other named places, such as the Kirkstone Pass between Ambleside and Patterdale, are made the subject of lyrics; extensive notes draw the reader's attention to peculiarities of the area; one poem reminds the poet's academically ambitious and successful brother what he has lost by swapping a Lake District valley for London. Although the volume contains one of the finest of Wordsworth's later poems (see p. 635), however, its high point is the prose conclusion, the *Topographical Description*.

Wordsworth was not inventing a genre. There had been many Guides and Tours and Descriptions of the Lake District since the middle of the eighteenth century, but his was special in that it combined the knowledge of someone who walked and observed in all weathers, with the emotional commitment of a lover who has proved his constancy by years of faithful attendance. The *Topographical Description* is rather a love letter than a description. In *The Prelude* Wordsworth addresses the Hawkshead region where he went to school as 'my darling vale' (II, 202), and the note of unchanging affection is sustained throughout this later, wide-ranging, and highly informed prose account of his 'Dear native regions'.²³ Primarily the *Topographical Description* presents, as one might expect, acute observation of natural phenomena, but the success of the presentation rests upon Wordsworth's ability as a poet to find the right language to evoke them (see, for example, below pp. 658–9). But it includes also what is more important to the success of the whole *River Duddon* volume, a sense of certain core values to human life, which Wordsworth believes existed in the 'Republic of Shepherds' he grew up in (see below p. 666). In this passage of the *Topographical Description*, which both celebrates a good and laments the inevitability of its passing, Wordsworth keeps faith, so to speak, with 'Michael', and with the poet he was, when he had declared in the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* that 'Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity . . . and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature' (see below p. 57).

²³ 'Dear native regions' are the opening words of youthful verse published in the collected *Poems* of 1815 as 'Extract. From the Conclusion of a Poem, Composed Upon Leaving School'.

(5)

From the mid-1820s onwards the pattern of Wordsworth's poetic career became settled. The *Topographical Description* went through three further separate editions by 1835, its title changing to *A Guide through the District of the Lakes*. At longish intervals new poems were issued in discrete volumes—*Yarrow Revisited* in 1835 was the most successful and *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years* in 1842 the last. Regular revisions of the collected poems ensured that the most recent fresh verse was folded into the existing corpus—the collections of 1827, 1832, 1836, 1845 (one volume), and 1849–50 all incorporated extensive revision by the poet who continued to subject the whole of his published work to vigilant oversight. But although the rate of creative activity was high, there are few poems from Wordsworth's later years that can insist on inclusion in a selection such as this. As the reader will discover, however, those that do get in, poems such as 'Extempore Effusion Upon the Death of James Hogg' or 'The Departure of Sir Walter Scott for Naples', need no apology (see below pp. 696, 687).

What happened to Wordsworth over the last twenty five years of his life is that he became an unignorable feature in the cultural landscape, not loved perhaps, but certainly respected and increasingly revered. Many factors contributed to this development—sheer longevity obviously being one of them—but two stand out. The first is that, as generally happens with any original artist, the audience belatedly caught up. Having been scorned or ignored, Wordsworth's early work began to be appreciated more widely, so that the poet of *Lyrical Ballads* or *The Excursion* was taken up by early figures in the Tractarian movement and became an acknowledged influence on writers such as George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Matthew Arnold. Honorary degrees and latterly the offer of the Poet Laureateship testified to the elderly poet's standing as, in John Keble's words, 'a True Philosopher and Poet . . . who . . . whether he discoursed on Man or Nature failed not to lift up the Heart to Holy Things, Tired not of Maintaining the Cause of the Poor and Simple'.²⁴ As historical commentary Keble's words might be placed alongside the last poem in this selection, 'I know an aged Man', which, by linking back to early poems, 'The Old

²⁴ For an account of Keble's testimony, and other such, see my *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

Cumberland Beggar' or 'Lines Left Upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree', points up the continuities that matter in the whole of Wordsworth's work.

The other factor is that the elderly poet did not fall silent. Profoundly agitated by the course of political affairs and certain issues in particular such as Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform, Wordsworth (who claimed not to like letter writing) maintained a serious correspondence over years with public figures and opinion formers. But that was in private. Publicly he sought attention as commentator on the age in a prose 'Postscript' to the collection *Yarrow Revisited* in 1835 and in poems such as 'The Warning', published in the 1842 volume, *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years*. The latter is not included in this selection, but passages from the former are (see below pp. 688–96) and in the compassion of their critique of the effects of the 1834 New Poor Law they remind us that Wordsworth was the contemporary of the Dickens of *Oliver Twist*.

And there was more to come. In 1844 plans to drive a railway into the Lake District as far as Lowood on Windermere, with the threat of continuation northwards through the heart of the region, roused Wordsworth to one last campaign. His two letters published as *Kendal and Windermere Railway* were unavailing, and anyone who has travelled to the Lake District by rail must be glad that they were. But we must also be glad that the old poet was moved to such indignation as is expressed in the splendidly grand sonnets printed in this selection, pp. 700–1. In his demand, 'Is then no nook of English ground secure | From rash assault?' and his 'Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you | To share the passion of a just disdain', is heard for the last time the accent both of the poet who, hearing Milton's sonnets in 1802, 'took fire', and of the schoolboy who, catching sight of Grasmere from Loughrigg, exclaimed,

'What happy fortune were it here to live!
And if I thought of dying, if a thought
Of mortal separation could come in
With paradise before me, here to die'.²⁵

Wordsworth died on 23 April 1850. His greatest work, *The Prelude*, was published by his executors later in the same year.

²⁵ The phrase 'took fire' is Wordsworth's, in the Fenwick note to his Miscellaneous Sonnets. See *IF Notes*, 19. The concluding quotation is from *Home at Grasmere*, ll. 9–12. See below p. 186.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1770 W is born 7 April at Cockermouth, in the north of the English Lake District.
- 1771 Dorothy Wordsworth (DW) is born 25 September at Cockermouth.
- 1778 Mother, Ann Wordsworth, dies c.8 March.
- 1779 W enters Hawkshead Grammar School, lodging with Hugh and Ann Tyson.
- 1783 Father, John Wordsworth, dies 30 December.
- 1785–6 First surviving verse, 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead' (1785) and more sustained composition towards 'The Vale of Esthwaite', not published by W.
- 1787 W's first published poem, a sonnet, 'On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress' appears in *The European Magazine* in March. In October W enters St John's College, Cambridge.
- 1788–9 Composition of *An Evening Walk*, published 1793. Storming of the Bastille, 14 July 1789.
- 1790 Walking tour in France and Switzerland with Robert Jones, July–October. Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* is published.
- 1791–2 W in London. In November 1791 returns to France and sees Revolutionary fervour in Paris. Is influenced by Michel Beaupuy. Love affair with Annette Vallon and birth of their daughter, Caroline, 15 December 1792. Composes *Descriptive Sketches*, published 1793. Returns to England to seek a livelihood.
- 1793 Louis XVI is executed in January. War is declared between England and France in February. W feels an outcast in his own country. Writes, but does not publish, a seditious *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and after wandering penniless across Salisbury Plain into Wales composes *Salisbury Plain*. Sees Tintern Abbey. William Godwin's *Political Justice* is published, as Government repression of dissent intensifies.
- 1794 W is reunited with DW in stay at Windy Brow, Keswick. In August–September stays at Rampside and sees Peele Castle. Nurses Raisley Calvert, who leaves W £900 on his death in January 1795. Robespierre is executed on 28 July.

- 1795 C lectures in Bristol on politics and religion. W is a familiar figure in radical circles in London in spring and summer and regularly visits Godwin. Meets C and Southey in Bristol in August. Settles with DW at Racedown in Dorset and rewrites 'Salisbury Plain'.
- 1797 Completes the play *The Borderers*, and moves to Alfoxden to be nearer C, with whom period of greatest intimacy begins. First version of *The Ruined Cottage* and plans for joint composition with C.
- 1798 The *annus mirabilis*. W completes *The Ruined Cottage* and composes the bulk of the verse published anonymously in September as *Lyrical Ballads*. Plans for *The Recluse* first mentioned. W, DW, and C go to Germany and over winter W writes autobiographical verse, the foundation of *The Prelude*.
- 1799 By end April W is back in England. Moves into Dove Cottage, Grasmere in December.
- 1800 Begins *Home at Grasmere* and probably composes lines printed in 1814 as a 'Prospectus' to *The Recluse*. Works on poems for second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, published January 1800, and writes *Preface*.
- 1802 Composes much lyrical poetry. Further edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, with revised *Preface*, is published in April. Peace of Amiens enables Ws to visit Annette and Caroline in August. W marries Mary Hutchinson (1770–1859) 4 October.
- 1803 War begins again and fear of invasion grows. Birth of first son, John. W, DW, and C tour Scotland from mid-August. The Ws meet Sir Walter Scott 17 September. C is ill and plans to leave for better climate.
- 1804 Much composition, especially on *The Prelude*, which is enlarged after March from planned five-book structure. 'Ode to Duty' and completion of 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality'. C sails to Malta. On 18 May Napoleon is crowned Emperor.
- 1805 5–6 February, John Wordsworth (b. 1772), Captain of the *Earl of Abergavenny*, drowned. W circle is very deeply affected. W completes *The Prelude*.
- 1806–7 W visits London. Sees Sir George Beaumont's picture of Peele Castle in a storm. Ws spend winter in a Beaumont house at Coleorton, Leicestershire. C at last returns, much changed by ill-health. W reads *The Prelude* to him. *Poems in Two Volumes* published in 1807 and ridiculed in reviews. W composes *The White Doe of Rylstone*, but does not publish it till 1815.
- 1808–9 Ws leave Dove Cottage for larger house in Grasmere, Allan Bank. Publishes *The Convention of Cintra* in 1809.
- 1810 Son, William, born 12 May. Misunderstanding leads to breach with C—healed in 1812. First version of *Guide to the Lakes* is

- published as anonymous Preface to Joseph Wilkinson's *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire*.
- 1811–12 Deaths of children Thomas (b. 1806) and Catherine (b. 1808). Ws move from Allan Bank to Rectory, Grasmere.
- 1813 Becomes Distributor of Stamps for Westmorland, a post in the revenue service. Moves to Rydal Mount, home for the rest of his life. Completes *The Excursion*.
- 1814 *The Excursion* is published, prefaced by an account of the plan for *The Recluse*. Further attack by reviewers. Tour of Scotland, including a visit to the Yarrow.
- 1815–20 First Collected Edition of Poems published, with Preface, in 1815. The argument and classification advanced here spurs C to complete his own theoretical statement, *Biographia Literaria*, published 1817. *The White Doe of Rylstone* is also published 1815. W issues a *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, 1816, and in 1819 *The Waggoner* and *Peter Bell*, written in 1806 and 1798, respectively. W moves more widely in London circles and meets Keats in 1817. For the General Election of 1818 W campaigned hard in the Tory interest to the distress of many admirers.
- 1820–8 W publishes *The River Duddon* sonnet sequence in 1820. Tours Europe and revisits places last seen in 1790. Publishes in 1822 *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820* and *Ecclesiastical Sketches*. Enlarged Collected Editions are published in 1820 and 1827. Tours the Rhine with C and much loved daughter Dora (b. 1804).
- 1829–35 Catholic emancipation issue greatly troubles W. Tours Scotland again September–October 1831 and sees Sir Walter Scott (d. 1832) for last time. Further Collected Edition is published in 1832. C dies 25 July 1834. *Yarrow Revisited* published 1835, with important Postscript.
- 1836–43 Further Collected Edition, revised as always, 1836. Tours France and Italy in 1837. Sonnets gathered into one volume in 1838. In 1839 W revises *The Prelude* for the last time. Poems written in youth (notably *The Borderers* and *Salisbury Plain*) revised for publication in *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years*, 1842. Resigns Stamp Distributorship in 1842 and becomes Poet Laureate on Southey's death in 1843. Dictates Fenwick Notes. W is now a widely celebrated figure, receiving honorary degrees from Durham and Oxford. Steady increase in American reputation.
- 1844–50 Supervises with great care one-volume Collected Edition of 1845 and the final edition in six volumes of 1849–50. W deeply stricken by the death of Dora, 9 July 1847. W dies 23 April 1850. *The Prelude* published in July by his wife and executors.

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A NOTE ON THE SELECTION AND ITS ORDERING

Wordsworth lived to eighty years of age and never stopped writing and publishing. The last Collected Edition he saw through the press in 1849–50 was in six volumes, but even so did not include all that he had written. Shortly after his death the long-concealed *Prelude* was revealed to the world and scholarly investigation has since added many more poems to the canon. So, faced with the considerable bulk of Wordsworth's writings in verse and prose, for a one-volume edition selection is unavoidable—and mostly not too difficult to make. Given that from his contemporaries onwards, readers have generally found Wordsworth's later poetry less compelling than the earlier, and that scholars and critics have not really dissented from the common judgement, most of the poems in this volume belong to the period which closed with the publication of Wordsworth's first collective *Poems* in 1815. Since the first edition of this Oxford University Press selection in 1984, however, there have been two important developments in the appreciation of Wordsworth's work which this much revised selection reflects and hopes to further. The first is the recognition that the interest of the later poetry has been slighted—that much of it is both pleasing in itself as very accomplished poetic art and rich for its historical-cultural significance. The second is the realization that in order to understand the intersecting trajectories of Wordsworth's hopes for publication, his experience of the reception of his publications, and the uncertain growth of his poetic reputation, one needs to follow the sequence of his appearances in the marketplace and to know what they looked like to his contemporaries. This selection aims to include all the best of Wordsworth, the poetry that all readers would expect to find, but in the selection of poetry and prose from 1815 onwards and through the way it is arranged (more on that below) it is hoped that it will also encourage exploration of the less familiar terrain of Wordsworth's later years.

The first edition of this selection adhered to the principle that only complete works in poetry or prose could be included. Casting off that restriction (though ideally desirable) has enabled the presentation of material which no representative edition of Wordsworth ought to omit but which could not possibly be included in full—passages from *The Excursion* most notably, and from prose such as *The Convention of*

Cintra and the *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes*. Even so, selection is selection and what has had to be left out even from Wordsworth's greatest years makes a dismayingly long list: *Descriptive Sketches* and *An Evening Walk*, the *Salisbury Plain* poems, *The Borderers*, *Peter Bell*, *Benjamin*, *The Waggoner*, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, and more. None the less, although all of these absences are to be regretted, this volume presents enough of the evidence for the reader to assess Coleridge's judgement on Wordsworth that 'in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own'.

Selection is only one aspect, however, of the editorial task. The other is deciding on text—quite literally, what words shall be set down as being this or that Wordsworth poem. 'A correct text is the first object of an editor', Wordsworth declared to Sir Walter Scott (7 November 1805)—quite so, but establishing what is a 'correct text' and an order of presentation with this particular poet is not a straightforward matter.

During his long publishing career from 1793 to 1849–50 Wordsworth oversaw fifteen new volumes of verse (excluding from consideration reprint editions, selections, and pamphlets), and from 1815 nine collected editions (again excluding reprints, American, and other unauthorized editions). Each new collection contained fresh verse added to the canon and presented Wordsworth's latest revision of the old. Over revision the poet expended enormous labour and vigilance and the labour did not end until his death. The Collected Edition of 1849–50 must, therefore, be regarded as the poet's final authorized text, and Wordsworth's view of such texts was stated firmly to Alexander Dyce: 'You know what importance I attach to following strictly the last copy text of an author' (c.19 April, 1830).

For the reader interested in the development of Wordsworth's art, however, this last edition is far from satisfactory. Many poems had been considerably revised from their first published state, altered moreover not in one creative burst of revision, but at various times throughout Wordsworth's lifetime. Some poems which were not published soon after composition, *Salisbury Plain*, for example, only appeared eventually in a text which fundamentally changed the original conception. Others, such as *The Ruined Cottage* or the elegies on John Wordsworth, were incorporated into other works or dismembered to make new ones. Some poems which were published were excised from the canon, while others, much excellent poetry which

includes *The Prelude*, were not published by Wordsworth at all. From some bibliographical points of view the 1849–50 edition might have canonical status, but it does not present all of the poetry, nor the poems as they appeared to Wordsworth's first readers.

There is a further objection to the last authorized edition, namely that its organization is designed to prevent a chronological reading. From 1815 onwards Wordsworth arranged his poems in groupings designed to 'assist the attentive Reader in perceiving their connection with each other', as he explained in the *Preface* to that first Collected Poems. New categories were added after *Poems* (1815) and poems were moved from one to another, but overall this remained Wordsworth's preferred arrangement. What determines the relation of poems within his classification is not chronology of composition, but, he claimed, the powers of mind predominant in their creation, or relationship of subject-matter.

This selected edition, therefore, it must be recognized, disregards Wordsworth's expressed wishes with regard to the state of the text of the poems and the ordering of them. Convinced that a presentation which recognizes the claims of chronology can best reveal the growth of the poet's mind (the subject, after all, of his greatest poem, *The Prelude*), and record the historical unfolding of his career, I have presented the poems in this selection in order of volume publication: *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807), *The Excursion* (1814), *Poems* (1815), and so on. Both the text of the poems and the order in which they appear follow that of the first editions. A reader who does not have access to a set of *Poems, in Two Volumes*, for example, will be able to see from this present edition how Wordsworth arranged his work for publication in 1807 and what the 1807 text actually was. Few poems first published in the 1815 volumes and the 1820 *River Duddon* collection have been included in this selection, but the principle of honouring the sequence of arrangement in the first publication has nonetheless been followed. The last clutch of poems, however, are so few in number that they cannot claim to represent the numerous volumes in which they first appeared and are therefore presented simply in order of publication.

Much of Wordsworth's finest poetry was not published in his lifetime or was held back from publication and only finally released in a form that differed substantially from its first completed version. This edition aims to give a good selection of this body of work. To maintain the sense of chronological development, the poems have been placed in clusters, with a clear indication of the period in

which they were written. It will be easy for a reader to see, for example, which poems Wordsworth chose to include in *Poems, in Two Volumes* in 1807 and which not. The text of these non-published poems is taken from manuscript and represents the earliest completed state. Any difficulties over textual status are discussed in the notes. The text of *The Prelude* is that of the first completed thirteen-book version of 1805.

Readers who would like to explore further how views can differ on the issues dealt with summarily in this Note should see Stephen Gill, 'Wordsworth's Poems: The Question of Text', *Review of English Studies* NS 34 (1983), 172–90, revised for *Romantic Revisions*, ed. Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 43–63; and Zachary Leader, *Revision and Romantic Authorship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 19–77.

In the selection from Wordsworth's prose writings his most important public statements about poetry are fully represented—constraints of space rule out the inclusion of many important testimonies in private letters—but also represented are Wordsworth's other identities as polemicist, both in youth and in late middle-age; as moralist commenting on national affairs; and as supreme interpreter of the Lake District. The impassioned eloquence of *The Convention of Cintra* and the delicately evocative prose of the *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes* deserve to be at the centre of any consideration of Wordsworth's overall achievement as imaginative artist and as cultural force. The prose has been placed historically in the chronological sequence in order to bring out its integral relationship to the poetry at every stage in the development of Wordsworth's *oeuvre*. For example, the additions of 1802 to the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* look forward to the daring lyrics of *Poems, in Two Volumes* in 1807; the *Convention of Cintra* belongs to the imaginative mindset of the 'Sonnets on National Independence and Liberty'; the *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes* complements poems such as the Kirkstone Pass ode in the *River Duddon* volume.

The source of a text is always indicated in the notes, by reference either to the date of first publication or to a manuscript. As the Cornell Wordsworth editions abundantly demonstrate, establishing any printed text is not straightforward—Butler and Green examined 65 copies of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in order to settle on their base text—but textual minutiae are not the proper concern of an edition such as this. Only major textual issues have been noted and obvious printing errors have been silently corrected. The 'd' form has

generally been expanded to 'ed', but otherwise original spelling has been retained. The punctuation of published texts has only been altered when absolutely necessary and in texts taken from manuscript I have punctuated lightly, trying to follow my source wherever possible. [] indicates a word missing in the manuscript; [word] indicates material supplied by the editor.

The degree sign (°) indicates a note at the end of the book. More general notes and headnotes are not cued.

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FROM *LYRICAL BALLADS* (1798)

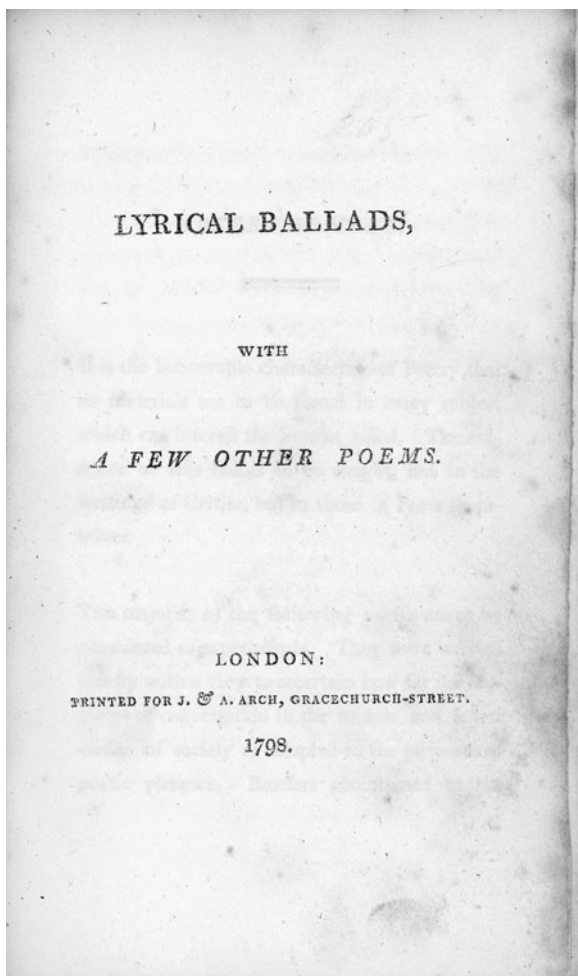


FIG. 1 Title-page of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

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Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree

WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE, ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE, YET COMMANDING A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT

—Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb;
What if these barren boughs the bee not loves;
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Who he was

That piled these stones, and with the mossy sod
First covered o'er, and taught this aged tree,
Now wild, to bend its arms in circling shade,
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth, by genius nursed,
And big with lofty views, he to the world
Went forth, pure in his heart, against the taint
Of dissolute tongues, 'gainst jealousy, and hate,
And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect: and so, his spirit damped
At once, with rash disdain he turned away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper;
And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downward eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene; how lovely 'tis
Thou seest, and he would gaze till it became^o
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty still more beauteous. Nor, that time,
Would he forget those beings, to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,

10

20

30

The world, and man himself, appeared a scene
 Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh
 With mournful joy, to think that others felt
 What he must never feel: and so, lost man! 40
 On visionary views would fancy feed,
 Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
 He died, this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
 Of young imagination have kept pure,
 Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know, that pride,
 Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
 Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
 For any living thing, hath faculties
 Which he has never used; that thought with him 50
 Is in its infancy. The man, whose eye
 Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
 The least of nature's works, one who might move
 The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
 Unlawful, ever. O, be wiser thou!
 Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
 True dignity abides with him alone
 Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
 Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
 In lowliness of heart. 60

The Female Vagrant

By Derwent's side my Father's cottage stood,
 (The Woman thus her artless story told)
 One field, a flock, and what the neighbouring flood
 Supplied, to him were more than mines of gold.
 Light was my sleep; my days in transport rolled:
 With thoughtless joy I stretched along the shore
 My father's nets, or watched, when from the fold
 High o'er the cliffs I led my fleecy store,
 A dizzy depth below! his boat and twinkling oar.

My father was a good and pious man, 10
 An honest man, by honest parents bred,
 And I believe that, soon as I began

To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
 And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
 And afterwards, by my good father taught,
 I read, and loved the books in which I read;
 For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
 And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

Can I forget what charms did once adorn
 My garden, stored with pease, and mint, and thyme, 20
 And rose and lily for the sabbath morn?
 The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime;
 The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time;
 My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
 The cowslip-gathering at May's dewy prime;
 The swans, that when I sought the water-side,
 From far to meet me came, spreading their snowy pride.

The staff I yet remember which upbore
 The bending body of my active sire;
 His seat beneath the honeyed sycamore 30
 When the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
 When market-morning came, the neat attire
 With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked;
 My watchful dog, whose starts of furious ire,
 When stranger passed, so often I have checked;
 The red-breast known for years, which at my casement pecked.

The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
 Ah! little marked, how fast they rolled away:
 Then rose a mansion proud our woods among,
 And cottage after cottage owned its sway, 40
 No joy to see a neighbouring house, or stray
 Through pastures not his own, the master took;
 My Father dared his greedy wish gainsay;
 He loved his old hereditary nook,
 And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.

But, when he had refused the proffered gold,
 To cruel injuries he became a prey,
 Sore traversed in whate'er he bought and sold:
 His troubles grew upon him day by day,
 Till all his substance fell into decay. 50
 His little range of water was denied;

All but the bed where his old body lay,
 All, all was seized, and weeping, side by side,
 We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.

Can I forget that miserable hour,
 When from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
 Peering above the trees, the steeple tower,
 That on his marriage-day sweet music made?
 Till then he hoped his bones might there be laid,
 Close by my mother in their native bowers: 60
 Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed,—
 I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers,
 Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours!

There was a youth whom I had loved so long,
 That when I loved him not I cannot say.
 'Mid the green mountains many and many a song
 We two had sung, like little birds in May.
 When we began to tire of childish play
 We seemed still more and more to prize each other:
 We talked of marriage and our marriage day; 70
 And I in truth did love him like a brother,
 For never could I hope to meet with such another.

His father said, that to a distant town
 He must repair, to ply the artist's trade.^o
 What tears of bitter grief till then unknown!
 What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
 To him we turned:—we had no other aid.
 Like one revived, upon his neck I wept,
 And her whom he had loved in joy, he said
 He well could love in grief: his faith he kept; 80
 And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

Four years each day with daily bread was blest,
 By constant toil and constant prayer supplied.
 Three lovely infants lay upon my breast;
 And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
 And knew not why. My happy father died
 When sad distress reduced the children's meal:
 Thrice happy! that from him the grave did hide
 The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
 And tears that flowed for ills which patience could not heal. 90

'Twas a hard change, an evil time was come;
 We had no hope, and no relief could gain.
 But soon, with proud parade, the noisy drum
 Beat round, to sweep the streets of want and pain.
 My husband's arms now only served to strain
 Me and his children hungering in his view:
 In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
 To join those miserable men he flew;
 And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

There foul neglect for months and months we bore, 100
 Nor yet the crowded fleet its anchor stirred.
 Green fields before us and our native shore,
 By fever, from polluted air incurred,
 Ravage was made, for which no knell was heard.
 Fondly we wished, and wished away, nor knew,
 'Mid that long sickness, and those hopes deferred,
 That happier days we never more must view:
 The parting signal streamed, at last the land withdrew,

But from delay the summer calms were past.
 On as we drove, the equinoctial deep 110
 Ran mountains-high before the howling blast.
 We gazed with terror on the gloomy sleep
 Of them that perished in the whirlwind's sweep,
 Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
 Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
 That we the mercy of the waves should rue.
 We reached the western world, a poor, devoted crew.°

Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
 All that is dear *in* being! better far 120
 In Want's most lonely cave till death to pine,
 Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
 Or in the streets and walks where proud men are,
 Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
 Than dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
 Protract a curst existence, with the brood
 That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's blood.

The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
 Disease and famine, agony and fear,
 In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,

It would thy brain unsettle even to hear. 130
 All perished—all, in one remorseless year,
 Husband and children! one by one, by sword
 And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
 Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
 A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored.

Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
 By the first beams of dawning light impressed,
 In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main.
 The very ocean has its hour of rest,
 That comes not to the human mourner's breast. 140
 Remote from man, and storms of mortal care,
 A heavenly silence did the waves invest;
 I looked and looked along the silent air,
 Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.

Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps!
 And groans, that rage of racking famine spoke,
 Where looks inhuman dwelt on festering heaps!
 The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke!
 The shriek that from the distant battle broke!
 The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host 150
 Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
 To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish tossed,
 Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!

Yet does that burst of woe congeal my frame,
 When the dark streets appeared to heave and gape,
 While like a sea the storming army came,
 And Fire from Hell reared his gigantic shape,
 And Murder, by the ghastly gleam, and Rape
 Seized their joint prey, the mother and the child!
 But from those crazing thoughts my brain, escape! 160
 —For weeks the balmy air breathed soft and mild,
 And on the gliding vessel Heaven and Ocean smiled.

Some mighty gulph of separation past,
 I seemed transported to another world:—
 A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
 The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
 And whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
 The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home,

And from all hope I was forever hurled.
 For me—farthest from earthly port to roam 170
 Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might come.

And oft, robbed of my perfect mind, I thought
 At last my feet a resting-place had found:
 Here will I weep in peace, (so fancy wrought,)
 Roaming the illimitable waters round;
 Here watch, of every human friend disowned,
 All day, my ready tomb the ocean-flood—
 To break my dream the vessel reached its bound:
 And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
 And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food. 180

By grief enfeebled was I turned adrift,
 Helpless as sailor cast on desert rock;
 Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
 Nor dared my hand at any door to knock.
 I lay, where with his drowsy mates, the cock
 From the cross timber of an out-house hung;
 How dismal tolled; that night, the city clock!
 At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
 Nor to the beggar's language could I frame my tongue.

So passed another day, and so the third: 190
 Then did I try, in vain, the crowd's resort,
 In deep despair by frightful wishes stirred,
 Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort:
 There, pains which nature could no more support,
 With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
 Dizzy my brain, with interruption short
 Of hideous sense; I sunk, nor step could crawl,
 And thence was borne away to neighbouring hospital.

Recovery came with food: but still, my brain 200
 Was weak, nor of the past had memory.
 I heard my neighbours, in their beds, complain
 Of many things which never troubled me;
 Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
 Of looks where common kindness had no part,
 Of service done with careless cruelty,
 Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
 And groans, which, as they said, would make a dead man start.

These things just served to stir the torpid sense,
 Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
 Memory, though slow, returned with strength; and thence 210
 Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,
 At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
 The lanes I sought, and as the sun retired,
 Came, where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
 The wild brood saw me weep, my fate enquired,
 And gave me food, and rest, more welcome, more desired.

My heart is touched to think that men like these,
 The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief:
 How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
 And their long holiday that feared not grief, 220
 For all belonged to all, and each was chief.
 No plough their sinews strained; on grating road
 No wain they drove, and yet, the yellow sheaf
 In every vale for their delight was stowed:
 For them, in nature's meads, the milky udder flowed.

Semblance, with straw and panniered ass, they made
 Of potters wandering on from door to door:
 But life of happier sort to me pourtrayed,
 And other joys my fancy to allure;
 The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor 230
 In barn uplighted, and companions boon
 Well met from far with revelry secure,
 In depth of forest glade, when jocund June
 Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

But ill it suited me, in journey dark
 Of moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch;
 To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
 Or hang on tiptoe at the lifted latch;
 The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
 The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill, 240
 And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
 Were not for me, brought up on nothing ill;
 Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

What could I do, unaided and unblest?
 Poor Father! gone was every friend of thine.
 And kindred of dead husband are at best

Small help, and after marriage such as mine,
 With little kindness would to me incline.
 Ill was I then for toil or service fit:
 With tears whose course no effort could confine, 250
 By high-way side forgetful would I sit
 Whole hours, my idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

I lived upon the mercy of the fields,
 And oft of cruelty the sky accused;
 On hazard, or what general bounty yields,
 Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
 The fields I for my bed have often used:
 But, what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth
 Is, that I have my inner self abused,
 Foregone the home delight of constant truth, 260
 And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

Three years a wanderer, often have I viewed,
 In tears, the sun towards that country tend
 Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
 And now across this moor my steps I bend—
 Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
 Have I—She ceased, and weeping turned away,
 As if because her tale was at an end
 She wept;—because she had no more to say
 Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay. 270

Goody Blake and Harry Gill

A TRUE STORY

Oh! what's the matter? what's the matter?
 What is't that ails young Harry Gill?
 That evermore his teeth they chatter,
 Chatter, chatter, chatter still.
 Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
 Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
 He has a blanket on his back,
 And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
 Tis all the same with Harry Gill; 10
 The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
 His teeth they chatter, chatter still.

At night, at morning, and at noon,
 'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
 Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
 His teeth they chatter, chatter still.

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
 And who so stout of limb as he?
 His cheeks were red as ruddy clover,
 His voice was like the voice of three. 20
 Auld Goody Blake was old and poor,
 Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
 And any man who passed her door,
 Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling,
 And then her three hours' work at night!
 Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
 It would not pay for candle-light.
 —This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire,
 Her hut was on a cold hill-side, 30
 And in that country coals are dear,
 For they come far by wind and tide.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
 Two poor old dames, as I have known,
 Will often live in one small cottage,
 But she, poor woman, dwelt alone.
 'Twas well enough when summer came,
 The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
 Then at her door the *canty* dame
 Would sit, as any linnet gay. 40

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
 Oh! then how her old bones would shake!
 You would have said, if you had met her,
 'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
 Her evenings then were dull and dead;
 Sad case it was, as you may think,
 For very cold to go to bed,

And then for cold not sleep a wink.
 Oh joy for her! when e'er in winter
 The winds at night had made a rout, 50

And scattered many a lusty splinter,
 And many a rotten bough about.
 Yet never had she, well or sick,
 As every man who knew her says,
 A pile before-hand, wood or stick,
 Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
 And made her poor old bones to ache,
 Could any thing be more alluring,
 Than an old hedge to Goody Blake? 60
 And now and then, it must be said,
 When her old bones were cold and chill,
 She left her fire, or left her bed,
 To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
 This trespass of old Goody Blake,
 And vowed that she should be detected,
 And he on her would vengeance take. 70
 And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
 And to the fields his road would take,
 And there, at night, in frost and snow,
 He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
 Thus looking out did Harry stand;
 The moon was full and shining clearly,
 And crisp with frost the stubble-land.
 —He hears a noise—he's all awake—
 Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
 He softly creeps—'Tis Goody Blake,
 She's at the hedge of Harry Gill. 80

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
 Stick after stick did Goody pull,
 He stood behind a bush of elder,
 Till she had filled her apron full.
 When with her load she turned about,
 The bye-road back again to take,
 He started forward with a shout,
 And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
 And by the arm he held her fast, 90
 And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
 And cried, 'I've caught you then at last!
 Then Goody, who had nothing said,
 Her bundle from her lap let fall;
 And kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
 To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
 While Harry held her by the arm—
 'God! who art never out of hearing,
 Oh may he never more be warm!' 100
 The cold, cold moon above her head,
 Thus on her knees did Goody pray,
 Young Harry heard what she had said,
 And icy-cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
 That he was cold and very chill:
 His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
 Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
 That day he wore a riding-coat,
 But not a whit the warmer he: 110
 Another was on Thursday brought,
 And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
 And blankets were about him pinned;
 Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
 Like a loose casement in the wind.
 And Harry's flesh it fell away;
 And all who see him say 'tis plain,
 That, live as long as live he may,
 He never will be warm again. 120

No word to any man he utters,
 A-bed or up, to young or old;
 But ever to himself he mutters,
 'Poor Harry Gill is very cold.'
 A-bed or up, by night or day;
 His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
 Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
 Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.

Lines

WRITTEN AT A SMALL DISTANCE FROM MY HOUSE, AND SENT BY
MY LITTLE BOY TO THE PERSON TO WHOM THEY ARE ADDRESSED

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

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

My Sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done, 10
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

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

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living Calendar:
We from to-day, my friend, will date
The opening of the year. 20

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

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

Some silent laws our hearts may make,
Which they shall long obey; 30
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

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

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

40

Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman

WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
 Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
 An old man dwells, a little man,
 I've heard he once was tall.
 Of years he has upon his back,
 No doubt, a burthen weighty;
 He says he is three score and ten,
 But others say he's eighty.

A long blue livery-coat has he,
 That's fair behind, and fair before;
 Yet, meet him where you will, you see
 At once that he is poor.
 Full five and twenty years he lived
 A running huntsman merry;
 And, though he has but one eye left,
 His cheek is like a cherry.

10

No man like him the horn could sound,
 And no man was so full of glee;
 To say the least, four counties round
 Had heard of Simon Lee;
 His master's dead, and no one now
 Dwells in the hall of Ivor;
 Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
 He is the sole survivor.

20

His hunting feats have him bereft
Of his right eye, as you may see:
And then, what limbs those feats have left
To poor old Simon Lee!
He has no son, he has no child,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.

30

And he is lean and he is sick,
His little body's half awry;
His ancles they are swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
When he was young he little knew
Of husbandry or tillage;
And now he's forced to work, though weak,
—The weakest in the village.

40

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

Old Ruth works out of doors with him,
And does what Simon cannot do;
For she, not over stout of limb,
Is stouter of the two.
And though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
Alas! 'tis very little, all
Which they can do between them.

50

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
 Not twenty paces from the door,
 A scrap of land they have, but they
 Are poorest of the poor. 60
 This scrap of land he from the heath
 Enclosed when he was stronger;
 But what avails the land to them,
 Which they can till no longer?

Few months of life has he in store,
 As he to you will tell,
 For still, the more he works, the more
 His poor old ancles swell.
 My gentle reader, I perceive
 How patiently you've waited, 70
 And I'm afraid that you expect
 Some tale will be related.

O reader! had you in your mind
 Such stores as silent thought can bring,
 O gentle reader! you would find
 A tale in every thing.
 What more I have to say is short,
 I hope you'll kindly take it;
 It is no tale; but should you think,
 Perhaps a tale you'll make it. 80

One summer-day I chanced to see
 This old man doing all he could
 About the root of an old tree,
 A stump of rotten wood.
 The mattock tottered in his hand;
 So vain was his endeavour
 That at the root of the old tree
 He might have worked for ever.

'You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
 Give me your tool' to him I said; 90
 And at the word right gladly he
 Received my proffered aid.
 I struck, and with a single blow
 The tangled root I severed,
 At which the poor old man so long
 And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
 And thanks and praises seemed to run
 So fast out of his heart, I thought
 They never would have done. 100
 —I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
 With coldness still returning.
 Alas! the gratitude of men
 Has oftner left me mourning.

Anecdote for Fathers

SHEWING HOW THE ART OF LYING MAY BE TAUGHT

I have a boy of five years old,
 His face is fair and fresh to see;
 His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
 And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
 Our quiet house all full in view,
 And held such intermitted talk
 As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
 I thought of Kilve's delightful shore, 10
 My pleasant home, when spring began,
 A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
 To think, and think, and think again;
 With so much happiness to spare,
 I could not feel a pain.

My boy was by my side, so slim
 And graceful in his rustic dress!
 And oftentimes I talked to him,
 In very idleness. 20

The young lambs ran a pretty race;
 The morning sun shone bright and warm;
 'Kilve,' said I, 'was a pleasant place,
 And so is Liswyn farm.

My little boy, which like you more,
 I said and took him by the arm—
 'Our home by Kilve's delightful shore,
 Or here at Liswyn farm?'

'And tell me, had you rather be,'
 I said and held him by the arm, 30
 'At Kilve's smooth shore by the green sea,
 Or here at Liswyn farm?'

In careless mood he looked at me,
 While still I held him by the arm,
 And said, 'At Kilve I'd rather be
 Than here at Liswyn farm.'

'Now, little Edward, say why so;
 My little Edward, tell me why;' 40
 'I cannot tell, I do not know.'
 'Why this is strange,' said I.

'For, here are woods and green-hills warm;
 There surely must some reason be
 Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
 For Kilve by the green sea.'

At this, my boy, so fair and slim,
 Hung down his head, nor made reply;
 And five times did I say to him,
 'Why? Edward, tell me why?'

His head he raised—there was in sight,
 It caught his eye, he saw it plain— 50
 Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
 A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
 And thus to me he made reply;
 'At Kilve there was no weather-cock,
 And that's the reason why.'

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

60

We Are Seven

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

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

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

10

'Sisters and brothers, little maid,
 How many may you be?'
 'How many? seven in all,' she said,
 And wondering looked at me.

'And where are they, I pray you tell?'
 She answered, 'Seven are we,
 And two of us at Conway dwell,
 And two are gone to sea.

20

Two of us in the church-yard lie,
 My sister and my brother,
 And in the church-yard cottage, I
 Dwell near them with my mother.'

'You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet you are seven; I pray you tell
Sweet Maid, how this may be?'

Then did the little Maid reply,
'Seven boys and girls are we; 30
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.'

'You run about, my little maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five.'

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

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

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

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

So in the church-yard she was laid,
And all the summer dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

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

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

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

Lines Written in Early Spring

I heard a thousand blended notes,
 While in a grove I sate reclined,
 In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

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

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

10

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

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

20

If I these thoughts may not prevent,
 If such be of my creed the plan,
 Have I not reason to lament
 What man has made of man?

The Thorn

There is a thorn; it looks so old,
 In truth you'd find it hard to say,
 How it could ever have been young,
 It looks so old and grey.

Not higher than a two-years' child,
 It stands erect this aged thorn;
 No leaves it has, no thorny points;
 It is a mass of knotted joints,
 A wretched thing forlorn.

It stands erect, and like a stone
 With lichens it is overgrown.

10

Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown
 With lichens to the very top,
 And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
 A melancholy crop:

Up from the earth these mosses creep,
 And this poor thorn they clasp it round
 So close, you'd say that they were bent
 With plain and manifest intent,
 To drag it to the ground;
 And all had joined in one endeavour
 To bury this poor thorn for ever.

20

High on a mountain's highest ridge,
 Where oft the stormy winter gale
 Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
 It sweeps from vale to vale;

Not five yards from the mountain-path,
 This thorn you on your left espy;
 And to the left, three yards beyond,
 You see a little muddy pond
 Of water, never dry;

30

I've measured it from side to side:
 'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

And close beside this aged thorn,
 There is a fresh and lovely sight,
 A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
 Just half a foot in height.

All lovely colours there you see,
 All colours that were ever seen,
 And mossy network too is there, 40
 As if by hand of lady fair
 The work had woven been,
 And cups, the darlings of the eye,
 So deep is their vermilion dye.

Ah me! what lovely tints are there!
 Of olive-green and scarlet bright,
 In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
 Green, red, and pearly white.
 This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
 Which close beside the thorn you see, 50
 So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
 Is like an infant's grave in size
 As like as like can be:
 But never, never any where,
 An infant's grave was half so fair.

Now would you see this aged thorn,
 This pond and beauteous hill of moss,
 You must take care and chuse your time
 The mountain when to cross. 60
 For oft there sits, between the heap
 That's like an infant's grave in size,
 And that same pond of which I spoke,
 A woman in a scarlet cloak,
 And to herself she cries,
 'Oh misery! oh misery!
 Oh woe is me! oh misery!'

At all times of the day and night
 This wretched woman thither goes,
 And she is known to every star,
 And every wind that blows; 70
 And there beside the thorn she sits
 When the blue day-light's in the skies,
 And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
 Or frosty air is keen and still,
 And to herself she cries,
 'Oh misery! oh misery!
 Oh woe is me! oh misery!'

'Now wherefore thus, by day and night,
 In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
 Thus to the dreary mountain-top 80
 Does this poor woman go?
 And why sits she beside the thorn
 When the blue day-light's in the sky,
 Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,
 Or frosty air is keen and still,
 And wherefore does she cry?
 Oh wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
 Does she repeat that doleful cry?'

I cannot tell; I wish I could;
 For the true reason no one knows, 90
 But if you'd gladly view the spot,
 The spot to which she goes;
 The heap that's like an infant's grave,
 The pond—and thorn, so old and grey,
 Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
 And if you see her in her hut,
 Then to the spot away!—
 I never heard of such as dare
 Approach the spot when she is there.

'But wherefore to the mountain-top 100
 Can this unhappy woman go,
 Whatever star is in the skies,
 Whatever wind may blow?'
 Nay rack your brain—'tis all in vain,
 I'll tell you every thing I know;
 But to the thorn, and to the pond
 Which is a little step beyond,
 I wish that you would go:
 Perhaps when you are at the place
 You something of her tale may trace. 110

I'll give you the best help I can:
 Before you up the mountain go,
 Up to the dreary mountain-top,
 I'll tell you all I know.
 'Tis now some two and twenty years,
 Since she (her name is Martha Ray)

Gave with a maiden's true good will
 Her company to Stephen Hill;
 And she was blithe and gay,
 And she was happy, happy still
 Whene'er she thought of Stephen Hill. 120

And they had fixed the wedding-day,
 The morning that must wed them both;
 But Stephen to another maid
 Had sworn another oath;
 And with this other maid to church
 Unthinking Stephen went—
 Poor Martha! on that woful day
 A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
 Into her bones was sent: 130
 It dried her body like a cinder,
 And almost turned her brain to tinder.

They say, full six months after this,
 While yet the summer-leaves were green,
 She to the mountain-top would go,
 And there was often seen.
 'Tis said, a child was in her womb,
 As now to any eye was plain;
 She was with child, and she was mad,
 Yet often she was sober sad
 From her exceeding pain. 140
 Oh me! ten thousand times I'd rather
 That he had died, that cruel father!

Sad case for such a brain to hold
 Communion with a stirring child!
 Sad case, as you may think, for one
 Who had a brain so wild!
 Last Christmas when we talked of this,
 Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
 That in her womb the infant wrought
 About its mother's heart, and brought
 Her senses back again: 150
 And when at last her time drew near,
 Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

No more I know, I wish I did,
 And I would tell it all to you;
 For what became of this poor child
 There's none that ever knew:
 And if a child was born or no,
 There's no one that could ever tell; 160
 And if 'twas born alive or dead,
 There's no one knows, as I have said,
 But some remember well,
 That Martha Ray about this time
 Would up the mountain often climb.

And all that winter, when at night
 The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
 'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
 The church-yard path to seek:
 For many a time and oft were heard 170
 Cries coming from the mountain-head,
 Some plainly living voices were,
 And others, I've heard many swear,
 Were voices of the dead:
 I cannot think, whate'er they say,
 They had to do with Martha Ray.

But that she goes to this old thorn,
 The thorn which I've described to you,
 And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
 I will be sworn is true. 180
 For one day with my telescope,
 To view the ocean wide and bright,
 When to this country first I came,
 Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
 I climbed the mountain's height:
 A storm came on, and I could see
 No object higher than my knee.

'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain,
 No screen, no fence could I discover,
 And then the wind! in faith, it was 190
 A wind full ten times over.
 I looked around, I thought I saw
 A jutting crag, and off I ran,

Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain,
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A woman seated on the ground.

I did not speak—I saw her face,
Her face it was enough for me; 200
I turned about and heard her cry,
‘O misery! O misery!’
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go,
And when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders and you hear her cry,
‘Oh misery! oh misery!’

‘But what’s the thorn? and what’s the pond?
210
And what’s the hill of moss to her?
And what’s the creeping breeze that comes
The little pond to stir?’
I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree,
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond,
But all and each agree,
The little babe was buried there,
220
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

I’ve heard the scarlet moss is red
With drops of that poor infant’s blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus!
I do not think she could.
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby’s face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene’er you look on it, ’tis plain 230
The baby looks at you again.

And some had sworn an oath that she
 Should be to public justice brought;
 And for the little infant's bones
 With spades they would have sought.
 But then the beauteous hill of moss
 Before their eyes began to stir;
 And for full fifty yards around,
 The grass it shook upon the ground;
 But all do still aver
 The little babe is buried there,
 Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

240

I cannot tell how this may be,
 But plain it is, the thorn is bound
 With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
 To drag it to the ground.
 And this I know, full many a time,
 When she was on the mountain high,
 By day, and in the silent night,
 When all the stars shone clear and bright,
 That I have heard her cry,
 'Oh misery! oh misery!
 O woe is me! oh misery!'

250

The Last of the Flock

In distant countries I have been,
 And yet I have not often seen
 A healthy man, a man full grown,
 Weep in the public roads alone.
 But such a one, on English ground,
 And in the broad high-way, I met;
 Along the broad high-way he came,
 His cheeks with tears were wet:
 Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
 And in his arms a lamb he had.

10

He saw me, and he turned aside,
 As if he wished himself to hide:
 Then with his coat he made essay
 To wipe those briny tears away.

I followed him, and said, 'My friend,
What ails you? wherefore weep you so?'
—'Shame on me, Sir! this lusty lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock;
He is the last of all my flock. 20

When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, a ewe I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year encreased my store. 30

Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As sweet a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the mountain did they feed;
They throve, and we at home did thrive:
—This lusty lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive:
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty. 40

Ten children, Sir! had I to feed,
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the parish asked relief.
They said I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the mountain fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread:
"Do this: how can we give to you,"
They cried, "what to the poor is due?" 50

I sold a sheep as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;

For me it never did me good.
 A woeful time it was for me,
 To see the end of all my gains,
 The pretty flock which I had reared
 With all my care and pains,
 To see it melt like snow away!
 For me it was a woeful day. 60

Another still! and still another!
 A little lamb, and then its mother!
 It was a vein that never stopped,
 Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
 Till thirty were not left alive
 They dwindled, dwindled, one by one,
 And I may say that many a time
 I wished they all were gone:
 They dwindled one by one away;
 For me it was a woeful day. 70

To wicked deeds I was inclined,
 And wicked fancies crossed my mind,
 And every man I chanced to see,
 I thought he knew some ill of me.
 No peace, no comfort could I find,
 No ease, within doors or without,
 And crazily, and wearily,
 I went my work about.
 Oft-times I thought to run away;
 For me it was a woeful day. 80

Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me,
 As dear as my own children be;
 For daily with my growing store
 I loved my children more and more.
 Alas! it was an evil time;
 God cursed me in my sore distress,
 I prayed, yet every day I thought
 I loved my children less;
 And every week, and every day,
 My flock, it seemed to melt away. 90

They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
 From ten to five, from five to three,
 A lamb, a weather, and a ewe;
 And then at last, from three to two;
 And of my fifty, yesterday
 I had but only one,
 And here it lies upon my arm,
 Alas! and I have none;
 To-day I fetched it from the rock;
 It is the last of all my flock.'

100

The Idiot Boy

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
 The moon is up—the sky is blue,
 The owlet in the moonlight air,
 He shouts from nobody knows where;
 He lengthens out his lonely shout,
 Halloo! halloo! a long halloo!

—Why bustle thus about your door,
 What means this bustle, Betty Foy?
 Why are you in this mighty fret?
 And why on horseback have you set
 Him whom you love, your idiot boy?

10

Beneath the moon that shines so bright,
 Till she is tired, let Betty Foy
 With girt and stirrup fiddle-faddle;
 But wherefore set upon a saddle
 Him whom she loves, her idiot boy?

There's scarce a soul that's out of bed;
 Good Betty! put him down again;
 His lips with joy they burr at you,
 But, Betty! what has he to do
 With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?

20

The world will say 'tis very idle,
 Bethink you of the time of night;
 There's not a mother, no not one,
 But when she hears what you have done,
 Oh! Betty she'll be in a fright.

But Betty's bent on her intent,
 For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
 Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
 Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
 As if her very life would fail.

30

There's not a house within a mile,
 No hand to help them in distress:
 Old Susan lies a bed in pain,
 And sorely puzzled are the twain,
 For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband's at the wood,
 Where by the week he doth abide,
 A woodman in the distant vale;
 There's none to help poor Susan Gale,
 What must be done? what will betide?

40

And Betty from the lane has fetched
 Her pony, that is mild and good,
 Whether he be in joy or pain,
 Feeding at will along the lane,
 Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,
 And by the moonlight, Betty Foy
 Has up upon the saddle set,
 The like was never heard of yet,
 Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.

50

And he must post without delay
 Across the bridge that's in the dale,
 And by the church, and o'er the down,
 To bring a doctor from the town,
 Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand,
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a hurly-burly now
He shakes the green bough in his hand: 60

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The boy who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, 'Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,
Come home again, whate'er befall,
My Johnny do, I pray you do.' 70

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head, and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too,
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the pony's side,
On which her idiot boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry. 80

But when the pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor idiot boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left-hand you may see,
The green bough's motionless and dead;
The moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he. 90

His heart it was so full of glee,
 That till full fifty yards were gone,
 He quite forgot his holly whip,
 And all his skill in horsemanship,
 Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And Betty's standing at the door,
 And Betty's face with joy o'erflows,
 Proud of herself, and proud of him,
 She sees him in his travelling trim;
 How quietly her Johnny goes.

100

The silence of her idiot boy,
 What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
 He's at the guide-post—he turns right,
 She watches till he's out of sight,
 And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
 As loud as any mill, or near it,
 Meek as a lamb the pony moves,
 And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
 And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

110

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
 And Johnny's in a merry tune,
 The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
 And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
 And on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree,
 For of this pony there's a rumour,
 That should he lose his eyes and ears,
 And should he live a thousand years,
 He never will be out of humour.

120

But then he is a horse that thinks!
 And when he thinks his pace is slack;
 Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
 Yet for his life he cannot tell
 What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale. 130

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What comfort Johnny soon will bring,
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit and Johnny's glory.

And Betty's still at Susan's side:
By this time she's not quite so flurried;
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate 140
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more,
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well,
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears, 150
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
'As sure as there's a moon in heaven,'
Cries Betty, 'he'll be back again;
They'll both be here, 'tis almost ten,
They'll both be here before eleven.'

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans,
The clock gives warning for eleven;
'Tis on the stroke—'If Johnny's near,'
Quoth Betty 'he will soon be here, 160
As sure as there's a moon in heaven.'

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
 And Johnny is not yet in sight,
 The moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
 But Betty is not quite at ease;
 And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
 On Johnny vile reflections cast;
 'A little idle sauntering thing!' 170
 With other names, an endless string,
 But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
 That happy time all past and gone,
 'How can it be he is so late?
 The doctor he has made him wait,
 Susan! they'll both be here anon.'

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
 And Betty's in a sad quandary;
 And then there's nobody to say 180
 If she must go or she must stay:
 —She's in a sad quandary.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
 But neither Doctor nor his guide
 Appear along the moonlight road,
 There's neither horse nor man abroad,

And Betty's still at Susan's side.
 And Susan she begins to fear
 Of sad mischances not a few,
 That Johnny may perhaps be drowned,
 Or lost perhaps, and never found; 190
 Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
 With, 'God forbid it should be true!'
 At the first word that Susan said
 Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
 'Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.'

I must be gone, I must away,
 Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
 Susan, we must take care of him,
 If he is hurt in life or limb'—
 'Oh God forbid!' poor Susan cries. 200

'What can I do?' says Betty, going,
 'What can I do to ease your pain?
 Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay;
 I fear you're in a dreadful way,
 But I shall soon be back again.'

'Good Betty go, good Betty go,
 There's nothing that can ease my pain.'
 Then off she hies, but with a prayer
 That God poor Susan's life would spare,
 Till she comes back again. 210

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
 And far into the moonlight dale;
 And how she ran, and how she walked,
 And all that to herself she talked,
 Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
 In great and small, in round and square,
 In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
 In bush and brake, in black and green,
 'Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where. 220

She's past the bridge that's in the dale,
 And now the thought torments her sore,
 Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
 To hunt the moon that's in the brook,
 And never will be heard of more.

And now she's high upon the down,
 Alone amid a prospect wide;
 There's neither Johnny nor his horse,
 Among the fern or in the gorse;
 There's neither doctor nor his guide. 230

‘Oh saints! what is become of him?
 Perhaps he’s climbed into an oak,
 Where he will stay till he is dead;
 Or sadly he has been misled,
 And joined the wandering gypsey-folk.

Or him that wicked pony’s carried
 To the dark cave, the goblins’ hall,
 Or in the castle he’s pursuing,
 Among the ghosts, his own undoing; 240
 Or playing with the waterfall.’

At poor old Susan then she railed,
 While to the town she posts away;
 ‘If Susan had not been so ill,
 Alas! I should have had him still,
 My Johnny, till my dying day.’

Poor Betty! in this sad distemper,
 The doctor’s self would hardly spare,
 Unworthy things she talked and wild,
 Even he, of cattle the most mild, 250
 The pony had his share.

And now she’s got into the town,
 And to the doctor’s door she hies;
 ’Tis silence all on every side;
 The town so long, the town so wide,
 Is silent as the skies.

And now she’s at the doctor’s door,
 She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap,
 The doctor at the casement shews,
 His glimmering eyes that peep and doze; 260
 And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

‘Oh Doctor! Doctor! where’s my Johnny?’
 ‘I’m here, what is’t you want with me?’
 ‘Oh Sir! you know I’m Betty Foy,
 And I have lost my poor dear boy,
 You know him—him you often see;

He's not so wise as some folks be,
'The devil take his wisdom!' said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
'What, woman! should I know of him?' 270
And, grumbling, he went back to bed.

'O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my Johnny here,
But he is neither far nor near,
Oh! what a wretched mother I!'

She stops, she stands, she looks about,
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again; 280
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail,
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road,
'Oh cruel! I'm almost three-score;
Such night as this was ne'er before, 290
There's not a single soul abroad.'

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers, yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob. 300
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
 Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin;
 A green-grown pond she just has passed,
 And from the brink she hurries fast,
 Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
 Such tears she never shed before;
 'O dear, dear pony! my sweet joy!
 Oh carry back my idiot boy! 310
 And we will ne'er o'erload thee more.'

A thought is come into her head;
 'The pony he is mild and good,
 And we have always used him well;
 Perhaps he's gone along the dell,
 And carried Johnny to the wood.'

Then up she springs as if on wings;
 She thinks no more of deadly sin;
 If Betty fifty ponds should see,
 The last of all her thoughts would be, 320
 To drown herself therein.

Oh reader! now that I might tell
 What Johnny and his horse are doing!
 What they've been doing all this time,
 Oh could I put it into rhyme,
 A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
 He with his pony now doth roam
 The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
 To lay his hands upon a star, 330
 And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
 His face unto his horse's tail,
 And still and mute, in wonder lost,
 All like a silent horseman-ghost,
 He travels on along the vale.

And now, perhaps, he's hunting sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he!
Yon valley, that's so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be. 340

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so he'll gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil.

I to the muses have been bound,
These fourteen years, by strong indentures;
Oh gentle muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befel,
For sure he met with strange adventures. 350

Oh gentle muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me?
Ye muses! whom I love so well.

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse? 360

Unto his horse, that's feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read,
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very pony too.
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring water-fall she hears,
And cannot find her idiot boy. 370

Your pony's worth his weight in gold,
 Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
 She's coming from among the trees,
 And now, all full in view, she sees
 Him whom she loves, her idiot boy.

And Betty sees the pony too:
 Why stand you thus Good Betty Foy?
 It is not goblin, 'tis no ghost,
 'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
 He whom you love, your idiot boy.

380

She looks again—her arms are up—
 She screams—she cannot move for joy;
 She darts as with a torrent's force,
 She almost has o'erturned the horse,
 And fast she holds her idiot boy.

And Johnny burrs and laughs aloud,
 Whether in cunning or in joy,
 I cannot tell; but while he laughs,
 Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs,
 To hear again her idiot boy.

390

And now she's at the pony's tail,
 And now she's at the pony's head,
 On that side now, and now on this,
 And almost stifled with her bliss,
 A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again,
 Him whom she loves, her idiot boy,
 She's happy here, she's happy there,
 She is uneasy every where;
 Her limbs are all alive with joy.

400

She pats the pony, where or when
 She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
 The little pony glad may be,
 But he is milder far than she,
 You hardly can perceive his joy.

'Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
You've done your best, and that is all.'
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the pony's head
From the loud water-fall. 410

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The pony, Betty, and her boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale:
And who is she, be-times abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale? 420

Long Susan lay deep lost in thought,
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her messenger and nurse;
And as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better. 430

'Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured,
I'll to the wood.'—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she posts up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come,
She spies her friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting,
As ever was in Christendom. 440

The owls have hardly sung their last,
 While our four travellers homeward wend;
 The owls have hooted all night long,
 And with the owls began my song,
 And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
 Cried Betty, 'Tell us Johnny, do,
 Where all this long night you have been,
 What you have heard, what you have seen, 450
 And Johnny, mind you tell us true.'

Now Johnny all night long had heard
 The owls in tuneful concert strive;
 No doubt too he the moon had seen;
 For in the moonlight he had been
 From eight o'clock till five.

And thus to Betty's question, he
 Made answer, like a traveller bold,
 (His very words I give to you,
 'The cocks did crow to-who, to-who, 460
 And the sun did shine so cold.'
 —Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
 And that was all his travel's story.

Expostulation and Reply

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

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

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

One morning thus, by Esthwaite Lake,^o
 When life was sweet I knew not why,
 To me my good friend Matthew spake,
 And thus I made reply.

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

20

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

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

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

30

The Tables Turned

AN EVENING SCENE, ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks,
 Why all this toil and trouble?
 Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
 Or surely you'll grow double.

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

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

10

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
 And he is no mean preacher;
 Come forth into the light of things,
 Let Nature be your teacher.

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

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

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

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

Old Man Travelling

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY, A SKETCH

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

With envy, what the old man hardly feels.
 —I asked him whither he was bound, and what
 The object of his journey; he replied
 ‘Sir! I am going many miles to take
 A last leave of my son, a mariner,
 Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,
 And there is dying in an hospital.’ 20

Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR, JULY 13, 1798

Five years have passed; five summers, with the length^o
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
 With a sweet inland murmur.—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
 Which on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
 Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Among the woods and copses lose themselves,
 Nor, with their green and simple hue, disturb
 The wild green landscape. Once again I see
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
 Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms
 Green to the very door; and wreathes of smoke^o
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees,
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem, 20
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
 Or of some hermit’s cave, where by his fire
 The hermit sits alone.

Though absent long,
 These forms of beauty have not been to me,^o
 As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye:
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,

In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
 And passing even into my purer mind 30
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
 Of unremembered pleasure; such, perhaps,
 As may have had no trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life;
 His little, nameless, unremembered acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery, 40
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world
 Is lightened: that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.°

If this

50

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft,
 In darkness, and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless day-light; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee
 O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!
 And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint, 60
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts°
 That in this moment there is life and food
 For future years. And so I dare to hope

Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first^o
 I came among these hills; when like a roe
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams, 70
 Wherever nature led; more like a man
 Flying from something that he dreads, than one
 Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,^o
 And their glad animal movements all gone by,)
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
 What then I was. The sounding cataract
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me 80
 An appetite: a feeling and a love,
 That had no need of a remoter charm,
 By thought supplied, or any interest
 Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
 And all its aching joys are now no more,
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
 Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompence. For I have learned 90
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity,
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,^o
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean, and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man, 100
 A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,
 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.^o

And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
 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. 110

Nor, perchance,
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
 For thou art with me, here, upon the banks
 Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
 My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
 The language of my former heart, and read
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
 May I behold in thee what I was once,
 My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make,
 Knowing that Nature never did betray
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform
 The mind that is within us, so impress
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,^o
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
 Our chearful faith that all which we behold
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
 And let the misty mountain winds be free
 To blow against thee: and in after years,
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
 Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh! then,
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me, 120
 130
 140

And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,
If I should be, where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, wilt thou then forget 150
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love, oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves, and for thy sake. 160

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FROM *LYRICAL BALLADS* (1800)

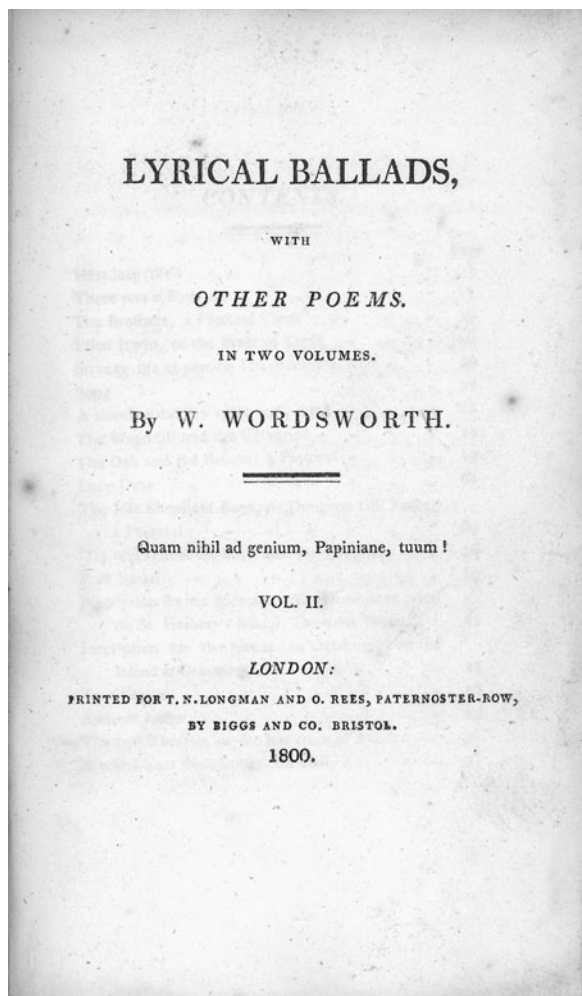


FIG. 2 Title-page of second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800).

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Preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral
and Other Poems* (1800 and 1802)

The first Volume of these Poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was published, as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a Poet may rationally endeavour to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those Poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure: and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that I have pleased a greater number, than I ventured to hope I should please.

For the sake of variety, and from a consciousness of my own weakness, I was induced to request the assistance of a Friend, who furnished me with the Poems of the ANCIENT MARINER, the FOSTER-MOTHER'S TALE, the NIGHTINGALE, and the Poem entitled LOVE. I should not, however, have requested this assistance, had I not believed that the Poems of my Friend would in a great measure have the same tendency as my own, and that, though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance in the colours of our style; as our opinions on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide.

Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realized, a class of Poetry would be produced, well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the multiplicity, and in the quality of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence of the theory, upon which the poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, because I knew that on this occasion the Reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular Poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display my opinions, and fully to enforce my arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to the nature of a preface. For to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence, of

which I believe it susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, would not be determined, without pointing out, in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defence; yet I am sensible, that there would be some impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the Public, without a few words of introduction, Poems so materially different from those, upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprizes the Reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different aeras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which by the act of writing in verse an Author, in the present day, makes to his Reader; but I am certain, it will appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. [They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title.] I hope therefore the Reader will not censure me, if I attempt to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also, (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappointment, and that I myself may be protected from the most dishonourable accusation which can be brought against an Author, namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavouring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, which I proposed to myself in these Poems was to [chuse incidents and situations from common life, and

to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men; and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual way; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting] by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended; and are more durable; and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men is adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets, who think that they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.*

I cannot, however, be insensible of the present outcry against the triviality and meanness both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is

* It is worth while here to observe that the affecting parts of Chaucer are almost always expressed in language pure and universally intelligible even to this day.

more dishonourable to the Writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the Poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I mean to say, that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If in this opinion I am mistaken, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a healthful state of association, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections ameliorated.

I have said that each of these poems has a purpose. I have also informed my Reader what this purpose will be found principally to be: namely, to illustrate the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement. But, speaking in language somewhat more appropriate, it is to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature. This object I have endeavoured in these short essays to attain by various means; by tracing the maternal passion through many of its more subtle windings, as in the poems of the IDIOT BOY and the MAD MOTHER; by accompanying the last struggles of a human being, at the approach of death, cleaving in solitude to life and society, as in the Poem of the FORSAKEN INDIAN; by showing, as in the Stanzas entitled WE ARE SEVEN, the perplexity and obscurity which in childhood attend our notion of death, or rather our utter inability to admit that notion; or by displaying the strength of fraternal,

or to speak more philosophically, of moral attachment when early associated with the great and beautiful objects of nature, as in *THE BROTHERS*; or, as in the Incident of *SIMON LEE*, by placing my Reader in the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensations another and more salutary impression than we are accustomed to receive from them. It has also been part of my general purpose to attempt to sketch characters under the influence of less impassioned feelings, as in *TWO APRIL MORNINGS*, *THE FOUNTAIN*, *THE OLD MAN TRAVELLING*, *THE TWO THIEVES*, &c. characters of which the elements are simple, belonging rather to nature than to manners, such as exist now, and will probably always exist, and which from their constitution may be distinctly and profitably contemplated. I will not abuse the indulgence of my Reader by dwelling longer upon this subject; but it is proper that I should mention one other circumstance which distinguishes these Poems from the popular Poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling. My meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible by referring my Reader to the Poems entitled *POOR SUSAN* and the *CHILDLESS FATHER*, particularly to the last Stanza of the latter Poem.

I will not suffer a sense of false modesty to prevent me from asserting, that I point my Reader's attention to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular Poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavour to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a Writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed

themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespear and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble effort with which I have endeavoured to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and did I not further add to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these Poems, I shall request the Reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style*, in order, among other reasons, that I may not be censured for not having performed what I never attempted. [The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and, I hope, are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. I have proposed to myself to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but I have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription.] I have wished to keep my Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. I am, however, well aware that others who pursue a different track may interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, I only wish to prefer a different claim of my own. There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; I have taken as much pains to avoid it as others ordinarily take to produce it; this I have done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. I do not know how, without being culpably particular, I can give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which I wished these poems to be written than by

informing him that I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject, consequently, I hope that there is in these Poems little falsehood of description, and that my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something I must have gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely good sense; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of Poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad Poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a Poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of metre, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics, who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the Poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the Reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these volumes. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. I have not space for much quotation; but, to illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt Prose and Metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
 And reddening Phoebus lifts his golden fire:
 The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
 Or chearful fields resume their green attire.
 These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;

*My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
 And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain.
 I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
 And weep the more because I weep in vain.*

It will easily be perceived that the only part of this Sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in Italics: it is equally obvious, that, except in the rhyme, and in the use of the single word 'fruitless' for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

[By the foregoing quotation I have shewn that the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and I have previously asserted that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose. I will go further. I do not doubt that it may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.] We are fond of tracing the resemblance between Poetry and Painting, and, accordingly, we call them Sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing even in degree; Poetry* sheds no tears 'such as Angels weep,' but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial Ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what I have been saying on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the

* I here use the word 'Poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Prose, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Matter of Fact, or Science. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre; nor is this, in truth, a strict antithesis; because lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, [I answer that the language of such Poetry as I am recommending is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if metre be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments; for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the Poems I now present to the Reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of the highest importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labour is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, I would remind such persons that, whatever may be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest Poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing, and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, I ask what is meant by the word Poet? What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man

speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than any thing which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But, whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him, must, in liveliness and truth, fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself. However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him, by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle on which I have so much insisted, namely, that of selection; on this he will depend for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which his fancy

or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who deems himself justified when he substitutes excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of Poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for Poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for Rope-dancing, or Frontinac or Sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, hath said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who has an adequate notion of the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the Poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere, because it is not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by

pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathize with pain it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The Man of Science, the Chemist and Mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the Anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions which by habit become of the nature of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which without any other discipline than that of our daily life we are fitted to take delight, the Poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature. And thus the Poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature with affections akin to those, which, through labour and length of time, the Man of Science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the Poet and the Man of Science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and unalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The Man of Science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the coun-

tenance of all Science. Emphatically may it be said of the Poet, as Shakespeare hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence of human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying every where with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are every where; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present, but he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the Science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective Sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called Science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the Poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.—It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of Poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavour to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What I have thus far said applies to Poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the Poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to have such weight that I will conclude, there are few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of

nature, and are coloured by a diction of the Poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual Poet, or belonging simply to Poets in general, to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in metre, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the Poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring my Reader to the description which I have before given of a Poet. Among the qualities which I have enumerated as principally conducing to form a Poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what I have there said is, that the Poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sun-shine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the Poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of the passions of men. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the Poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But Poets do not write for Poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which depends upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the Poet must descend from this supposed height, and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to metre; for, as it may be proper to remind the Reader,] the

distinction of metre is regular and uniform, and not like that which is produced by what is usually called poetic diction, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the Reader is utterly at the mercy of the Poet respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion, whereas, in the other, the metre obeys certain laws, to which the Poet and Reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what I have already said, I reply in the first place: because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse, the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature, from which I am at liberty to supply myself with endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why am I to be condemned, if to such description I have endeavoured to superadd the charm which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are unconvinced by what I have already said, it may be answered, that a very small part of the pleasure given by Poetry depends upon the metre, and that it is injudicious to write in metre, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which metre is usually accompanied, and that by such deviation more will be lost from the shock which will be thereby given to the Reader's associations, than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying metre with certain appropriate colours of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly under-rate the power of metre in itself, it might perhaps, as far as relates to these Poems, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a more naked and simple style than I have aimed at, which poems have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present

day; and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But I might point out various causes why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who is sensible of the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of Poetry is to produce excitement in co-existence with an over-balance of pleasure. Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order. But, if the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, [and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true, and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language in a certain degree of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rhyme, than in prose. The metre of the old Ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion, and, I hope, if the following Poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found in them.] This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of *Clarissa Harlowe*, or the *Gamester*. While Shakespeare's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us as pathetic beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.—On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen) if the Poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the Reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the Poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudi-

scious) in the feelings of pleasure which the Reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether chearful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the Poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a systematic defence of the theory upon which these poems are written, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; I mean the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not have been a useless employment to have applied this principle to the consideration of metre, and to have shown that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to have pointed out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, from various causes is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will upon the whole be in a state of enjoyment. Now, if Nature be thus cautious in preserving in a state of enjoyment a being thus employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson thus held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that whatever passions he communicates to his Reader, those passions, if his Reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure.

Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rhyme or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely, all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling which will always be found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the Reader. I might perhaps include all which it is *necessary* to say upon this subject by affirming, what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once. We see that Pope, by the power of verse alone, has contrived to render the plainest common sense interesting, and even frequently to invest it with the appearance of passion. In consequence of these convictions I related in metre the Tale of GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL, which is one of the rudest of this collection. I wished to draw attention to the truth, that the power of the human imagination is sufficient to produce such changes even in our physical nature as might almost appear miraculous. The truth is an important one; the fact (for it is a *fact*) is a valuable illustration of it. And I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been communicated to many hundreds of people who would never have heard of it, had it not been narrated as a Ballad, and in a more impressive metre than is usual in Ballads.

Having thus explained a few of the reasons why I have written in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and it is for this reason that I request the Reader's permission to add a few words with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, sometimes from diseased impulses I may have written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this

account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt, that, in some instances, feelings even of the ludicrous may be given to my Readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an Author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support, and, if he sets them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind loses all confidence in itself, and becomes utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the Reader ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the Poet, and perhaps in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying, that it is not probable he will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and above all, since he is so much less interested in the subject, he may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as I have detained my Reader, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to Poetry in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen.

‘I put my hat upon my head,
And walk'd into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.’

Immediately under these lines I will place one of the most justly admired stanzas of *‘The Babes in the Wood.’*

‘These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town.’

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are

words in both, for example, 'the Strand,' and 'the Town,' connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the metre, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, 'This is a bad kind of poetry,' or 'This is not poetry;' but 'This wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to any thing interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader.' This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

I have one request to make of my Reader, which is, that in judging these Poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, 'I myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but to such and such classes of people it will appear mean or ludicrous.' This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal: I have therefore to request, that the Reader would abide independently by his own feelings, and that if he finds himself affected he would not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an Author by any single composition has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that, on other occasions where we have been displeased, he nevertheless may not have written ill or absurdly; and, further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce in a high degree to the improvement of our own taste: for an *accurate* taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced Reader from judging for himself, (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself;) but merely to temper the rashness of decision,

and to suggest, that, if Poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

I know that nothing would have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shewn of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavoured to recommend: for the Reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what can I do more for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if I propose to furnish him with new friends, it is only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the Reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of Poetry; and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honorable bigotry for the objects which have long continued to please them; we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is a host of arguments in these feelings; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the Poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, I might have removed many obstacles, and assisted my Reader in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible that poetry may give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of my subject I have not altogether neglected; but it has been less my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, than to offer reasons for presuming, that, if the object which I have proposed to myself were adequately attained, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the Poems, the Reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I have proposed to myself: he will determine how far I have attained this object; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining: and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the public.

Appendix to the Preface (1802)

As perhaps I have no right to expect from a Reader of an Introduction to a volume of Poems that attentive perusal without which it is impossible, imperfectly as I have been compelled to express my meaning, that what I have said in the Preface should throughout be fully understood, I am the more anxious to give an exact notion of the sense in which I use the phrase *poetic diction*; and for this purpose I will here add a few words concerning the origin of the phraseology which I have condemned under that name.—The earliest Poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language, and desirous of producing the same effect, without having the same animating passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of those figures of speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and ideas with which they had no natural connection whatsoever. A language was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men in *any situation*. The Reader or Hearer of this distorted language found himself in a perturbed and unusual state of mind: when affected by the genuine language of passion he had been in a perturbed and unusual state of mind also: in both cases he was willing that his common judgment and understanding should be laid asleep, and he had no instinctive and infallible perception of the true to make him reject the false; the one served as a passport for the other. The agitation and confusion of mind were in both cases delightful, and no wonder if he confounded the one with the other, and believed them both to be produced by the same, or similar causes. Besides, the Poet spake to him in the character of a man to be looked up to, a man of genius and authority. Thus, and from a variety of other causes, this distorted language was received with admiration; and Poets, it is probable, who had before contented themselves for the most part with misapplying only expressions which at first had been dictated by real passion, carried the abuse still further, and introduced phrases composed apparently in the spirit of the original figurative language of

passion, yet altogether of their own invention, and distinguished by various degrees of wanton deviation from good sense and nature.

It is indeed true that the language of the earliest Poets was felt to differ materially from ordinary language, because it was the language of extraordinary occasions; but it was really spoken by men, language which the Poet himself had uttered when he had been affected by the events which he described, or which he had heard uttered by those around him. To this language it is probable that metre of some sort or other was early superadded. This separated the genuine language of Poetry still further from common life, so that whoever read or heard the poems of these earliest Poets felt himself moved in a way in which he had not been accustomed to be moved in real life, and by causes manifestly different from those which acted upon him in real life. This was the great temptation to all the corruptions which have followed: under the protection of this feeling succeeding Poets constructed a phraseology which had one thing, it is true, in common with the genuine language of poetry, namely, that it was not heard in ordinary conversation; that it was unusual. But the first Poets, as I have said, spake a language which, though unusual, was still the language of men. This circumstance, however, was disregarded by their successors; they found that they could please by easier means: they became proud of a language which they themselves had invented, and which was uttered only by themselves; and, with the spirit of a fraternity, they arrogated it to themselves as their own. In process of time metre became a symbol or promise of this unusual language, and whoever took upon him to write in metre, according as he possessed more or less of true poetic genius, introduced less or more of this adulterated phraseology into his compositions, and the true and the false became so inseparably interwoven that the taste of men was gradually perverted; and this language was received as a natural language; and at length, by the influence of books upon men, did to a certain degree really become so. Abuses of this kind were imported from one nation to another, and with the progress of refinement this diction became daily more and more corrupt, thrusting out of sight the plain humanities of nature by a motley masquerade of tricks, quaintnesses, hieroglyphics, and enigmas.

It would be highly interesting to point out the causes of the pleasure given by this extravagant and absurd language: but this is not the place; it depends upon a great variety of causes, but upon none perhaps more than its influence in impressing a notion of the peculiarity and exaltation of the Poet's character, and in flattering the

Reader's self-love by bringing him nearer to a sympathy with that character; an effect which is accomplished by unsettling ordinary habits of thinking, and thus assisting the Reader to approach to that perturbed and dizzy state of mind in which if he does not find himself, he imagines that he is *balked* of a peculiar enjoyment which poetry can, and ought to bestow.

The sonnet which I have quoted from Gray, in the Preface, except the lines printed in italics, consists of little else but this diction, though not of the worst kind; and indeed, if I may be permitted to say so, it is far too common in the best writers, both antient and modern. Perhaps I can in no way, by positive example, more easily give my Reader a notion of what I mean by the phrase *poetic diction* than by referring him to a comparison between the metrical paraphrases which we have of passages in the old and new Testament, and those passages as they exist in our common Translation. See Pope's 'Messiah' throughout, Prior's 'Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue,' &c. &c. 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,' &c. &c. See 1st Corinthians, chapter 13th. By way of immediate example, take the following of Dr. Johnson:

'Turn on the prudent Ant thy heedless eyes,
Observe her labours, Sluggard, and be wise;
No stern command, no monitory voice,
Prescribes her duties, or directs her choice;
Yet, timely provident, she hastes away
To snatch the blessings of a plenteous day;
When fruitful Summer loads the teeming plain,
She crops the harvest and she stores the grain.
How long shall sloth usurp thy useless hours,
Unnerve thy vigour, and enchain thy powers?
While artful shades thy downy couch enclose,
And soft solicitation courts repose,
Amidst the drowsy charms of dull delight,
Year chases year with unremitting flight,
Till want now following, fraudulent and slow,
Shall spring to seize thee, like an ambushed foe.'

From this hubbub of words pass to the original. 'Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a

little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man.' Proverbs, chap. 6th.

One more quotation and I have done. It is from Cowper's verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk:

'Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.
Ye winds, that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I must visit no more.
My Friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.'

I have quoted this passage as an instance of three different styles of composition. The first four lines are poorly expressed; some critics would call the language prosaic; the fact is, it would be bad prose, so bad, that it is scarcely worse in metre. The epithet 'church-going' applied to a bell, and that by so chaste a writer as Cowper, is an instance of the strange abuses which Poets have introduced into their language till they and their Readers take them as matters of course, if they do not single them out expressly as objects of admiration. The two lines 'Ne'er sighed at the sound,' &c. are, in my opinion, an instance of the language of passion wrested from its proper use, and, from the mere circumstance of the composition being in metre, applied upon an occasion that does not justify such violent expressions; and I should condemn the passage, though perhaps few Readers will agree with me, as vicious poetic diction. The last stanza is throughout admirably expressed: it would be equally good whether in prose or verse, except that the Reader has an exquisite pleasure in seeing such natural language so naturally connected with metre. The beauty of this stanza tempts me here to add a sentiment

which ought to be the pervading spirit of a system, detached parts of which have been imperfectly explained in the Preface,—namely, that in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or in verse, they require and exact one and the same language.

Hart-Leap Well

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

The Knight had ridden down from Wensley moor
 With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
 He turned aside towards a Vassal's door,
 And, 'Bring another Horse!' he cried aloud.

'Another Horse!'—That shout the Vassal heard,
 And saddled his best steed, a comely Grey;
 Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
 Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

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

10

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

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

20

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

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

The poor Hart toils along the mountain side;
 I will not stop to tell how far he fled, 30
 Nor will I mention by what death he died;
 But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

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

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
 Stood his dumb partner in this glorious act;
 Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned,
 And foaming like a mountain cataract. 40

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched:
 His nose half-touched a spring beneath a hill,
 And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
 The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
 Was never man in such a joyful case,
 Sir Walter walked all around, north, south and west,
 And gazed, and gazed upon that darling place.

And turning up the hill, it was at least
 Nine roods of sheer ascent, Sir Walter found 50
 Three several marks which with his hoofs the beast
 Had left imprinted on the verdant ground.

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

I'll build a Pleasure-house upon this spot,
 And a small Arbour, made for rural joy;
 'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot
 A place of love for damsels that are coy. 60

A cunning Artist will I have to frame
 A bason for that fountain in the dell;
 And they, who do make mention of the same,
 From this day forth, shall call it Hart-leap Well.

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

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

70

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

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
 With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
 And soon the Knight performed what he had said,
 The fame whereof through many a land did ring.

80

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

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

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

90

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

PART SECOND

The moving accident is not my trade,^o
 To curl the blood I have no ready arts;^o
 'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
 To pipe a simple song to thinking hearts. 100

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

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

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head;
 Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green; 110
 So that you just might say, as then
 I said, 'Here in old time the hand of man has been.'

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

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

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
 Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
 'A jolly place,' said he, 'in times of old,
 But something ails it now; the spot is cursed. 120

You see these lifeless stumps of aspin wood,
 Some say that they are beeches, others elms,
 These were the Bower; and here a Mansion stood,
 The finest palace of a hundred realms.

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

There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
 Will wet his lips within that cup of stone; 130
 And, oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
 This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

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

What thoughts must through the creature's brain have passed!
 To this place from the stone upon the steep
 Are but three bounds, and look, Sir, at this last!
 O Master! it has been a cruel leap. 140

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

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

In April here beneath the scented thorn
 He heard the birds their morning carols sing, 150
 And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
 Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

But now here's neither grass nor pleasant shade;
 The sun on drearier hollow never shone:
 So will it be, as I have often said,
 Till trees, and stones, and fountain all are gone.'

'Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
 Small difference lies between thy creed and mine;
 This beast not unobserved by Nature fell,
 His death was mourned by sympathy divine. 160

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

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

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

170

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

The Brothers, A Pastoral Poem

'These Tourists, Heaven preserve us! needs must live^o
A profitable life: some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as their summer lasted; some, as wise,
Upon the forehead of a jutting crag
Sit perched with book and pencil on their knee,
And look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn.
But, for that moping son of Idleness
Why can he tarry *yonder*?—In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tomb-stone nor name, only the turf we tread,
And a few natural graves.' To Jane, his Wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening, and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage, as it chanced that day,

10

Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone 20
 His Wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
 While, from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
 He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
 Who turned her large round wheel in the open air
 With back and forward steps. Towards the field
 In which the parish chapel stood alone,
 Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
 While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
 Many a long look of wonder, and at last,
 Risen from his seat, beside the snowy ridge 30
 Of carded wool which the old Man had piled
 He laid his implements with gentle care,
 Each in the other locked; and, down the path
 Which from his cottage to the church-yard led,
 He took his way, impatient to accost
 The Stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

'Twas one well known to him in former days,
 A Shepherd-lad: who ere his thirteenth year
 Had changed his calling, with the mariners
 A fellow-mariner, and so had fared 40
 Through twenty seasons; but he had been reared
 Among the mountains, and he in his heart
 Was half a Shepherd on the stormy seas.
 Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
 The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
 Of caves and trees; and when the regular wind
 Between the tropics filled the steady sail
 And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,
 Lengthening invisibly its weary line
 Along the cloudless main, he, in those hours 50
 Of tiresome indolence would often hang
 Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze,
 And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam^o
 Flashed round him images and hues, that wrought
 In union with the employment of his heart,
 He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
 Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
 Below him, in the bosom of the deep,

Saw mountains, saw the forms of sheep that grazed
 On verdant hills, with dwellings among trees, 60
 And Shepherds clad in the same country grey
 Which he himself had worn.

And now at length,
 From perils manifold, with some small wealth
 Acquired by traffic in the Indian Isles,
 To his paternal home he is returned,
 With a determined purpose to resume
 The life which he lived there, both for the sake
 Of many darling pleasures, and the love
 Which to an only brother he has borne
 In all his hardships, since that happy time 70
 When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
 Were brother Shepherds on their native hills.

—They were the last of all their race; and now,
 When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
 Failed in him, and, not venturing to inquire
 Tidings of one whom he so dearly loved,
 Towards the church-yard he had turned aside,
 That, as he knew in what particular spot
 His family were laid, he thence might learn 80
 If still his Brother lived, or to the file
 Another grave was added.—He had found
 Another grave, near which a full half hour
 He had remained, but, as he gazed, there grew
 Such a confusion in his memory,
 That he began to doubt, and he had hopes
 That he had seen this heap of turf before,
 That it was not another grave, but one,
 He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
 As up the vale he came that afternoon,
 Through fields which once had been well known to him. 90

And Oh! what joy the recollection now
 Sent to his heart! he lifted up his eyes,
 And looking round he thought that he perceived
 Strange alteration wrought on every side
 Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
 And the eternal hills, themselves were changed.

By this the Priest who down the field had come
 Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
 Stopped short, and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
 He scanned him with a gay complacency. 100
 Aye, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
 'Tis one of those who needs must leave the path
 Of the world's business, to go wild alone:
 His arms have a perpetual holiday,
 The happy man will creep about the fields
 Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
 Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
 Into his face, until the setting sun
 Write Fool upon his forehead. Planted thus
 Beneath a shed that overarched the gate 110
 Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appeared
 The good man might have communed with himself
 But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
 Approached; he recognized the Priest at once,
 And after greetings interchanged, and given
 By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
 Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

LEONARD

You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet life:
 Your years make up one peaceful family;
 And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come 120
 And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
 They cannot be remembered. Scarce a funeral
 Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months;
 And yet, some changes must take place among you:
 And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks
 Can trace the finger of mortality,
 And see, that with our threescore years and ten
 We are not all that perish.—I remember,
 For many years ago I passed this road,
 There was a foot-way all along the fields 130
 By the brook-side—'tis gone—and that dark cleft!
 To me it does not seem to wear the face
 Which then it had.

PRIEST

Why, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—

LEONARD

But, surely, yonder—

PRIEST

Aye, there indeed, your memory is a friend^o
That does not play you false.—On that tall pike,
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two Springs which bubbled side by side
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: ten years back, 140
Close to those brother fountains, the huge crag
Was rent with lightning—one is dead and gone,
The other, left behind, is flowing still.
For accidents and changes such as these,
Why we have store of them! a water-spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract—a sharp May storm
Will come with loads of January snow, 150
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens, or a Shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge—
A wood is felled:—and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house clock is decked with a new face;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here 160
A pair of diaries, one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side—
Your's was a stranger's judgment; for historians
Commend me to these vallies.

LEONARD

Yet your church-yard
 Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
 To say that you are heedless of the past.
 Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
 Cross-bones or skull, type of our earthly state
 Or emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
 Is but a fellow to that pasture field.

170

PRIEST

Why there, Sir, is a thought that's new to me.
 The Stone-cutters, 'tis true, might beg their bread
 If every English church-yard were like ours:
 Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth.
 We have no need of names and epitaphs,
 We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
 And then for our immortal part, *we* want
 No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
 The thought of death sits easy on the man
 Who has been born and dies among the mountains.°

180

LEONARD

Your dalesmen, then, do in each other's thoughts
 Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
 You, Sir, could help me to the history
 Of half these Graves?

PRIEST

For eight-score winters past
 With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
 Perhaps I might, and, on a winter's evening,
 If you were seated at my chimney's nook
 By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
 We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round,
 Yet all in the broad high-way of the world.
 Now there's a grave—your foot is half upon it,
 It looks just like the rest, and yet that man
 Died broken hearted.

190

LEONARD

'Tis a common case,
 We'll take another: who is he that lies
 Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves,
 It touches on that piece of native rock
 Left in the church-yard wall.

PRIEST

That's Walter Ewbank.
 He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
 As ever were produced by youth and age 200
 Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
 For five long generations had the heart
 Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
 Of their inheritance, that single cottage,
 You see it yonder, and those few green fields.
 They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son
 Each struggled, and each yielded as before
 A little—yet a little—and old Walter,
 They left to him the family heart, and land
 With other burthens than the crop it bore. 210
 Year after year the old man still preserved
 A chearful mind, and buffeted with bond,
 Interest and mortgages; at last he sank,
 And went into his grave before his time.
 Poor Walter! whether it was care that spurred him
 God only knows, but to the very last
 He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale:
 His pace was never that of an old man:
 I almost see him tripping down the path
 With his two Grandsons after him—but you, 220
 Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
 Have far to travel, and in these rough paths
 Even in the longest day of midsummer—

LEONARD

But these two Orphans!

PRIEST

Orphans! such they were—
 Yet not while Walter lived—for, though their Parents
 Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
 The old Man was a father to the boys,
 Two fathers in one father: and if tears
 Shed, when he talked of them where they were not,
 And hauntings from the infirmity of love, 230
 Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
 This old Man in the day of his old age
 Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, Sir,
 To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
 Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred!
 Aye. You may turn that way—it is a grave
 Which will bear looking at.

LEONARD

These Boys I hope
 They loved this good old Man—

PRIEST

They did—and truly,
 But that was what we almost overlooked,
 They were such darlings of each other. For 240
 Though from their cradles they had lived with Walter,
 The only kinsman near them in the house,
 Yet he being old, they had much love to spare,
 And it all went into each other's hearts.
 Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
 Was two years taller: 'twas a joy to see,
 To hear, to meet them! from their house the School
 Was distant three short miles, and in the time
 Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
 And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed 250
 Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,
 Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,

Would Leonard then, when elder boys perhaps
 Remained at home, go staggering through the fords
 Bearing his Brother on his back.—I've seen him,
 On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
 Aye, more than once I've seen him mid-leg deep,
 Their two books lying both on a dry stone
 Upon the hither side:—and once I said,
 As I remember, looking round these rocks
 And hills on which we all of us were born,
 That God who made the great book of the world
 Would bless such piety—

260

LEONARD

It may be then—

PRIEST

Never did worthier lads break English bread:
 The finest Sunday that the Autumn saw,
 With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
 Could never keep these boys away from church,
 Or tempt them to an hour of sabbath breach.
 Leonard and James! I warrant, every corner
 Among these rocks and every hollow place
 Where foot could come, to one or both of them
 Was known as well as to the flowers that grew there.
 Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills:
 They played like two young ravens on the crags:
 Then they could write, aye and speak too, as well
 As many of their betters—and for Leonard!
 The very night before he went away,
 In my own house I put into his hand
 A Bible, and I'd wager twenty pounds,
 That, if he is alive, he has it yet.

270

280

LEONARD

It seems, these Brothers have not lived to be
 A comfort to each other.—

PRIEST

That they might
 Live to that end, is what both old and young
 In this our valley all of us have wished,
 And what, for my part, I have often prayed:
 But Leonard—

LEONARD

Then James still is left among you—

PRIEST

'Tis of the elder Brother I am speaking:
 They had an Uncle, he was at that time
 A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas:
 And, but for this same Uncle, to this hour 290
 Leonard had never handled rope or shroud.
 For the Boy loved the life which we lead here;
 And, though a very Stripling, twelve years old;
 His soul was knit to this his native soil.
 But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
 To strive with such a torrent; when he died,
 The estate and house were sold, and all their sheep,
 A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
 Had clothed the Ewbank for a thousand years.
 Well—all was gone, and they were destitute. 300
 And Leonard, chiefly for his brother's sake,
 Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
 'Tis now twelve years since we had tidings from him.
 If there was one among us who had heard
 That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
 From the great Gavel, down by Leeza's Banks,^o
 And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
 The day would be a very festival,
 And those two bells of ours, which there you see
 Hanging in the open air—but,—O good Sir! 310
 This is sad talk—they'll never sound for him
 Living or dead—When last we heard of him

He was in slavery among the Moors
 Upon the Barbary Coast—'Twas not a little
 That would bring down his spirit, and, no doubt,
 Before it ended in his death, the Lad
 Was sadly crossed—Poor Leonard! when we parted,
 He took me by the hand and said to me,
 If ever the day came when he was rich,
 He would return, and on his Father's Land
 He would grow old among us.

320

LEONARD

 If that day
 Should come, 't would needs be a glad day for him;
 He would himself, no doubt, be as happy then
 As any that should meet him—

PRIEST

Happy, Sir—

LEONARD

You said his kindred all were in their graves,
 And that he had one Brother—

PRIEST

 That is but
 A fellow tale of sorrow. From his youth
 James, though not sickly, yet was delicate,
 And Leonard being always by his side
 Had done so many offices about him,
 That, though he was not of a timid nature,
 Yet still the spirit of a mountain boy
 In him was somewhat checked, and when his Brother
 Was gone to sea and he was left alone
 The little colour that he had was soon
 Stolen from his cheek, he drooped, and pined and pined:

330

LEONARD

But these are all the graves of full grown men!

PRIEST

Aye, Sir, that passed away: we took him to us.
 'He was the child of all the dale—he lived
 Three months with one, and six months with another: 340
 And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love,
 And many, many happy days were his.
 But, whether blithe or sad, 'tis my belief
 His absent Brother still was at his heart.
 And, when he lived beneath our roof, we found
 (A practice till this time unknown to him)
 That often, rising from his bed at night,
 He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
 He sought his Brother Leonard—You are moved!
 Forgive me, Sir: before I spoke to you, 350
 I judged you most unkindly.

LEONARD

But this youth,
 How did he die at last?

PRIEST

One sweet May morning,
 It will be twelve years since, when Spring returns,
 He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
 With two or three companions whom it chanced
 Some further business summoned to a house
 Which stands at the Dale-head. James, tired perhaps,
 Or from some other cause remained behind.
 You see yon precipice—it almost looks
 Like some vast building made of many crags, 360
 And in the midst is one particular rock
 That rises like a column from the vale,
 Whence by our Shepherds it is called, the Pillar.
 James, pointing to its summit, over which
 They all had purposed to return together,
 Informed them that he there would wait for them:

They parted, and his comrades passed that way
 Some two hours after, but they did not find him
 At the appointed place, a circumstance
 Of which they took no heed: but one of them, 370
 Going by chance, at night, into the house
 Which at this time was James's home, there learned
 That nobody had seen him all that day:
 The morning came, and still he was unheard of:
 The neighbours were alarmed, and to the Brook
 Some went, and some towards the Lake; ere noon
 They found him at the foot of that same Rock
 Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
 I buried him, poor lad, and there he lies.

LEONARD

And that then *is* his grave! —Before his death 380
 You said that he saw many happy years?

PRIEST

Aye, that he did

LEONARD

And all went well with him—

PRIEST

If he had one, the Lad had twenty homes.

LEONARD

And you believe then, that his mind was easy—

PRIEST

Yes, long before he died, he found that time
 Is a true friend to sorrow, and unless
 His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless fortune,
 He talked about him with a cheerful love.

LEONARD

He could not come to an unhallowed end!

PRIEST

Nay, God forbid! You recollect I mentioned
 A habit which disquietude and grief 390
 Had brought upon him, and we all conjectured
 That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
 Upon the grass, and, waiting for his comrades
 He there had fallen asleep, that in his sleep
 He to the margin of the precipice
 Had walked, and from the summit had fallen head-long,
 And so no doubt he perished: at the time,
 We guess, that in his hands he must have had
 His Shepherd's staff; for midway in the cliff 400
 It had been caught, and there for many years
 It hung—and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended.

The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
 Tears rushing in; both left the spot in silence,
 And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard gate,
 As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round,
 And, looking at the grave, he said, 'My Brother'.

The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
 Pointing towards the Cottage, he entreated
 That Leonard would partake his homely fare: 410
 The other thanked him with a fervent voice,
 But added, that, the evening being calm,
 He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
 That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
 And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
 All that the Priest had said: his early years
 Were with him in his heart: his cherished hopes,
 And thoughts which had been his an hour before,

All pressed on him with such a weight, that now, 420
 This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
 A place in which he could not bear to live:
 So he relinquished all his purposes.
 He travelled on to Egremont; and thence,
 That night, addressed a letter to the Priest
 Reminding him of what had passed between them;
 And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
 That it was from the weakness of his heart,
 He had not dared to tell him, who he was.
 This done, he went on shipboard, and is now 430
 A Seaman, a grey headed Mariner.

'Strange fits of passion I have known'

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

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

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

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

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

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
 He raised and never stopped:
 When down behind the cottage roof
 At once the planet dropped.

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

Song

She dwelt among th' untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,
 A Maid whom there were none to praise
 And very few to love.

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

She *lived* unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceased to be;
 But she is in her Grave, and Oh!
 The difference to me.

10

'A slumber did my spirit seal'

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

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

The Oak and the Broom

A PASTORAL

His simple truths did Andrew glean
 Beside the babbling rills;
 A careful student he had been
 Among the woods and hills.
 One winter's night when through the Trees
 The wind was thundering, on his knees
 His youngest born did Andrew hold:
 And while the rest, a ruddy quire
 Were seated round their blazing fire,
 This Tale the Shepherd told.

10

I saw a crag, a lofty stone
 As ever tempest beat!
 Out of its head an Oak had grown,
 A Broom out of its feet.
 The time was March, a chearful noon—
 The thaw-wind with the breath of June
 Breathed gently from the warm South-west;
 When in a voice sedate with age
 This Oak, half giant and half sage,
 His neighbour thus addressed.

20

'Eight weary weeks, thro' rock and clay,
 Along this mountain's edge
 The Frost hath wrought both night and day,
 Wedge driving after wedge.
 Look up, and think, above your head
 What trouble surely will be bred;
 Last night I heard a crash—'tis true,
 The splinters took another road
 I see them yonder—what a load
 For such a Thing as you!

30

You are preparing as before
 To deck your slender shape;
 And yet, just three years back—no more—
 You had a strange escape.

Down from yon Cliff a fragment broke,
 It came, you know, with fire and smoke
 And hither did it bend its way.
 This pond'rous block was caught by me,
 And o'er your head, as you may see,
 'Tis hanging to this day.

40

The Thing had better been asleep,
 Whatever thing it were,
 Or Breeze, or Bird, or fleece of Sheep,
 That first did plant you there.
 For you and your green twigs decoy
 The little witless Shepherd-boy
 To come and slumber in your bower;
 And trust me, on some sultry noon,
 Both you and he, Heaven knows how soon!
 Will perish in one hour.

50

From me this friendly warning take'—
 —The Broom began to doze,
 And thus to keep herself awake
 Did gently interpose.
 'My thanks for your discourse are due;
 That it is true, and more than true,
 I know and I have known it long;
 Frail is the bond, by which we hold
 Our being, be we young or old,
 Wise, foolish, weak or strong.

60

Disasters, do the best we can,
 Will reach both great and small,
 And he is oft the wisest man,
 Who is not wise at all.
 For me, why should I wish to roam?
 This spot is my paternal home,
 It is my pleasant Heritage;
 My Father many a happy year
 Here spread his careless blossoms, here
 Attained a good old age.

70

Even such as his may be my lot.
 What cause have I to haunt
 My heart with terrors? Am I not
 In truth a favored plant!

The Spring for me a garland weaves
 Of yellow flowers and verdant leaves,
 And, when the Frost is in the sky,
 My branches are so fresh and gay
 That You might look on me and say
 This plant can never die. 80

The butterfly, all green and gold,
 To me hath often flown,
 Here in my Blossoms to behold
 Wings lovely as his own.
 When grass is chill with rain or dew,
 Beneath my shade the mother ewe
 Lies with her infant lamb; I see
 The love they to each other make,
 And the sweet joy, which they partake,
 It is a joy to me.' 90

Her voice was blithe, her heart was light;
 The Broom might have pursued
 Her speech, until the stars of night
 Their journey had renewed.
 But in the branches of the Oak
 Two Ravens now began to croak
 Their nuptial song, a gladsome air;
 And to her own green bower the breeze
 That instant brought two stripling Bees
 To feed and murmur there. 100

One night the Wind came from the North
 And blew a furious blast,
 At break of day I ventured forth
 And near the Cliff I passed.
 The storm had fall'n upon the Oak
 And struck him with a mighty stroke,
 And whirled and whirled him far away;
 And in one hospitable Cleft
 The little careless Broom was left
 To live for many a day. 110

Lucy Gray

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

No Mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
 She dwelt on a wide Moor,
 The sweetest Thing that ever grew
 Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the Fawn at play,
 The Hare upon the Green;
 But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
 Will never more be seen.

10

'To-night will be a stormy night,
 You to the Town must go,
 And take a lantern, Child, to light
 Your Mother thro' the snow.'

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

20

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

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

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

30

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

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the Moor;
And thence they saw the Bridge of Wood
A furlong from their door.

40

And now they homeward turned, and cried
'In Heaven we all shall meet!'
When in the snow the Mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

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

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

50

They followed from the snowy bank
The footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank,
And further there were none.

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living Child,
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome Wild.

60

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

*The Idle Shepherd-Boys, or Dungeon-Gill
Force, A Pastoral*

I

The valley rings with mirth and joy.
Among the hills the Echoes play
A never, never ending song
To welcome in the May.
The Magpie chatters with delight;
The mountain Raven's youngling Brood
Have left the Mother and the Nest,
And they go rambling east and west
In search of their own food,
Or thro' the glittering Vapors dart
In very wantonness of Heart. 10

2

Beneath a rock, upon the grass,
Two Boys are sitting in the sun;
It seems they have no work to do
Or that their work is done.
On pipes of sycamore they play
The fragments of a Christmas Hymn,
Or with that plant which in our dale
We call Stag-horn, or Fox's Tail,
Their rusty Hats they trim; 20
And thus as happy as the Day,
Those Shepherds wear the time away.

3

Along the river's stony marge
The sand-lark chaunts a joyous song;
The thrush is busy in the Wood,
And carols loud and strong.
A thousand lambs are on the rocks,

All newly born! both earth and sky
 Keep jubilee, and more than all,
 Those Boys with their green Coronals, 30
 They never hear the cry,
 That plaintive cry! which up the hill
 Comes from the depth of Dungeon-Gill.

4

Said Walter, leaping from the ground,
 'Down to the stump of yon old yew
 I'll run with you a race.'—No more—
 Away the Shepherds flew.
 They leapt, they ran, and when they came
 Right opposite to Dungeon-Gill,
 Seeing, that he should lose the prize, 40
 'Stop!' to his comrade Walter cries—
 James stopped with no good will:
 Said Walter then, 'Your task is here,
 'Twill keep you working half a year.

5

Till you have crossed where I shall cross,
 Say that you'll neither sleep nor eat.'
 James proudly took him at his word,
 But did not like the feat.
 It was a spot, which you may see
 If ever you to Langdale go: 50
 Into a chasm a mighty Block
 Hath fallen, and made a bridge of rock;
 The gulph is deep below,
 And in a bason black and small
 Receives a lofty Waterfall.

6

With staff in hand across the cleft
 The Challenger began his march;
 And now, all eyes and feet, hath gained
 The middle of the arch.
 When list! he hears a piteous moan— 60

Again! his heart within him dies—
 His pulse is stopped, his breath is lost,
 He totters, pale as any ghost,
 And looking down, he spies
 A Lamb, that in the pool is pent
 Within that black and frightful rent.

7

The Lamb had slipped into the stream,
 And safe without a bruise or wound
 The Cataract had borne him down
 Into the gulph profound. 70
 His dam had seen him when he fell,
 She saw him down the torrent borne;
 And while with all a mother's love
 She from the lofty rocks above
 Sent forth a cry forlorn,
 The Lamb, still swimming round and round
 Made answer to that plaintive sound.

8

When he had learnt, what thing it was,
 That sent this rueful cry; I ween,
 The Boy recovered heart, and told 80
 The sight which he had seen.
 Both gladly now deferred their task;
 Nor was there wanting other aid—
 A Poet, one who loves the brooks
 Far better than the sages' books,
 By chance had thither strayed;
 And there the helpless Lamb he found
 By those huge rocks encompassed round.

9

He drew it gently from the pool,
 And brought it forth into the light: 90
 The Shepherds met him with his charge
 An unexpected sight!
 Into their arms the Lamb they took,

Said they, 'He's neither maimed nor scarred'—
 Then up the steep ascent they hied
 And placed him at his Mother's side;
 And gently did the Bard
 Those idle Shepherd-boys upbraid,
 And bade them better mind their trade.

Poor Susan

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
 There's a thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
 Poor Susan has pass'd by the spot, and has heard
 In the silence of morning the song of the bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
 A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
 Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
 And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

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

She looks, and her heart is in heaven; but they fade,
 The mist and the river, the hill and the shade;
 The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
 And the colours have all passed away from her eyes.

Poor Outcast! return—to receive thee once more
 The house of thy Father will open its door,
 And thou once again, in thy plain russet gown,
 May'st hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own. 20

Lines written on a Tablet in a School

In the School of—— is a tablet on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the names of the several persons who have been Schoolmasters there since the foundation of the School, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite one of those names the Author wrote the following lines.

If nature, for a favorite Child
 In thee hath tempered so her clay,
 That every hour thy heart runs wild
 Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
 This tablet, that thus humbly rears
 In such diversity of hue
 Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
 Cypher and syllable, thine eye
 Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
 Pause with no common sympathy.

10

And if a sleeping tear should wake
 Then be it neither checked nor stayed:
 For Matthew a request I make
 Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
 Is silent as a standing pool,
 Far from the chimney's merry roar,
 And murmur of the village school.

20

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
 Of one tired out with fun and madness;
 The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
 Were tears of light, the oil of gladness.

Yet sometimes when the secret cup
 Of still and serious thought went round
 It seemed as if he drank it up,
 He felt with spirit so profound.

—Thou soul of God's best earthly mould,
 Thou happy soul, and can it be
 That these two words of glittering gold
 Are all that must remain of thee?

30

The Two April Mornings

We walked along, while bright and red
 Uprose the morning sun,
 And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
 'The will of God be done!'

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

And on that morning, through the grass,
 And by the steaming rills, 10
 We travelled merrily to pass
 A day among the hills.

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

A second time did Matthew stop,
 And fixing still his eye
 Upon the eastern mountain-top
 To me he made reply. 20

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

And on that slope of springing corn
 The self-same crimson hue
 Fell from the sky that April morn,
 The same which now I view!

With rod and line my silent sport
 I plied by Derwent's wave,^o 30
 And, coming to the church, stopped short
 Beside my Daughter's grave.

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

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

40

And, turning from her grave, I met
 Beside the church-yard Yew
 A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
 With points of morning dew.

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

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

50

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

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

60

The Fountain

A CONVERSATION

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

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

Now, Matthew, let us try to match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old Border-song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon.

10

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

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

20

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

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

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

30

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

The blackbird in the summer trees,
The lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

40

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

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

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

50

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

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

60

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

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

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

70

Nutting

It seems a day,
 One of those heavenly days which cannot die,
 When forth I sallied from our cottage-door,
 And with a wallet o'er my shoulder slung,
 A nutting crook in hand, I turned my steps
 Towards the distant woods, a Figure quaint,
 Tricked out in proud disguise of Beggar's weeds
 Put on for the occasion, by advice
 And exhortation of my frugal Dame.°
 Motley accoutrements! of power to smile 10
 At thorns, and brakes, and brambles, and, in truth,
 More ragged than need was. Among the woods,
 And o'er the pathless rocks, I forced my way
 Until, at length, I came to one dear nook
 Unvisited, where not a broken bough
 Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
 Of devastation, but the hazels rose
 Tall and erect, with milk-white clusters hung,
 A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
 Breathing with such suppression of the heart 20
 As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
 Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
 The banquet, or beneath the trees I sate
 Among the flowers, and with the flowers I played;
 A temper known to those, who, after long
 And weary expectation, have been blessed
 With sudden happiness beyond all hope.—
 —Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
 The violets of five seasons re-appear
 And fade, unseen by any human eye, 30
 Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on
 For ever, and I saw the sparkling foam,
 And with my cheek on one of those green stones
 That, fleeced with moss, beneath the shady trees,
 Lay round me scattered like a flock of sheep,
 I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
 In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
 Tribute to ease, and, of its joy secure

The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
 Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones, 40
 And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
 And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
 And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
 Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
 Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
 Their quiet being: and unless I now
 Confound my present feelings with the past,
 Even then, when from the bower I turned away,
 Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings
 I felt a sense of pain when I beheld 50
 The silent trees and the intruding sky.—

Then, dearest Maiden! move along these shades
 In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
 Touch,—for there is a Spirit in the woods.

‘Three years she grew in sun and shower’

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

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

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

The floating clouds their state shall lend
 To her, for her the willow bend, 20
 Nor shall she fail to see
 Even in the motions of the storm
 A beauty that shall mould her form
 By silent sympathy.

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

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

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

The Old Cumberland Beggar

A DESCRIPTION

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

I saw an aged Beggar in my walk,
 And he was seated by the highway side
 On a low structure of rude masonry
 Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they

Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
 May thence remount at ease. The aged man
 Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
 That overlays the pile, and from a bag
 All white with flour the dole of village dames,
 He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one, 10
 And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
 Of idle computation. In the sun,
 Upon the second step of that small pile,
 Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
 He sate, and eat his food in solitude;
 And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
 That still attempting to prevent the waste,
 Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
 Fell on the ground, and the small mountain birds,
 Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal, 20
 Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known, and then
 He was so old, he seems not older now;
 He travels on, a solitary man,
 So helpless in appearance, that for him
 The sauntering horseman-traveller does not throw
 With careless hands his alms upon the ground,
 But stops, that he may safely lodge the coin
 Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,
 But still when he has given his horse the rein 30
 Towards the aged Beggar turns a look,
 Sidelong and half-reverted. She who tends
 The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
 She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
 The aged Beggar coming, quits her work,
 And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
 The Post-boy when his rattling wheels o'take
 The aged Beggar, in the woody lane,
 Shouts to him from behind, and, if perchance
 The old Man does not change his course, the Boy 40
 Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-side,
 And passes gently by, without a curse
 Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.
 He travels on, a solitary Man,

His age has no companion. On the ground
 His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground; and evermore,
 Instead of common and habitual sight
 Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
 And the blue sky, one little span of earth 50
 Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
 Bowbent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
 He plies his weary journey, seeing still,
 And never knowing that he sees, some straw,
 Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
 The nails of cart or chariot wheel have left
 Impressed on the white road, in the same line,
 At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
 His staff trails with him, scarcely do his feet
 Disturb the summer dust, he is so still 60
 In look and motion that the cottage curs,
 Ere he have passed the door, will turn away
 Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
 The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
 And urchins newly breeched all pass him by:
 Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this man useless.—Statesman! ye
 Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
 Who have a broom still ready in your hands
 To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud, 70
 Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
 Your talents, power, and wisdom, deem him not
 A burthen of the earth. 'Tis Nature's law
 That none, the meanest of created things,
 Of forms created the most vile and brute,
 The dullest or most noxious, should exist
 Divorced from good, a spirit and pulse of good,
 A life and soul to every mode of being
 Inseparably linked. While thus he creeps
 From door to door, the Villagers in him 80
 Behold a record which together binds
 Past deeds and offices of charity
 Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
 The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,

And that half-wisdom half-experience gives
 Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
 To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
 Among the farms and solitary huts
 Hamlets, and thinly-scattered villages,
 Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds, 90
 The mild necessity of use compels
 To acts of love; and habit does the work
 Of reason, yet prepares that after joy
 Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
 By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued
 Doth find itself insensibly disposed
 To virtue and true goodness. Some there are,
 By their good works exalted, lofty minds
 And meditative, authors of delight
 And happiness, which to the end of time 100
 Will live, and spread, and kindle; minds like these,
 In childhood, from this solitary being,
 This helpless wanderer, have perchance received,
 (A thing more precious far than all that books
 Or the solitudes of love can do!)
 That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
 In which they found their kindred with a world
 Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
 Who sits at his own door, and like the pear
 Which overhangs his head from the green wall, 110
 Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
 The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
 Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
 Of their own kindred, all behold in him
 A silent monitor, which on their minds
 Must needs impress a transitory thought
 Of self-congratulation, to the heart
 Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
 His charters and exemptions; and perchance,
 Though he to no one give the fortitude 120
 And circumspection needful to preserve
 His present blessings, and to husband up
 The respite of the season, he, at least,
 And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

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

No—man is dear to man: the poorest poor 140
 Long for some moments in a weary life
 When they can know and feel that they have been
 Themselves the fathers and the dealers out
 Of some small blessings, have been kind to such
 As needed kindness, for this single cause,
 That we have all of us one human heart.
 —Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
 My Neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
 Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
 By her own wants, she from her chest of meal 150
 Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
 Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
 Returning with exhilarated heart,
 Sits by her fire and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
 And while, in that vast solitude to which
 The tide of things has led him, he appears
 To breathe and live but for himself alone,
 Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
 The good which the benignant law of heaven 160
 Has hung around him, and, while life is his,
 Still let him prompt the unlettered Villagers
 To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
 Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!

And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
 The freshness of the vallies, let his blood
 Struggle with frosty air and winter snows,
 And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
 Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
 Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness 170
 Gives the last human interest to his heart.
 May never House, misnamed of industry,
 Make him a captive; for that pent-up din,
 Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
 Be his the natural silence of old age.
 Let him be free of mountain solitudes,
 And have around him, whether heard or not,
 The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
 Few are his pleasures; if his eyes, which now
 Have been so long familiar with the earth, 180
 No more behold the horizontal sun
 Rising or setting, let the light at least
 Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
 And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
 Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank
 Of high-way side, and with the little birds
 Share his chance-gathered meal, and, finally,
 As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
 So in the eye of Nature let him die.

A Poet's Epitaph

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

A Lawyer art thou?—draw not nigh;
 Go, carry to some other place
 The hardness of thy coward eye,
 The falshood of thy sallow face.

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

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

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

20

Wrapped closely in thy sensual fleece
 O turn aside, and take, I pray,
 That he below may rest in peace,
 Thy pin-point of a soul away!

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

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

30

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

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

40

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

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

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

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

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

Poems on the Naming of Places

I

'It was an April Morning: fresh and clear'

It was an April Morning: fresh and clear
 The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
 Ran with a young man's speed, and yet the voice
 Of waters which the winter had supplied
 Was softened down into a vernal tone,
 The spirit of enjoyment and desire,
 And hopes and wishes, from all living things
 Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
 The budding groves appeared as if in haste
 To spur the steps of June; as if their shades 10
 Of *various* green were hindrances that stood^o
 Between them and their object: yet, meanwhile,
 There was such deep contentment in the air
 That every naked ash, and tardy tree
 Yet leafless, seemed as though the countenance
 With which it looked on this delightful day
 Were native to the summer.—Up the brook
 I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
 Alive to all things and forgetting all.
 At length I to a sudden turning came 20

In this continuous glen, where down a rock
 The stream, so ardent in its course before,
 Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
 Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
 Of common pleasure: beast and bird, the lamb,
 The Shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
 Vied with this waterfall, and made a song
 Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild growth
 Or like some natural produce of the air
 That could not cease to be. Green leaves were here, 30
 But 'twas the foliage of the rocks, the birch,
 The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
 With hanging islands of resplendent furze:
 And on a summit, distant a short space,
 By any who should look beyond the dell,
 A single mountain Cottage might be seen.
 I gazed and gazed, and to myself
 I said, 'Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook,
 My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee.'^o
 —Soon did the spot become my other home, 40
 My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
 And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
 To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
 Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
 Years after we are gone and in our graves,
 When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
 May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.

II

To Joanna

Amid the smoke of cities did you pass
 Your time of early youth, and there you learned,
 From years of quiet industry, to love
 The living Beings by your own fire-side,
 With such a strong devotion, that your heart
 Is slow towards the sympathies of them
 Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
 And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.
 Yet we who are transgressors in this kind,
 Dwelling retired in our simplicity 10

Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
 Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
 So distant from us now for two long years,
 That you will gladly listen to discourse
 However trivial, if you thence are taught
 That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
 Familiarly of you and of old times.
 While I was seated, now some ten days past,
 Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
 Their ancient neighbour, the old Steeple tower, 20
 The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
 Came forth to greet me, and when he had asked,
 'How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid!
 And when will she return to us?' he paused,
 And after short exchange of village news,
 He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
 Reviving obsolete Idolatry,
 I like a Runic Priest, in characters
 Of formidable size, had chiseled out
 Some uncouth name upon the native rock, 30
 Above the Rotha, by the forest side.
 —Now, by those dear immunities of heart
 Engendered betwixt malice and true love,
 I was not loth to be so catechized,
 And this was my reply.—'As it befel,
 One summer morning we had walked abroad
 At break of day, Joanna and myself.
 —'Twas that delightful season, when the broom,
 Full flowered, and visible on every steep,
 Along the copses runs in veins of gold. 40
 Our pathway led us on to Rotha's banks,
 And when we came in front of that tall rock
 Which looks towards the East, I there stopped short,
 And traced the lofty barrier with my eye
 From base to summit; such delight I found
 To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower,
 That intermixture of delicious hues,
 Along so vast a surface, all at once,
 In one impression, by connecting force
 Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart. 50
 —When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,

Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
 That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
 The rock, like something starting from a sleep,
 Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again:
 That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
 Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-Scar,
 And the tall Steep of Silver-How sent forth
 A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
 And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone: 60
 Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
 Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
 His speaking trumpet;—back out of the clouds
 Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
 And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
 Now whether, (said I to our cordial Friend
 Who in the hey-day of astonishment
 Smiled in my face) this were in simple truth
 A work accomplished by the brotherhood
 Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched 70
 With dreams and visionary impulses,
 Is not for me to tell; but sure I am
 That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
 And, while we both were listening, to my side
 The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
 To shelter from some object of her fear.
 —And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons
 Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
 Beneath this rock, at sun-rise, on a calm
 And silent morning, I sate down, and there, 80
 In memory of affections old and true,
 I chiseled out in those rude characters
 Joanna's name upon the living stone.
 And I, and all who dwell by my fire-side
 Have called the lovely rock, Joanna's Rock.'

III

'There is an Eminence,—of these our hills'

There is an Eminence,—of these our hills
 The last that parleys with the setting sun.
 We can behold it from our Orchard seat,

And, when at evening we pursue our walk
 Along the public way, this Cliff, so high
 Above us, and so distant in its height,
 Is visible, and often seems to send
 Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.
 The meteors make of it a favorite haunt:
 The star of Jove, so beautiful and large 10
 In the mid heav'ns, is never half so fair
 As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
 The loneliest place we have among the clouds.
 And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved^o
 With such communion, that no place on earth
 Can ever be a solitude to me,
 Hath said, this lonesome Peak shall bear my Name.

IV

'A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags'

A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags,
 A rude and natural causeway, interposed
 Between the water and a winding slope
 Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
 Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy.
 And there, myself and two beloved Friends,
 One calm September morning, ere the mist
 Had altogether yielded to the sun,
 Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
 —Ill suits the road with one in haste, but we 10
 Played with our time; and, as we strolled along,
 It was our occupation to observe
 Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore,
 Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
 Each on the other heaped along the line
 Of the dry wreck. And in our vacant mood,^o
 Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
 Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
 Which, seeming lifeless half, and half impelled
 By some internal feeling, skimmed along 20
 Close to the surface of the lake that lay
 Asleep in a dead calm, ran closely on

Along the dead calm lake, now here, now there,
 In all its sportive wanderings all the while
 Making report of an invisible breeze
 That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
 Its very playmate, and its moving soul.
 —And often, trifling with a privilege
 Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
 And now the other, to point out, perchance 30
 To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
 Either to be divided from the place
 On which it grew, or to be left alone
 To its own beauty. Many such there are,
 Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall plant
 So stately, of the Queen Osmunda named,^o
 Plant lovelier in its own retired abode
 On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side^o
 Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere
 Sole-sitting by the shores of old Romance. 40
 —So fared we that sweet morning: from the fields
 Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
 Of Reapers, Men and Women, Boys and Girls.
 Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
 And in the fashion which I have described,
 Feeding unthinking fancies, we advanced
 Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
 Through a thin veil of glittering haze, we saw
 Before us on a point of jutting land
 The tall and upright figure of a Man 50
 Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone
 Angling beside the margin of the lake.
 That way we turned our steps; nor was it long,
 Ere making ready comments on the sight
 Which then we saw, with one and the same voice
 We all cried out, that he must be indeed
 An idle man, who thus could lose a day
 Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
 Is ample, and some little might be stored
 Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time. 60
 Thus talking of that Peasant we approached
 Close to the spot where with his rod and line
 He stood alone; whereat he turned his head

To greet us—and we saw a man worn down
 By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
 And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
 That for my single self I looked at them,
 Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
 Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
 The man was using his best skill to gain 70
 A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
 That knew not of his wants. I will not say
 What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
 The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
 With all its lovely images, was changed
 To serious musing and to self-reproach.
 Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
 What need there is to be reserved in speech,
 And temper all our thoughts with charity.
 —Therefore, unwilling to forget that day, 80
 My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
 The same admonishment, have called the place
 By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
 As e'er by Mariner was giv'n to Bay
 Or Foreland on a new-discovered coast,
 And, POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the Name it bears.

V

To M.H.

Our walk was far among the ancient trees:
 There was no road, nor any wood-man's path,
 But the thick umbrage, checking the wild growth
 Of weed and sapling, on the soft green turf
 Beneath the branches of itself had made
 A track which brought us to a slip of lawn,
 And a small bed of water in the woods.
 All round this pool both flocks and herds might drink
 On its firm margin, even as from a well
 Or some stone-bason which the Herdsman's hand 10
 Had shaped for their refreshment, nor did sun
 Or wind from any quarter ever come

But as a blessing to this calm recess,
 This glade of water and this one green field.
 The spot was made by Nature for herself:
 The travellers know it not, and 'twill remain
 Unknown to them; but it is beautiful,
 And if a man should plant his cottage near,
 Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
 And blend its waters with his daily meal, 20
 He would so love it that in his death-hour
 Its image would survive among his thoughts,
 And, therefore, my sweet MARY, this still nook
 With all its beeches we have named from You.

Michael

A PASTORAL POEM

If from the public way you turn your steps
 Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill,^o
 You will suppose that with an upright path
 Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
 The pastoral Mountains front you, face to face.
 But, courage! for beside that boisterous Brook
 The mountains have all opened out themselves,
 And made a hidden valley of their own.
 No habitation there is seen; but such
 As journey thither find themselves alone 10
 With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
 That overhead are sailing in the sky.
 It is in truth an utter solitude,
 Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
 But for one object which you might pass by,
 Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
 There is a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
 And to that place a story appertains,
 Which, though it be ungarnished with events,
 Is not unfit, I deem, for the fire-side, 20
 Or for the summer shade. It was the first;
 The earliest of those tales that spake to me
 Of Shepherds, dwellers in the vallies, men
 Whom I already loved, not verily
 For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills

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

Upon the Forest-side in Grasmere Vale 40
 There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name,
 An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen
 Intense and frugal, apt for all affairs,
 And in his Shepherd's calling he was prompt
 And watchful more than ordinary men.
 Hence he had learned the meaning of all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone, and often-times
 When others heeded not, He heard the South 50
 Make subterraneous music, like the noise
 Of Bagpipers on distant Highland hills;
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself would say
 The winds are now devising work for me!
 And truly at all times the storm, that drives
 The Traveller to a shelter, summoned him
 Up to the mountains: he had been alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand mists
 That came to him and left him on the heights. 60
 So lived he till his eightieth year was passed.
 And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
 That the green Valleys, and the Streams and Rocks
 Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
 Fields, where with chearful spirits he had breathed
 The common air; the hills, which he so oft
 Had climbed with vigorous steps; which had impressed

So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
 Which like a book preserved the memory 70
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,
 So grateful in themselves, the certainty
 Of honorable gains; these fields, these hills
 Which were his living Being, even more
 Than his own Blood—what could they less? had laid
 Strong hold on his affections, were to him
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
 The pleasure which there is in life itself.
 He had not passed his days in singleness. 80
 He had a Wife, a comely Matron, old
 Though younger than himself full twenty years.
 She was a woman of a stirring life
 Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
 Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
 That small for flax, and if one wheel had rest,
 It was because the other was at work.
 The Pair had but one Inmate in their house,
 An only Child, who had been born to them
 When Michael telling o'er his years began 90
 To deem that he was old, in Shepherd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only son,
 With two brave sheep dogs tried in many a storm,
 The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their Household. I may truly say,
 That they were as a proverb in the vale
 For endless industry. When day was gone,
 And from their occupations out of doors
 The Son and Father were come home, even then
 Their labour did not cease, unless when all 100
 Turned to their cleanly supper-board, and there
 Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
 Sate round their basket piled with oaten cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when their meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
 And his old Father, both betook themselves
 To such convenient work, as might employ
 Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card

Wool for the House-wife's spindle, or repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe, 110
 Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling by the chimney's edge,
 Which in our ancient uncouth country style
 Did with a huge projection overbrow
 Large space beneath, as duly as the light
 Of day grew dim, the House-wife hung a lamp;
 An aged utensil, which had performed
 Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn and late,
 Surviving Comrade of uncounted Hours 120
 Which going by from year to year had found
 And left the Couple neither gay perhaps
 Nor chearful, yet with objects and with hopes
 Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke was in his eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
 Father and Son, while late into the night
 The House-wife plied her own peculiar work,
 Making the cottage thro' the silent hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer flies. 130
 Not with a waste of words, but for the sake
 Of pleasure, which I know that I shall give
 To many living now, I of this Lamp
 Speak thus minutely: for there are no few
 Whose memories will bear witness to my tale.
 The Light was famous in its neighbourhood,
 And was a public Symbol of the life,
 The thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
 Their Cottage on a plot of rising ground
 Stood single, with large prospect North and South, 140
 High into Easedale, up to Dunmal-Raise,
 And Westward to the village near the Lake.
 And from this constant light so regular
 And so far seen, the House itself by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named the Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs

Have loved his Help-mate; but to Michael's heart
 This Son of his old age was yet more dear— 150
 Effect which might perhaps have been produced
 By that instinctive tenderness, the same
 Blind Spirit, which is in the blood of all,
 Or that a child, more than all other gifts,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must fail.
 From such, and other causes, to the thoughts
 Of the old Man his only Son was now
 The dearest object that he knew on earth. 160
 Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
 His Heart and his Heart's joy! For oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
 Had done him female service, not alone
 For dalliance and delight, as is the use
 Of Fathers, but with patient mind enforced
 To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
 His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on Boy's attire, did Michael love, 170
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the young one in his sight, when he
 Had work by his own door, or when he sate
 With sheep before him on his Shepherd's stool,
 Beneath that large old Oak, which near their door
 Stood, and from its enormous breadth of shade
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
 Thence in our rustic dialect was called
 The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.°
 There, while they two were sitting in the shade, 180
 With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
 Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
 Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
 Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek

Two steady roses that were five years old,
 Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 190
 With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
 With iron, making it throughout in all
 Due requisites a perfect Shepherd's Staff,
 And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipped
 He as a Watchman oftentimes was placed
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock,
 And to his office prematurely called
 There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
 Something between a hindrance and a help,
 And for this cause not always, I believe, 200
 Receiving from his Father hire of praise
 Though nought was left undone, which staff or voice,
 Or looks, or threatening gestures could perform.
 But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
 Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,
 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
 He with his Father daily went, and they
 Were as companions, why should I relate
 That objects which the Shepherd loved before
 Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came 210
 Feelings and emanations, things which were
 Light to the sun and music to the wind;
 And that the Old Man's heart seemed born again.

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

While this good household thus were living on
 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
 Distressful tidings. Long before the time
 Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 220
 In surety for his Brother's Son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample means,
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had pressed upon him, and old Michael now
 Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This un-looked for claim

At the first hearing for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. 230
As soon as he had gathered so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seemed that his sole refuge was to sell
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. 'Isabel,' said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
'I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sun-shine of God's love
Have we all lived, yet if these fields of ours 240
Should pass into a Stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the Sun itself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I,
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil Man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but 250
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a chearful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free,
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou knowest,
Another Kinsman, he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade, and Luke to him shall go, 260
And with his Kinsman's help and his own thrift,
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor
What can be gained?' At this, the old man paused,
And Isabel sate silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.

There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,^o
 He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
 They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence, 270
 And halfpennies, wherewith the Neighbours bought
 A Basket, which they filled with Pedlar's wares,
 And with this Basket on his arm the Lad
 Went up to London, found a Master there,
 Who out of many chose the trusty Boy
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas, where he grew wondrous rich,
 And left estates and monies to the poor,
 And at his birth-place built a Chapel, floored
 With Marble, which he sent from foreign lands. 280
 These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
 Passed quickly thro' the mind of Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The Old Man was glad,
 And thus resumed. 'Well! Isabel, this scheme
 These two days has been meat and drink to me.
 Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
 —We have enough—I wish indeed that I
 Were younger, but this hope is a good hope.
 —Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
 Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 290
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
 —If he could go, the Boy should go to-night.'

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
 With a light heart. The House-wife for five days
 Was restless morn and night, and all day long
 Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
 Things needful for the journey of her Son.
 But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
 To stop her in her work; for, when she lay
 By Michael's side, she for the two last nights 300
 Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
 And when they rose at morning she could see
 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
 She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
 Were sitting at the door, 'Thou must not go,
 We have no other Child but thee to lose,
 None to remember—do not go away,

For if thou leave thy Father he will die.'
 The Lad made answer with a jocund voice,
 And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 310
 Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
 Did she bring forth, and all together sate
 Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

Next morning Isabel resumed her work,
 And all the ensuing week the house appeared
 As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
 The expected letter from their Kinsman came,
 With kind assurances that he would do
 His utmost for the welfare of the Boy,
 To which requests were added that forthwith 320
 He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
 The letter was read over; Isabel
 Went forth to shew it to the neighbours round:
 Nor was there at that time on English Land
 A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
 Had to her house returned, the Old Man said
 'He shall depart to-morrow.' To this word
 The House-wife answered, talking much of things
 Which, if at such short notice he should go,
 Would surely be forgotten. But at length 330
 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Gill,
 In that deep Valley, Michael had designed
 To build a Sheep-fold, and, before he heard^o
 The tidings of his melancholy loss,
 For this same purpose he had gathered up
 A heap of stones, which close to the brook side
 Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
 With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
 And soon as they had reached the place he stopped 340
 And thus the Old Man spake to him. 'My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me; with full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good

When thou art from me, even if I should speak
 Of things thou canst not know of.—After thou
 First cam'st into the world, as it befalls 350
 To new-born infants, thou didst sleep away
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
 And still I loved thee with encreasing love.
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
 First uttering without words a natural tune,
 When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
 And in the open fields my life was passed 360
 And in the mountains, else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
 —But we were playmates, Luke; among these hills,
 As well thou know'st, in us the old and young
 Have played together, nor with me didst thou
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
 He sobbed aloud; the Old Man grasped his hand,
 And said, 'Nay do not take it so—I see
 That these are things of which I need not speak. 370
 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good Father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others hands, for, though now old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
 Both of them sleep together: here they lived
 As all their Forefathers had done, and when
 At length their time was come, they were not loth
 To give their bodies to the family mold. 380
 I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived.
 But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
 And see so little gain from sixty years.
 These fields were burthened when they came to me; 'Till
 I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,

And 'till these three weeks past the land was free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke, 390
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou should'st go.' At this the Old Man paused,
 Then, pointing to the Stones near which they stood,
 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 'This was a work for us, and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But, lay one Stone—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 I for the purpose brought thee to this place.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope:—we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four 400
 I still am strong and stout;—do thou thy part,
 I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee;
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
 With many hopes—it should be so—yes—yes
 I knew that thou could'st never have a wish 410
 To leave me, Luke, thou hast been bound to me
 Only by links of love, when thou art gone
 What will be left to us!—But, I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
 As I requested, and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, let this Sheep-fold be
 Thy anchor and thy shield; amid all fear
 And all temptation, let it be to thee
 An emblem of the life thy Fathers lived, 420
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
 A work which is not here, a covenant
 'Twill be between us—but whatever fate
 Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
 And bear thy memory with me to the grave.'

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
 And as his Father had requested, laid
 The first stone of the Sheep-fold; at the sight 430
 The Old Man's grief broke from him, to his heart
 He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
 And to the House together they returned.

Next morning, as had been resolved, the Boy
 Began his journey, and when he had reached
 The public Way, he put on a bold face;
 And all the Neighbours as he passed their doors
 Came forth, with wishes and with farewell prayers,
 That followed him 'till he was out of sight.
 A good report did from their Kinsman come, 440
 Of Luke and his well-doing; and the Boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
 Which, as the House-wife phrased it, were throughout
 The prettiest letters that were ever seen.
 Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
 So, many months passed on: and once again
 The Shepherd went about his daily work
 With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
 Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
 He to that valley took his way, and there 450
 Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
 To slacken in his duty, and at length
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses: ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
 Would break the heart:—Old Michael found it so.
 I have conversed with more than one who well 460
 Remember the Old Man, and what he was
 Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up upon the sun,
 And listened to the wind; and as before

Performed all kinds of labour for his Sheep,
And for the land his small inheritance.
And to that hollow Dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which 470
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the Old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, with that his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years from time to time
He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought, 480
And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel,
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a Stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named The Evening Star
Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood, yet the Oak is left
That grew beside their Door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen 490
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Gill.

OTHER POEMS 1798-1800

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The Ruined Cottage

Give me a spark of nature's fire,
'Tis the best learning I desire.

.....

My Muse though homely in attire
May touch the heart.

FIRST PART

'Twas Summer; and the sun was mounted high.
Along the south the uplands feebly glared
Through a pale steam, and all the northern downs
In clearer air ascending shewed their brown
And [] surfaces distinct with shades
Of deep embattled clouds that lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of clear and pleasant sunshine interposed;
Pleasant to him who on the soft cool grass
Extends his careless limbs beside the root
Of some huge oak whose aged branches make
A twilight of their own, a dewy shade
Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
Half conscious of that soothing melody,
With sidelong eye looks out upon the scene,
By those impending branches made []
More soft and distant. Other lot was mine.
Across a bare wide Common I had toiled
With languid feet which by the slippery ground
Were baffled still; and when I sought repose
On the brown earth my limbs from very heat
Could find no rest nor my weak arm disperse
The insect host which gathered round my face
And joined their murmurs to the tedious noise
Of seeds of bursting gorse which crackled round.
I rose and turned towards a group of trees
Which midway in the level stood alone,
And thither come at length, beneath a shade
Of clustering elms that sprang from the same root
I found a ruined Cottage, four clay walls

10

20

30

That stared upon each other.—'T was a spot!
 The wandering gypsey in a stormy night
 Would pass it with his moveables to house
 On the open plain beneath the imperfect arch
 Of a cold lime-kiln. As I looked around
 Beside the door I saw an aged Man
 Stretched on a bench whose edge with short bright moss
 Was green and studded o'er with fungus flowers;
 An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.
 Him had I seen the day before—alone 40
 And in the middle of the public way
 Standing to rest himself. His eyes were turned
 Towards the setting sun, while with that staff
 Behind him fixed he propped a long white pack
 Which crossed his shoulders: wares for maids who live
 In lonely villages or straggling huts.
 I knew him—he was born of lowly race
 On Cumbrian hills, and I have seen the tear
 Stand in his luminous eye when he described
 The house in which his early days were passed 50
 And found I was no stranger to the spot.
 I loved to hear him talk of former days
 And tell how when a child ere yet of age
 To be a shepherd he had learned to read
 His bible in a school that stood alone,
 Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
 Far from the sight of city spire, or sound
 Of Minster clock. He from his native hills
 Had wandered far: much had he seen of men,
 Their manners, their enjoyments and pursuits, 60
 Their passions and their feelings, chiefly those
 Essential and eternal in the heart,
 Which 'mid the simpler forms of rural life
 Exist more simple in their elements
 And speak a plainer language. He possessed
 No vulgar mind though he had passed his life
 In this poor occupation, first assumed
 From impulses of curious thought, and now
 Continued many a year, and now pursued
 From habit and necessity. His eye 70
 Flashing poetic fire; he would repeat

The songs of Burns, and as we trudged along
 Together did we make the hollow grove
 Ring with our transports. Though he was untaught,
 In the dead lore of schools undisciplined,
 Why should he grieve? He was a chosen son:
 To him was given an ear which deeply felt
 The voice of Nature in the obscure wind,
 The sounding mountain and the running-stream.

80

To every natural form, rock, fruit, and flower,
 Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
 He gave a moral life; he saw them feel
 Or linked them to some feeling. In all shapes
 He found a secret and mysterious soul,
 A fragrance and a spirit of strange meaning.
 Though poor in outward shew, he was most rich;
 He had a world about him—'twas his own,
 He made it—for it only lived to him
 And to the God who looked into his mind.

90

Such sympathies would often bear him far
 In outward gesture, and in visible look,
 Beyond the common seeming of mankind.
 Some called it madness—such it might have been,
 But that he had an eye which evermore
 Looked deep into the shades of difference
 As they lie hid in all exterior forms,
 Which from a stone, a tree, a withered leaf,
 To the broad ocean and the azure heavens
 Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
 Could find no surface where its power might sleep,

100

Which spake perpetual logic to his soul,
 And by an unrelenting agency
 Did bind his feelings even as in a chain.
 So was he framed, though humble and obscure
 Had been his lot. Now on the Bench he lay^o
 Stretched at his length, and with that weary load
 Pillowed his head—I guess he had no thought
 Of his way-wandering life. His eyes were shut;
 The shadows of the breezy elms above
 Dappled his face. With thirsty heat oppressed

110

At length I hailed him, glad to see his hat
 Bedewed with water-drops, as if the brim

Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose
 And, pointing to a sun-flower, bade me climb
 The [] wall where that same gaudy flower
 Looked out upon the road. It was a plot
 Of garden-ground, now wild, its matted weeds
 Marked with the steps of those whom as they passed,
 The gooseberry trees that shot in long [],
 Or currants shewing on a leafless stem 120
 Their scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
 The broken wall. Within that cheerless spot,
 Where two tall hedgerows of thick willow boughs
 Joined in a damp cold nook, I found a well
 Half choaked [with willow flowers and weeds].
 I slaked my thirst and to the shady bench
 Returned, and while I stood unbonneted
 To catch the current of the breezy air
 The old man said, 'I see around me []
 Things which you cannot see. We die, my Friend, 130
 Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
 And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
 Dies with him or is changed, and very soon
 Even of the good is no memorial left.
 The waters of that spring if they could feel
 Might mourn. They are not as they were; the bond
 Of brotherhood is broken—time has been
 When every day the touch of human hand
 Disturbed their stillness, and they ministered
 To human comfort. As I stooped to drink, 140
 Few minutes gone, at that deserted well
 What feelings came to me! A spider's web
 Across its mouth hung to the water's edge,
 And on the wet and slimy foot-stone lay
 The useless fragment of a wooden bowl;
 It moved my very heart. The time has been
 When I could never pass this road but she
 Who lived within these walls, when I appeared,
 A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
 As my own child. Oh Sir! the good die first, 150
 And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
 Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
 Has blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks

When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
 From that forsaken well, and no one came
 But he was welcome, no one went away
 But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
 The worm is on her cheek, and this poor hut,^o
 Stripped of its outward garb of household flowers,
 Of rose and jasmine, offers to the wind 160
 A cold bare wall whose earthy top is tricked
 With weeds and the rank spear-grass. She is dead,
 And nettles rot and adders sun themselves
 Where we have sat together while she nursed
 Her infant at her bosom. The wild colt,
 The unstalled heifer and the Potter's ass,
 Find shelter now within the chimney wall
 Where I have seen her evening hearth-stone blaze
 And through the window spread upon the road
 Its chearful light.—You will forgive me, Sir, 170
 I feel I play the truant with my tale.
 She had a husband, an industrious man,
 Sober and steady; I have heard her say
 That he was up and busy at his loom
 In summer ere the mower's scythe had swept
 The dewy grass, and in the early spring
 Ere the last star had vanished. They who passed
 At evening, from behind the garden fence
 Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply
 After his daily work till the day-light 180
 Was gone and every leaf and every flower
 Were lost in the dark hedges. So they lived
 In peace and comfort, and two pretty babes
 Were their best hope next to the God in Heaven.
 —You may remember, now some ten years gone,
 Two blighting seasons when the fields were left
 With half a tillage. It pleased heaven to add
 A worse affliction in the plague of war:
 A happy land was stricken to the heart;
 'Twas a sad time of sorrow and distress: 190
 A wanderer among the cottages,
 I with my pack of winter raiment saw
 The hardships of that season: many rich
 Sunk down as in a dream among the poor,

And of the poor did many cease to be,
 And their place knew them not. Meanwhile, abridged
 Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
 To numerous self denials, Margaret
 Went struggling on through those calamitous years
 With chearful hope: but ere the second spring 200
 A fever seized her husband. In disease
 He lingered long, and when his strength returned
 He found the little he had stored to meet
 The hour of accident or crippling age
 Was all consumed. As I have said, 'twas now
 A time of trouble; shoals of artisans
 Were from their daily labour turned away
 To hang for bread on parish charity,
 They and their wives and children—happier far
 Could they have lived as do the little birds 210
 That peck along the hedges, or the kite
 That makes her dwelling in the mountain rocks.
 Ill fared it now with Robert, he who dwelt
 In this poor cottage; at his door he stood
 And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
 That had no mirth in them, or with his knife
 Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks,
 Then idly sought about through every nook
 Of house or garden any casual task
 Of use or ornament, and with a strange, 220
 Amusing but uneasy novelty
 He blended where he might the various tasks
 Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
 The passenger might see him at the door
 With his small hammer on the threshold stone
 Pointing lame buckle-tongues and rusty nails,
 The treasured store of an old household box,
 Or braiding cords or weaving bells and caps
 Of rushes, play-things for his babes.
 But this endured not; his good-humour soon 230
 Became a weight in which no-pleasure was,
 And poverty brought on a petted mood
 And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
 And he would leave his home, and to the town
 Without an errand would he turn his steps

Or wander here and there among the fields.
 One while he would speak lightly of his babes
 And with a cruel tongue: at other times
 He played with them wild freaks of merriment:
 And 'twas a piteous thing to see the looks 240
 Of the poor innocent children. "Every smile,"
 Said Margaret to me here beneath these trees,
 "Made my heart bleed." At this the old Man paused
 And looking up to those enormous elms
 He said, "Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
 At this still season of repose and peace,
 This hour when all things which are not at rest
 Are chearful, while this multitude of flies
 Fills all the air with happy melody,
 Why should a tear be in an old Man's eye? 250
 Why should we thus with an untoward mind
 And in the weakness of humanity
 From natural wisdom turn our hearts away,
 To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears,
 And feeding on disquiet thus disturb
 [The calm] of Nature with our restless thoughts?'

SECOND PART

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
 But when he ended there was in his face
 Such easy chearfulness, a look so mild
 That for a little time it stole away 260
 All recollection, and that simple tale
 Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
 A while on trivial things we held discourse,
 To me soon tasteless. In my own despite
 I thought of that poor woman as of one
 Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
 Her homely tale with such familiar power,
 With such a countenance of love, an eye
 So busy, that the things of which he spake
 Seemed present, and, attention now relaxed, 270
 There was a heartfelt chillness in my veins.
 I rose, and turning from that breezy shade

Went out into the open air, and stood
 To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.
 Long time I had not stayed ere, looking round
 Upon that tranquil ruin, and impelled
 By a mild force of curious pensiveness,
 I begged of the old man that for my sake
 He would resume his story. He replied,
 'It were a wantonness, and would demand 280
 Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
 Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
 Even of the dead, contented thence to draw
 A momentary pleasure never marked
 By reason, barren of all future good.
 But we have known that there is often found
 In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
 A power to virtue friendly; were't not so,
 I am a dreamer among men—indeed
 An idle dreamer. 'Tis a common tale, 290
 By moving accidents uncharactered,^o
 A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
 In bodily form, and to the grosser sense
 But ill adapted, scarcely palpable
 To him who does not think. But at your bidding
 I will proceed.

While thus it fared with those
 To whom this Cottage till that hapless year
 Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
 To travel in a country far remote.
 And glad I was when, halting by yon gate 300
 Which leads from the green lane, again I saw
 These lofty elm-trees. Long I did not rest:
 With many pleasant thoughts I cheered my way
 O'er the flat common. At the door arrived,
 I knocked, and when I entered with the hope
 Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me
 A little while, then turned her head away
 Speechless, and sitting down upon a chair
 Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do
 Or how to speak to her. Poor wretch! at last 310
 She rose from off her seat—and then—Oh Sir!
 I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name:

With fervent love and with a face of grief
 Unutterably helpless and a look
 That seemed to cling upon me, she inquired
 If I had seen her husband. As she spake
 A strange surprize and fear came o'er my heart
 And I could make no answer—then she told
 That he had disappeared, just two months gone.
 He left his house; two wretched days had passed, 320
 And on the third by the first break of light,
 Within her casement full in view she saw
 A purse of gold. "I trembled at the sight,"^o
 Said Margaret, "for I knew it was his hand
 That placed it there, and on that very day
 By one, a stranger, from my husband sent,
 The tidings came that he had joined a troop
 Of soldiers going to a distant land.
 He left me thus—Poor Man! he had not heart
 To take a farewell of me, and he feared 330
 That I should follow with my babes and sink
 Beneath the misery of a soldier's life."
 This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
 And when she ended I had little power
 To give her comfort and was glad to take
 Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
 To cheer us both—but long we had not talked
 Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
 And with a brighter eye she looked around
 As if she had been shedding tears of joy. 340
 We parted. It was then the early spring;
 I left her busy with her garden tools;
 And well remember, o'er the fence she looked,
 And while I paced along the foot-way path
 Called out, and sent a blessing after me
 With tender chearfulness and with a voice
 That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.
 I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale
 With this my weary load, in heat and cold,
 Through many a wood, and many an open plain, 350
 In sunshine or in shade, in wet or fair,
 Now blithe, now drooping—as it might befall—
 My best companions now the driving winds

And now the music of my own sad steps,
 With many short-lived thoughts that passed between
 And disappeared. I measured back this road
 Towards the wane of summer, when the wheat
 Was yellow and the soft and bladed grass
 Sprung up afresh and o'er the hay-field spread
 Its tender green. When I had reached the door 360
 I found that she was absent. In the shade
 Where now we sit I waited her return.
 Her cottage in its outward look appeared
 As chearful as before; in any shew
 Of neatness little changed, but that I thought
 The honeysuckle crowded round the door
 And from the wall hung down in heavier tufts,
 And knots of worthless stone-crop started-out
 Along the window's edge and grew like weeds
 Against the lower panes. I turned aside 370
 And strolled into her garden. It was changed:
 The unprofitable bindweed spread his bells
 From side to side, and with unwieldy wreaths
 Had dragged the rose from its sustaining wall
 And bowed it down to earth; the border tufts—
 Daisy, and thrift, and lowly camomile,
 And thyme—had straggled out into the paths
 Which they were used to deck. Ere this an hour
 Was wasted. Back I turned my restless steps,
 And as I walked before the door it chanced 380
 A stranger passed, and guessing whom I sought
 He said that she was used to ramble far.
 The sun was sinking in the west, and now
 I sate with sad impatience. From within
 Her solitary infant cried aloud.
 The spot though fair seemed very desolate,
 The longer I remained more desolate.
 And looking round I saw the corner stones,^o
 Till then unmarked, on either side the door
 With dull red stains discoloured and stuck o'er 390
 With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep
 That feed upon the commons thither came
 As to a couching-place and rubbed their sides
 Even at her threshold. The church-clock struck eight;

I turned and saw her distant a few steps.
 Her face was pale and thin, her figure too
 Was changed. As she unlocked the door she said,
 "It grieves me you have waited here so long,
 But in good truth I've wandered much of late
 And sometimes, to my shame I speak, have need 400
 Of my best prayers to bring me back again."
 While on the board she spread our evening meal
 She told me she had lost her eldest child,
 That he for months had been a serving-boy
 Apprenticed by the parish. "I am changed,
 And to myself," said she, "have done much wrong,
 And to this helpless infant. I have slept
 Weeping, and weeping I have waked; my tears
 Have flowed as if my body were not such
 As others are, and I could never die. 410
 But I am now in mind and in my heart
 More easy, and I hope," said she, "that heaven
 Will give me patience to endure the things
 Which I behold at home." It would have grieved
 Your very soul to see her: evermore
 Her eye-lids drooped, her eyes were downward cast;
 And when she at her table gave me food
 She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
 Her body was subdued. In every act
 Pertaining to her house affairs appeared 420
 The careless stillness which a thinking mind
 Gives to an idle matter—still she sighed,
 But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
 No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
 We sate together, sighs came on my ear;
 I knew not how and hardly whence they came.
 I took my staff, and when I kissed her babe
 The tears were in her eyes. I left her then
 With the best hope and comfort I could give;
 She thanked me for my will, but for my hope 430
 It seemed she did not thank me. I returned
 And took my rounds along this road again
 Ere on its sunny bank the primrose flower
 Had chronicled the earliest day of spring.
 I found her sad and drooping; she had learned

I yet remember, through the miry lane
 She went with me a mile, when the bare trees
 Trickled with foggy damps, and in such sort
 That any heart had ached to hear her begged 480
 That wheresoe'er I went I still would ask
 For him whom she had lost. Five tedious years
 She lingered in unquiet widowhood,
 A wife, and widow. Needs must it have been
 A sore heart-wasting. I have heard, my Friend,
 That in that broken arbour she would sit
 The idle length of half a sabbath day,
 There—where you see the toadstool's lazy head—
 And when a dog passed by she still would quit
 The shade and look abroad. On this old Bench 490
 For hours she sate, and evermore her eye
 Was busy in the distance, shaping things
 Which made her heart beat quick. Seest thou that path?
 (The greensward now has broken its grey line)
 There, to and fro she paced through many a day^o
 Of the warm summer, from a belt of flax
 That girt her waist spinning the long-drawn thread
 With backward steps.—Yet ever as there passed
 A man whose garments shewed the Soldier's red,
 Or crippled Mendicant in Sailor's garb, 500
 The little Child who sate to turn the wheel
 Ceased from his toil, and she with faltering voice,
 Expecting still to learn her husband's fate,
 Made many a fond inquiry; and when they
 Whose presence gave no comfort were gone by,
 Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate
 Which bars the traveller's road she often stood
 And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
 Would lift, and in his face look wistfully,
 Most happy if from aught discovered there 510
 Of tender feeling she might dare repeat
 The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor hut
 Sunk to decay, for he was gone whose hand,
 At the first nippings of October frost,
 Closed up each chink and with fresh bands of straw
 Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she sate
 Through the long winter, reckless and alone,

Till this reft house by frost, and thaw, and rain
 Was sapped, and when she slept the nightly damp
 Did chill her breast, and in the stormy day
 Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind
 Even at the side of her own fire.—Yet still
 She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
 Have parted hence; and still that length of road
 And this rude bench one torturing hope endeared,
 Fast rooted at her heart, and here, my friend,
 In sickness she remained, and here she died,
 Last human tenant of these ruined walls.’

520

A Night-Piece

The sky is overspread
 With a close veil of one continuous cloud
 All whitened by the moon, that just appears,
 A dim-seen orb, yet chequers not the ground
 With any shadow—plant, or tower, or tree.
 At last a pleasant instantaneous light
 Startles the musing man whose eyes are bent
 To earth. He looks around, the clouds are split
 Asunder, and above his head he views
 The clear moon and the glory of the heavens.
 There in a black-blue vault she sails along
 Followed by multitudes of stars, that small,
 And bright, and sharp along the gloomy vault
 Drive as she drives. How fast they wheel away!
 Yet vanish not! The wind is in the trees;
 But they are silent. Still they roll along
 Immeasurably distant, and the vault
 Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
 Still deepens its interminable depth.
 At length the vision closes, and the mind
 Not undisturbed by the deep joy it feels,
 Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
 Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

10

20

Now when I think of it, self-reproach can I
 And ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~thought~~ ^{thought} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~me~~ ^{me} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~a~~ ^a ~~late~~ ^{late} ~~day~~ ^{day}
 Though early, when upon the mountain-slope
 The foot and breath of frosty wind had snipped
 The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
 To wander half the night among the cliffs
 And the smooth hollow, where the woodcocks ran
 Along the ^{open} ~~mountain~~ turf. In thought and wish,
 That time, my shoulder all with springs hung,
 I was a fell destroyer. ~~On the heights~~
~~When~~ ~~adding~~ ~~on~~ ~~from~~ ~~snare~~ ~~to~~ ~~snare~~ ~~I~~ ~~plied~~
 My anxious visitation, hurrying on, Moon of stars
 Still hurrying, hurrying onward, ~~to my heart~~
~~where~~ ~~shining~~ ~~on~~ ~~my~~ ~~head~~, ~~I~~ ~~was~~ ~~alone~~
~~and~~ ~~seem'd~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~a~~ ~~trouble~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~peace~~
~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~ ~~among~~ ~~the~~ ~~stars~~
~~That~~ ~~was~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~them~~: ~~and~~ ~~they~~ ~~troubled~~ ~~me~~
~~with~~ ~~expectation~~ ~~of~~ ~~some~~ ~~other~~ ~~deed~~
~~Some~~ ~~times~~ ~~did~~ ~~it~~ ~~seem~~ ~~that~~ ~~his~~ ~~strong~~ ~~leg~~
~~which~~ ~~was~~ ~~the~~ ~~capture~~ ~~of~~ ~~another's~~ ~~toil~~
 Became my prey; and when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 New breathings coming after me, and sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.
 No less, in spring-time, when on southern banks
 The shining sun had from his knot of leaves
 Decey'd the promoose-flower, and when the oaks
 And woods were worn, was I a more than

FIG. 3 The Two-Part Prelude, I, 27-35. Fair-Copy MS in the hand of Dorothy Wordsworth, with revision by William Wordsworth.

Two-Part Prelude

FIRST PART

Was it for this
 That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
 To blend his murmurs with my Nurse's song,
 And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
 And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
 That flowed along my dreams? For this didst thou,
 O Derwent, travelling over the green plains^o
 Near my 'sweet birth-place', didst thou, beauteous stream,
 Make ceaseless music through the night and day,
 Which with, its steady cadence tempering 10
 Our human waywardness, composed my thoughts
 To more than infant softness, giving me,
 Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
 A knowledge, a dim earnest of the calm
 Which Nature breathes among the fields and groves?
 Beloved Derwent! fairest of all Streams!
 Was it for this that I, a four years child,
 A naked Boy, among thy silent pools
 Made one long bathing of a summer's day?
 Basked in the sun, or plunged into thy streams, 20
 Alternate, all a summer's day, or coursed
 Over the sandy fields, and dashed the flowers
 Of yellow grunsel, or when crag and hill,
 The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height^o
 Were bronzed with a deep radiance, stood alone,
 A naked Savage in the thunder-shower?
 And afterwards, 'twas in a later day
 Though early, when upon the mountain-slope
 The frost and breath of frosty wind had snapped
 The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy 30
 To wander half the night among the cliffs
 And the smooth hollows where the woodcocks ran
 Along the moonlight turf. In thought and wish,
 That time, my shoulder all with springes hung,^o
 I was a fell destroyer. Gentle Powers!
 Who give us happiness and call it peace!
 When scudding on from snare to snare I plied
 My anxious visitation, hurrying on,

Still hurrying, hurrying onward, how my heart
 Panted; among the scattered yew-trees and the crags 40
 That looked upon me, how my bosom beat
 With expectation. Sometimes strong desire
 Resistless overpowered me, and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toils
 Became my prey; and when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less in springtime, when on southern banks 50
 The shining sun had from his knot of leaves
 Decoyed the primrose flower, and when the vales
 And woods were warm, was I a rover then
 In the high places, on the lonesome peaks,
 Among the mountains and the winds. Though mean
 And though inglorious, were my views, the end
 Was not ignoble. Oh, when I have hung
 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
 Or half-inch fissures in the slippery rock 60
 But ill sustained, and almost, as it seemed,
 Suspended by the blast which blew amain,
 Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time,
 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
 With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
 Blow through my ears! The sky seemed not a sky
 Of earth, and with what motion moved the clouds!

The mind of man is fashioned and built up
 Even as a strain of music: I believe
 That there are spirits which, when they would form
 A favored being, from his very dawn 70
 Of infancy do open out the clouds
 As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
 With gentle visitation; quiet Powers!
 Retired, and seldom recognized, yet kind,
 And to the very meanest not unknown;
 With me, though rarely, in my early days
 They communed: others too there are, who use,
 Yet haply aiming at the self-same end,
 Severer interventions, ministry

More palpable, and of their school was I. 80
 They guided me: one evening, led by them,^o
 I went alone into a Shepherd's boat,
 A skiff that to a willow-tree was tied
 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
 The moon was up, the lake was shining clear
 Among the hoary mountains: from the shore
 I pushed, and struck the oars, and struck again
 In cadence, and my little Boat moved on
 Just like a man who walks with stately step
 Though bent on speed. It was an act of stealth 90
 And troubled pleasure; not without the voice
 Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on,
 Leaving behind her still on either side
 Small circles glittering idly in the moon
 Until they melted all into one track
 Of sparkling light. A rocky steep uprose
 Above the cavern of the willow-tree,
 And now, as suited one who proudly rowed
 With his best skill, I fixed a steady view
 Upon the top of that same craggy ridge, 100
 The bound, of the horizon, for behind
 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
 She was an elfin pinnacle; twenty times
 I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my Boat
 Went heaving through the water, like a swan,
 When, from behind that rocky steep, till then
 The bound of the horizon, a huge Cliff,
 As if with voluntary power instinct,
 Upreared its head: I struck, and struck again, 110
 And, growing still in stature, the huge cliff
 Rose up between me and the stars, and still
 With measured motion, like a living thing,
 Strode after me. With trembling hands I turned,
 And through the silent water stole my way
 Back to the cavern of the willow-tree.
 There in her mooring-place I left my bark,
 And through the meadows homeward went with grave
 And serious thoughts: and after I had seen
 That spectacle, for many days my brain 120

Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
 Of unknown modes of being: in my thoughts
 There was a darkness, call it solitude
 Or blank desertion; no familiar shapes
 Of hourly objects, images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields:
 But huge and mighty forms that do not live
 Like living men moved slowly through my mind
 By day, and were the trouble of my dreams.

Ah! not in vain ye Beings of the hills! 130

And ye that walk the woods and open heaths
 By moon or star-light, thus from my first dawn
 Of childhood, did ye love to intertwine
 The passions that build up our human soul,
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,^o
 But with high objects, with eternal things,
 With life and nature, purifying thus
 The elements of feeling and of thought,
 And sanctifying by such discipline
 Both pain and fear, until we recognise 140
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
 With stinted kindness. In November days,
 When vapours, rolling down the valleys, made
 A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods
 At noon, and 'mid the calm of summer nights
 When by the margin of the trembling lake
 Beneath the gloomy hills I homeward went
 In solitude, such intercourse was mine.

And in the frosty season, when the sun 150

Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
 The cottage-windows through the twilight blazed,
 I heeded not the summons: clear and loud
 The village clock tolled six; I wheeled about
 Proud and exulting, like an untired horse
 That cares not for its home. All shod with steel
 We hissed along the polished ice in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chace
 And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,
 The pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare. 160
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,

And not a voice was idle. With the din,
 Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud,
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron, while the distant hills
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
 Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
 The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay, or sportively
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the shadow of a star
 That gleamed upon the ice: and oftentimes,
 When we had given our bodies to the wind
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,

Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round;^o
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

Ye Powers of earth! ye Genii of the springs!
 And ye that have your voices in the clouds,
 And ye that are Familiars of the lakes
 And of the standing pools, I may not think
 A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
 Such ministry, when ye through many a year
 Thus, by the agency of boyish sports,
 On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
 Impressed upon all forms the characters^o
 Of danger or desire, and thus did make
 The surface of the universal earth
 With meanings of delight, of hope and fear,
 Work like a sea.

Not uselessly employed
 I might pursue this theme through every change
 Of exercise and sport to which the year
 Did summon us in its delightful round.

We were a noisy crew: the sun in heaven
 Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours,
 Nor saw a race in happiness and joy
 More worthy of the fields where they were sown.
 I would record with no reluctant voice
 Our home amusements by the warm peat-fire
 At evening, when with pencil and with slate
 In square divisions parcelled out, and all
 With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er, 210
 We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head,
 In strife too humble to be named in verse;
 Or round the naked table, snow-white deal,
 Cherry or maple, sate in close array,
 And to the combat—Lu or Whist—led on°
 A thick-ribbed army, not as in the world
 Discarded and ungratefully thrown by
 Even for the very service they had wrought,
 But husbanded through many a long campaign.
 Oh, with what echoes on the board they fell— 220
 Ironic diamonds, hearts of sable hue,
 Queens gleaming through their splendour's last decay,
 Knaves wrapt in one assimilating gloom,
 And Kings indignant at the shame incurred
 By royal visages. Meanwhile abroad
 The heavy rain was falling, or the frost
 Raged bitterly with keen and silent tooth,
 And, interrupting the impassioned game,
 Oft from the neighbouring lake the splitting ice,
 While it sank down towards the water, sent 230
 Among the meadows and the hills its long
 And frequent yellings, imitative some
 Of wolves that howl along the Bothnic main.°
 Nor with less willing heart would I rehearse
 The woods of autumn and their hidden bowers
 With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,
 True symbol of the foolishness of hope,
 Which with its strong enchantment led me on
 By rocks and pools, where never summer star
 Impressed its shadow, to forlorn cascades 240
 Among the windings of the mountain-brooks;
 The kite, in sultry calms from some high hill

Sent up, ascending thence till it was lost
 Among the fleecy clouds, in gusty days
 Launched from the lower grounds, and suddenly
 Dashed headlong and rejected by the storm.
 All these, and more, with rival claims demand
 Grateful acknowledgement. It were a song
 Venial, and such as if I rightly judge
 I might protract unblamed; but I perceive 250
 That much is overlooked, and we should ill
 Attain our object if from delicate fears
 Of breaking in upon the unity
 Of this my argument I should omit^o
 To speak of such effects as cannot here
 Be regularly classed, yet tend no less
 To the same point, the growth of mental power
 And love of nature's works.

Ere I had seen

Eight summers (and 'twas in the very week
 When I was first transplanted to thy vale, 260
 Beloved Hawkshead! when thy paths, thy shores^o
 And brooks, were like a dream of novelty
 To my half-infant mind) I chanced to cross
 One of those open fields which, shaped like ears,
 Make green peninsulas on Esthwaite's lake.
 Twilight was coming on, yet through the gloom
 I saw distinctly on the opposite shore,
 Beneath a tree and close by the lake side,
 A heap of garments, as left by one
 Who there was bathing: half an hour I watched 270
 And no one owned them: meanwhile the calm lake
 Grew dark with all the shadows on its breast,
 And now and then a leaping fish disturbed
 The breathless stillness. The succeeding day
 There came a company, and in their boat
 Sounded with iron hooks and with long poles.
 At length the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene^o
 Of trees, and hills, and water, bolt upright
 Rose with his ghastly face. I might advert
 To numerous accidents in flood or field, 280
 Quarry or moor, or 'mid the winter snows,
 Distresses and disasters, tragic facts

Of rural history that impressed my mind
 With images, to which in following years
 Far other feelings were attached, with forms
 That yet exist with independent life
 And, like their archetypes, know no decay.°

There are in our existence spots of time
 Which with distinct pre-eminence retain
 A fructifying virtue, whence, depressed 290
 By trivial occupations and the round
 Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
 (Especially the imaginative power)
 Are nourished and invisibly repaired.
 Such moments chiefly seem to have their date
 In our first childhood. I remember well
 ('Tis of an early season that I speak,
 The twilight of rememberable life),
 While I was yet an urchin, one who scarce
 Could hold a bridle, with ambitious hopes 300
 I mounted, and we rode towards the hills.
 We were a pair of horsemen: honest James
 Was with me, my encourager and guide.
 We had not travelled long ere some mischance
 Disjoined me from my comrade, and, through fear
 Dismounting, down the rough and stony moor
 I led my horse, and stumbling on, at length
 Came to a bottom where in former times
 A man, the murderer of his wife, was hung
 In irons; mouldered was the gibbet mast, 310
 The bones were gone, the iron and the wood,
 Only a long green ridge of turf remained
 Whose shape was like a grave. I left the spot,
 And, reascending the bare slope, I saw
 A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
 The beacon on the summit, and more near°
 A girl who bore a pitcher on her head
 And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
 Against the blowing wind. It was in truth
 An ordinary sight but I should need 320
 Colours and words that are unknown to man
 To paint the visionary dreariness
 Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,

Did at that time invest the naked pool,
 The beacon on the lonely eminence,
 The woman and her garments vexed and tossed
 By the strong wind. Nor less I recollect
 (Long after, though my childhood had not ceased)
 Another scene which left a kindred power
 Implanted in my mind.

One Christmas-time, 330

The day before the holidays began,
 Feverish, and tired, and restless, I went forth
 Into the fields, impatient for the sight
 Of those three horses which should bear us home,
 My brothers and myself. There was a crag,^o
 An eminence, which from the meeting-point
 Of two highways ascending overlooked
 At least a long half-mile of those two roads,
 By each of which the expected steed might come,
 The choice uncertain. Thither I repaired 340
 Up to the highest summit. 'Twas a day
 Stormy, and rough, and wild, and on the grass
 I sate, half-sheltered by a naked wall;
 Upon my right hand was a single sheep,
 A whistling hawthorn on my left, and there,
 Those two companions at my side, I watched
 With eyes intensely straining, as the mist
 Gave intermitting prospects of the wood
 And plain beneath. Ere I to school returned 350
 That dreary time, ere I had been ten days
 A dweller in my father's house, he died,
 And I and my two brothers, orphans then,
 Followed his body to the grave. The event,
 With all the sorrow which it brought, appeared
 A chastisement, and when I called to mind
 That day so lately passed, when from the crag
 I looked in such anxiety of hope,
 With trite reflections of morality
 Yet with the deepest passion, I bowed low
 To God, who thus corrected my desires; 360
 And afterwards the wind, and sleety rain,
 And all the business of the elements,
 The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,

And the bleak music of that old stone wall,
 The noise of wood and water, and the mist
 Which on the line of each of those two roads
 Advanced in such indisputable shapes,
 All these were spectacles and sounds to which
 I often would repair, and thence would drink
 As at a fountain. And I do not doubt
 That in this later time, when storm and rain
 Beat on my roof at midnight, or by day
 When I am in the woods, unknown to me
 The workings of my spirit thence are brought.

[Nor, sedulous to trace]

How Nature by collateral interest,
 And by extrinsic passion, peopled first
 My mind with forms, or beautiful or grand,
 And made me love them, may I well forget
 How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
 Of subtler origin, how I have felt
 Not seldom, even in that tempestuous time,
 Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
 Which seem in their simplicity to own
 An intellectual charm, that calm delight
 Which, if I err not, surely must belong
 To those first-born affinities that fit
 Our new existence to existing things,
 And in our dawn of being constitute
 The bond of union betwixt life and joy.

Yes, I remember when the changeful earth
 And twice five seasons on my mind had stamped
 The faces of the moving year, even then,
 A Child, I held unconscious intercourse
 With the eternal Beauty, drinking in
 A pure organic pleasure from the lines
 Of curling mist or from the level plain
 Of waters coloured by the steady clouds.

The sands of Westmorland, the creeks and bays
 Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
 How when the sea threw off his evening shade
 And to the Shepherd's hut beneath the crags
 Did send sweet notice of the rising moon,
 How I have stood, to images like these

A stranger, linking with the spectacle
 No body of associated forms,
 And bringing with me no peculiar sense
 Of quietness or peace, yet I have stood
 Even while my eye has moved o'er three long leagues
 Of shining water, gathering, as it seemed, 410
 Through the wide surface of that field of light
 New pleasure, like a bee among the flowers.

Thus often in those fits of vulgar joy
 Which through all seasons on a child's pursuits
 Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
 Which like a tempest works along the blood
 And is forgotten, even then I felt
 Gleams like the flashing of a shield; the earth
 And common face of Nature spoke to me
 Rememberable things: sometimes, 'tis true, 420
 By quaint associations, yet not vain
 Nor profitless, if haply they impressed
 Collateral objects and appearances,
 Albeit lifeless then and doomed to sleep
 Until maturer seasons called them forth
 To impregnate and to elevate the mind.

And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
 Wearied itself out of the memory,
 The scenes which were a witness of that joy
 Remained, in their substantial lineaments 430
 Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
 Were visible, a daily sight: and thus
 By the impressive agency of fear,
 By pleasure and repeated happiness.
 So frequently repeated, and by force
 Of obscure feelings representative
 Of joys that were forgotten, these same scenes,
 So beauteous and majestic in themselves,
 Though yet the day was distant, did at length
 Become habitually dear, and all 440
 Their hues and forms were by invisible links
 Allied to the affections.

I began

My story early, feeling, as I fear,
 The weakness of a human love for days

Disowned by memory, ere the birth of spring
 Planting my snowdrops among winter snows.
 Nor will it seem to thee, my Friend, so prompt
 In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
 With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
 Meanwhile my hope has been that I might fetch 450
 Reproaches from my former years, whose power
 May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
 To honourable toil. Yet should it be
 That this is but an impotent desire,
 That I by such inquiry am not taught
 To understand myself, nor thou to know
 With better knowledge how the heart was framed
 Of him thou lovest, need I dread from thee
 Harsh judgements if I am so loth to quit
 Those recollected hours that have the charm 460
 Of visionary things, and lovely forms
 And sweet sensations that throw back our life^o
 And make our infancy a visible scene
 On which the sun is shining?

SECOND PART

Thus far, my Friend, have we retraced the way
 Through which I travelled when I first began
 To love the woods and fields. The passion yet
 Was in its birth, sustained as might befall
 By nourishment that came unsought; for still
 From week to week, from month to month, we lived
 A round of tumult: duly were our games
 Prolonged in summer till the daylight failed;
 No chair remained before the doors, the bench
 And threshold steps were empty, fast asleep 10
 The labourer and the old man who had sate
 A later lingerer, yet the revelry
 Continued and the loud uproar: at last,
 When all the ground was dark, and the huge clouds
 Were edged with twinkling stars, to bed we went
 With weary joints and with a beating mind.
 Ah! is there one who ever has been young

And needs a monitory voice to tame
 The pride of virtue and of intellect,
 And is there one, the wisest and the best 20
 Of all mankind, who does not sometimes wish
 For things which cannot be, who would not give,
 If so he might, to duty and to truth
 The eagerness of infantine desire?
 A tranquillizing spirit presses now
 On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
 The vacancy between me and those days
 Which yet have such self-presence in my heart
 That sometimes when I think of them I seem
 Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself 30
 And of some other being. A grey stone
 Of native rock, left midway in the square
 Of our small market-village, was the home
 And centre of these joys; and when, returned
 After long absence, thither I repaired,
 I found that it was split and gone to build
 A smart assembly-room that perked and flared^o
 With wash and rough-cast, elbowing the ground
 Which had been ours. But let the fiddle scream
 And be ye happy! yet I know, my Friends, 40
 That more than one of you will think with me
 Of those soft starry nights and that old dame
 From whom the stone was named, who there had sate
 And watched her table with its huckster's wares,
 Assiduous, for the length of sixty years.

We ran a boisterous race, the year span round
 With giddy motion. But the time approached
 That brought with it a regular desire
 For calmer pleasures, when the beauteous scenes
 Of nature were collaterally attached 50
 To every scheme of holiday delight
 And every boyish sport, less grateful else
 And languidly pursued.

When summer came
 It was the pastime of our afternoons
 To beat along the plain of Windermere
 With rival oars; and the selected bourn
 Was now an island musical with birds

That sang for ever, now a sister isle
 Beneath the oak's umbrageous covert sown
 With lilies-of-the-valley like a field, 60
 And now a third small island where remained
 An old stone table and one mouldered cave,
 A hermit's history. In such a race,
 So ended, disappointment could be none,
 Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy;
 We rested in the shade all pleased alike,
 Conquered and conqueror. Thus our selfishness
 Was mellowed down, and thus the pride of strength
 And the vainglory of superior skill
 Were interfused with objects which subdued 70
 And tempered them, and gradually produced
 A quiet independence of the heart.
 And to my Friend who knows me I may add,
 Unapprehensive of reproof, that hence
 Ensued a diffidence and modesty,
 And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,
 The self-sufficing power of solitude.

No delicate viands sapped our bodily strength;
 More than we wished we knew the blessing then
 Of vigorous hunger, for our daily meals 80
 Were frugal, Sabine fare! and then exclude^o
 A little weekly stipend, and we lived
 Through three divisions of the quartered year
 In penniless poverty. But now to school
 Returned from the half-yearly holidays,
 We came with purses more profusely filled,
 Allowance which abundantly sufficed
 To gratify the palate with repasts
 More costly than the dame of whom I spake,
 That ancient woman, and her board, supplied, 90
 Hence inroads into distant vales, and long
 Excursions far away among the hills;
 Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground
 Or in the woods, or by a river-side
 Or fountain, festive banquets that provoked^o
 The languid action of a natural scene
 By pleasure of corporeal appetite
 Nor is my aim neglected if I tell

How twice in the long length of those half-years
 We from our funds perhaps with bolder hand 100
 Drew largely, anxious for one day at least
 To feel the motion of the galloping steed;
 And with the good old Innkeeper in truth
 I needs must say that sometimes we have used
 Sly subterfuge, for the intended bound
 Of the day's journey was too distant far
 For any cautious man, a Structure famed
 Beyond its neighbourhood, the antique walls
 Of a large Abbey, with its fractured arch,^o
 Belfry, and images, and living trees, 110
 A holy scene! Along the smooth green turf
 Our horses grazed: in more than inland peace
 Left by the winds that overpass the vale,
 In that sequestered ruin trees and towers,
 Both silent and both motionless alike,
 Hear all day long the murmuring sea that beats
 Incessantly upon a craggy shore.

Our steeds remounted and the summons given,
 With whip and spur we by the Chantry flew
 In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged Knight 120
 And the stone Abbot, and that single wren
 Which one day sang so sweetly in the nave
 Of the old church that, though from recent showers
 The earth was comfortless, and, touched by faint
 Internal breezes, from the roofless walls
 The shuddering ivy dripped large drops, yet still
 So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible bird
 Sang to itself that there I could have made
 My dwelling-place, and lived for ever there
 To hear such music. Through the walls we flew 130
 And down the valley, and, a circuit made
 In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth
 We scampered homeward. Oh, ye rocks and streams,
 And that still spirit of the evening air,
 Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
 Your presence, when with slackened step we breathed
 Along the sides of the steep hills, or when,
 Lightened by gleams of moonlight from the sea,
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

There was a row of ancient trees, since fallen, 140
 That on the margin of a jutting land
 Stood near the Lake of Coniston and made
 With its long boughs above the water stretched
 A gloom through which a boat might sail along
 As in a cloister. An old Hall was near,
 Grotesque and beautiful, its gavel end
 And huge round chimneys to the top o'ergrown
 With fields of ivy. Thither we repaired,
 'Twas even a custom with us, to the shore
 And to that cool piazza. They who dwelt 150
 In the neglected mansion-house supplied
 Fresh butter, tea-kettle, and earthen-ware,
 And chafing-dish with smoking coals, and so
 Beneath the trees we sate in our small boat,
 And in the covert eat our delicate meal
 Upon the calm smooth lake. It was a joy
 Worthy the heart of one who is full grown
 To rest beneath those horizontal boughs
 And mark the radiance of the setting sun,
 Himself unseen, reposing on the top 160
 Of the high eastern hills. And there I said,^o
 That beauteous sight before me, there I said
 (Then first beginning in my thoughts to mark
 That sense of dim similitude which links
 Our moral feelings with external forms)
 That in whatever region I should close
 My mortal life I would remember you,
 Fair scenes! that dying I would think on you,
 My soul would send a longing look to you:
 Even as that setting sun, while all the vale 170
 Could nowhere catch one faint memorial gleam
 Yet with the last remains of his last light
 Still lingered, and a farewell lustre threw
 On the dear mountain-tops where first he rose.
 'Twas then my fourteenth summer, and these words
 Were uttered in a casual access
 Of sentiment, a momentary trance
 That far outran the habit of my mind.
 Upon the eastern shore of Windermere,^o
 Above the crescent of a pleasant bay, 180

There was an Inn, no homely-featured shed,
 Brother of the surrounding cottages,
 But 'twas a splendid place, the door beset
 With chaises, grooms, and liveries, and within
 Decanters, glasses, and the blood-red wine.
 In ancient times, or ere the Hall was built
 On the large island, had the dwelling been
 More worthy of a poet's love, a hut
 Proud of its one bright fire and sycamore shade.
 But though the rhymes were gone which once inscribed 190
 The threshold, and large golden characters
 On the blue-frosted signboard had usurped
 The place of the old Lion in contempt
 And mockery of the rustic painter's hand,
 Yet to this hour the spot to me is dear
 With all its foolish pomp. The garden lay
 Upon a slope surmounted by the plain
 Of a small bowling-green; beneath us stood
 A grove, with gleams of water through the trees
 And over the tree-tops; nor did we want 200
 Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream,
 And there through half an afternoon we played
 On the smooth platform, and the shouts we sent
 Made all the mountains ring. But ere the fall
 Of night, when in our pinnace we returned
 Over the dusky lake, and to the beach
 Of some small island steered our course, with one,
 The minstrel of our troop, and left him there,^o
 And rowed off gently while he blew his flute
 Alone upon the rock, oh, then the calm 210
 And dead still water lay upon my mind
 Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,
 Never before so beautiful, sank down
 Into my heart and held me like a dream.

Thus day by day my sympathies increased,
 And thus the common range of visible things
 Grew dear to me: already I began
 To love the sun, a Boy I loved the sun
 Not, as I since have loved him, as a pledge
 And surety of my earthly life, a light 220
 Which while I view I feel I am alive,

But for this cause, that I had seen him lay
 His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
 The western mountain touch his setting orb
 In many a thoughtless hour, when from excess
 Of happiness my blood appeared to flow
 With its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy.
 And from like feelings, humble though intense,
 To patriotic and domestic love
 Analogous, the moon to me was dear,

230

For I would dream away my purposes
 Standing to look upon her while she hung
 Midway between the hills as if she knew
 No other region, but belonged to thee,
 Yea, appertained by a peculiar right
 To thee and thy grey huts, my native vale.

Those incidental charms which first attached

My heart to rural objects day by day

Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell

How nature, intervenient till this time

240

And secondary, now at length was sought

For her own sake. But who shall parcel out

His intellect by geometric rules,

Split like a province into round and square;

Who knows the individual hour in which

His habits were first sown, even as a seed;

Who that shall point as with a wand and say,

This portion of the river of my mind

Came from yon fountain? Thou, my friend, art one

More deeply read in thy own thoughts, no slave

250

Of that false secondary power by which

In weakness we create distinctions, then

Believe our puny boundaries are things

Which we perceive, and not which we have made.

To thee, unblinded by these outward shews,

The unity of all has been revealed,

And thou wilt doubt with me, less aptly skilled^o

Than many are to class the cabinet

Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase

Run through the history and birth of each

260

As of a single independent thing.

Hard task to analyse a soul in which

Not only general habits and desires,
 But each most obvious and particular thought,
 Not in a mystical and idle sense,
 But in the words of reason deeply weighed,
 Hath no beginning.

Blest the infant Babe
 (For with my best conjectures I would trace
 The progress of our being), blest the Babe
 Nursed in his Mother's arms, the Babe who sleeps 270
 Upon his Mother's breast, who when his soul
 Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul
 Doth gather passion from his Mother's eye!
 Such feelings pass into his torpid life
 Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind,
 Even in the first trial of its powers
 Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
 In one appearance all the elements
 And parts of the same object, else detached
 And loth to coalesce. Thus day by day 280
 Subjected to the discipline of love
 His organs and recipient faculties
 Are quickened, are more vigorous, his mind spreads
 Tenacious of the forms which it receives.
 In one beloved presence, nay, and more,
 In that most apprehensive habitude
 And those sensations which have been derived
 From this beloved presence, there exists
 A virtue which irradiates and exalts
 All objects through all intercourse of sense. 290
 No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
 Along his infant veins are interfused
 The gravitation and the filial bond
 Of nature that connect him with the world.
 Emphatically such a being lives
 An inmate of this *active* universe;
 From nature largely he receives, nor so
 Is satisfied but largely gives again,
 For feeling has to him imparted strength,
 And powerful in all sentiments of grief, 300
 Of exultation, fear, and joy, his mind,
 Even as an agent of the one great mind,

Creates, creator and receiver both,
 Working but in alliance with the works
 Which it beholds.—Such verily is the first
 Poetic spirit of our human life,
 By uniform control of after years
 In most abated and suppressed, in some
 Through every change of growth or of decay
 Preeminent till death.

310

From early days,

Beginning not long after that first time
 In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch
 I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart,
 I have endeavoured to display the means
 Whereby this infant sensibility,
 Great birthright of our being, was in me
 Augmented and sustained. Yet is a path
 More difficult before me, and I fear
 That in its broken windings we shall need
 The Chamois' sinews and the Eagle's wing: 320
 For now a trouble came into my mind
 From obscure causes. I was left alone
 Seeking this visible world, nor knowing why:
 The props of my affections were removed
 And yet the building stood as if sustained
 By its own spirit. All that I beheld
 Was dear to me, and from this cause it came
 That now to Nature's finer influxes
 My mind lay open, to that more exact
 And intimate communion which our hearts 330
 Maintain with the minuter properties
 Of objects which already are beloved,
 And of those only. Many are the joys
 Of youth, but oh! what happiness to live
 When every hour brings palpable access
 Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,
 And sorrow is not there. The seasons came
 And every season brought a countless store
 Of modes and temporary qualities
 Which but for this most watchful power of love 340
 Had been neglected, left a register
 Of permanent relations else unknown:

Hence life, and change, and beauty, solitude
 More active even than 'best society',^o
 Society made sweet as solitude
 By silent inobtrusive sympathies,
 And gentle agitations of the mind
 From manifold distinctions, difference
 Perceived in things where to the common eye
 No difference is, and hence from the same source, 350
 Sublimier joy; for I would walk alone
 In storm and tempest or in starlight nights
 Beneath the quiet heavens, and at that time
 Would feel whate'er there is of power in sound
 To breathe an elevated mood by form
 Or image unprofaned: and I would stand
 Beneath some rock listening to sounds that are
 The ghostly language of the ancient earth
 Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
 Thence did I drink the visionary power. 360
 I deem not profitless these fleeting moods
 Of shadowy exaltation, not for this,
 That they are kindred to our purer mind
 And intellectual life, but that the soul
 Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
 Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
 Of possible sublimity to which
 With growing faculties she doth aspire,
 With faculties still growing, feeling still 370
 That whatsoever point they gain, they still
 Have something to pursue.

And not alone
 In grandeur and in tumult, but no less
 In tranquil scenes, that universal power
 And fitness in the latent qualities
 And essences of things, by which the mind
 Is moved with feelings of delight, to me
 Came strengthened with a superadded soul,
 A virtue not its own. My morning walks
 Were early: oft before the hours of school^o
 I travelled round our little lake, five miles 380
 Of pleasant wandering, happy time more dear
 For this, that one was by my side, a Friend

Then passionately loved; with heart how full
 Will he peruse these lines, this page, perhaps
 A blank to other men, for many years
 Have since flowed in between us, and, our minds
 Both silent to each other, at this time
 We live as if those hours had never been.
 Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch
 Far earlier, and before the vernal thrush 390
 Was audible, among the hills I sate
 Alone upon some jutting eminence
 At the first hour of morning when the vale
 Lay quiet in an utter solitude.
 How shall I trace the history, where seek
 The origin of what I then have felt?
 Oft in those moments such a holy calm
 Did overspread my soul that I forgot
 The agency of sight, and what I saw 400
 Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
 A prospect in my mind. 'Twere long to tell
 What spring and autumn, what the winter-snows,
 And what the summer-shade, what day and night,
 The evening and the morning, what my dreams
 And what my waking thoughts supplied, to nurse
 That spirit of religious love in which
 I walked with nature. But let this at least
 Be not forgotten, that I still retained
 My first creative sensibility,
 That by the regular action of the world 410
 My soul was unsubdued. A plastic power^o
 Abode with me, a forming hand, at times
 Rebellious, acting in a devious mood,
 A local spirit of its own, at war
 With general tendency, but for the most
 Subservient strictly to the external things
 With which it communed. An auxiliar light
 Came from my mind which on the setting sun
 Bestowed new splendour; the melodious birds,
 The gentle breezes, fountains that ran 420
 Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
 A like dominion, and the midnight storm
 Grew darker in the presence of my eye.

Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
And *hence* my transport.

Nor should this, perchance,
Pass unrecorded, that I still had loved
The exercise and produce of a toil
Than analytic industry to me
More pleasing, and whose character, I deem,
Is more poetic, as resembling more 430
Creative agency: I mean to speak
Of that interminable building reared
By observation of affinities
In objects where no brotherhood exists
To common minds. My seventeenth year was come,
And, whether from this habit rooted now
So deeply in my mind, or from excess
Of the great social principle of life
Coercing all things into sympathy,
To unorganic natures I transferred 440
My own enjoyments, or, the power of truth
Coming in revelation, I conversed
With things that really are, I at this time
Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
Thus did my days pass on, and now at length
From Nature and her overflowing soul
I had received so much that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of being spread 450
O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still,
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart,
O'er all that leaps, and runs, and shouts, and sings
Or beats the gladsome air, o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself
And mighty depth of waters: wonder not
If such my transports were, for in all things
I saw one life, and felt that it was joy. 460
One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible then when the fleshly ear,
O'ercome by grosser prelude of that strain,

Forgot its functions, and slept undisturbed.

If this be error, and another faith
 Find easier access to the pious mind,
 Yet were I grossly destitute of all
 Those human sentiments which make this earth
 So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice
 To speak of you, ye mountains! and ye lakes 470
 And sounding cataracts! ye mists and winds
 That dwell among the hills where I was born.
 If in my youth I have been pure in heart,
 If, mingling with the world, I am content
 With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
 With God and Nature communing, removed
 From little enmities and low desires,
 The gift is yours: if in these times of fear,
 This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,^o
 If, mid indifference and apathy 480
 And wicked exultation, when good men
 On every side fall off, we know not how,
 To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
 Of peace, and quiet, and domestic love,
 Yet mingled, not unwillingly, with sneers
 On visionary minds, if in this time
 Of dereliction and dismay I yet
 Despair not of our nature, but retain
 A more than Roman confidence, a faith
 That fails not, in all sorrow my support, 490
 The blessing of my life, the gift is yours,
 Ye Mountains! thine O Nature! thou hast fed
 My lofty speculations, and in thee
 For this uneasy heart of ours I find
 A never-failing principle of joy
 And purest passion.

Thou, my Friend, wast reared^o
 In the great city 'mid far other scenes,
 But we, by different roads, at length have gained
 The self-same bourne. And from this cause to thee
 I speak unapprehensive of contempt, 500
 The insinuated scoff of coward tongues,
 And all that silent language which so oft
 In conversation betwixt man and man

Blots from the human countenance all trace
 Of beauty and of love. For thou hast sought
 The truth in solitude, and thou art one
 The most intense of Nature's worshippers,
 In many things my brother, chiefly here
 In this my deep devotion.

Fare thee well!

Health and the quiet of a healthful mind
 Attend thee! seeking oft the haunts of men
 But yet more often living with thyself
 And for thyself, so haply shall thy days
 Be many and a blessing to mankind.

510

Home at Grasmere

Once on the brow of yonder Hill I stopped^o
 While I was yet a School-boy (of what age
 I cannot well remember, but the hour
 I well remember though the year be gone),
 And, with a sudden influx overcome
 At sight of this seclusion, I forgot
 My haste, for hasty had my footsteps been
 As boyish my pursuits; and sighing said,
 'What happy fortune were it here to live!
 And if I thought of dying, if a thought
 Of mortal separation could come in
 With paradise before me, here to die.'
 I was no Prophet, nor had even a hope,
 Scarcely a wish, but one bright pleasing thought,
 A fancy in the heart of what might be
 The lot of others, never could be mine.

10

The place from which I looked was soft and green,
 Not giddy yet aerial, with a depth
 Of Vale below, a height of Hills above.
 Long did I halt; I could have made it even
 My business and my errand so to halt.
 For rest of body 'twas a perfect place,
 All that luxurious nature could desire,
 But tempting to the Spirit; who could look
 And not feel motions there? I thought of clouds

20

That sail on winds; of breezes that delight
 To play on water, or in endless chase
 Pursue each other through the liquid depths
 Of grass or corn, over and through and through,
 In billow after billow, evermore; 30
 Of Sunbeams, Shadows, Butterflies and Birds,
 Angels and winged Creatures that are Lords
 Without restraint of all which they behold.
 I sate and stirred in Spirit as I looked,
 I seemed to feel such liberty was mine,
 Such power and joy; but only for this end,
 To flit from field to rock, from rock to field,
 From shore to island, and from isle to shore,
 From open place to covert, from a bed
 Of meadow-flowers into a tuft of wood, 40
 From high to low, from low to high, yet still
 Within the bounds of this huge Concave; here
 Should be my home, this Valley be my World.

From that time forward was the place to me
 As beautiful in thought, as it had been
 When present to my bodily eyes; a haunt
 Of my affections, oftentimes in joy
 A brighter joy, in sorrow (but of that
 I have known little) in such gloom, at least,
 Such damp of the gay mind as stood to me 50
 In place of sorrow, 'twas a gleam of light.
 And now 'tis mine for life: dear Vale,
 One of thy lowly dwellings is my home!

Yes, the Realities of Life—so cold,
 So cowardly, so ready to betray,
 So stinted in the measure of their grace,
 As we report them, doing them much wrong,
 Have been to me more bountiful than hope,
 Less timid than desire. Oh bold indeed
 They have been, bold and bounteous unto me 60
 Who have myself been bold, not wanting trust
 Nor resolution, nor at last the hope
 Which is of wisdom, for I feel it is.

And did it cost so much, and did it ask
 Such length of discipline, and could it seem
 An act of courage, and the thing itself

A conquest? Shame that this was ever so,
 Not to the Boy or Youth, but shame to thee,
 Sage Man, thou Sun in its meridian strength,
 Thou flower in its full blow, thou King and Crown 70
 Of human Nature; shame to thee, sage Man,
 Thy prudence, thy experience, thy desires,
 Thy apprehensions—blush thou for them all.
 But I am safe, yes, one at least is safe;
 What once was deemed so difficult, is now
 Smooth, easy, without obstacle; what once
 Did to my blindness seem a sacrifice,
 The same is now a choice of the whole heart.
 If e'er the acceptance of such dower was deemed
 A condescension or a weak indulgence 80
 To a sick fancy, it is now an act
 Of reason that exultingly aspires.
 This solitude is mine; the distant thought
 Is fetched out of the heaven in which it was.
 The unappropriated bliss hath found
 An owner, and that owner I am he.
 The Lord of this enjoyment is on Earth
 And in my breast. What wonder if I speak
 With fervour, am exalted with the thought
 Of my possessions, of my genuine wealth 90
 Inward and outward? What I keep, have gained,
 Shall gain, must gain, if sound be my belief
 From past and present, rightly understood,
 That in my day of childhood I was less
 The mind of Nature, less, take all in all,
 Whatever may be lost, than I am now.
 For proof behold this Valley, and behold
 Yon Cottage, where with me my Emma dwells.
 Aye, think on that, my Heart, and cease to stir,
 Pause upon that, and let the breathing frame 100
 No longer breathe, but all be satisfied.
 Oh, if such silence be not thanks to God
 For what hath been bestowed, then where, where then
 Shall gratitude find rest? Mine eyes did ne'er
 Rest on a lovely object, nor my mind
 Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
 But either She whom now I have, who now

Divides with me this loved abode, was there,
 Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned,
 Her Voice was like a hidden Bird that sang; 110
 The thought of her was like a flash of light
 Or an unseen companionship, a breath
 Or fragrance independent of the wind;
 In all my goings, in the new and old
 Of all my meditations, and in this
 Favorite of all, in this the most of all.
 What Being, therefore, since the birth of Man
 Had ever more abundant cause to speak
 Thanks, and if music and the power of song
 Make him more thankful, then to call on these 120
 To aid him, and with these resound his joy.
 The boon is absolute; surpassing grace
 To me hath been vouchsafed; among the bowers
 Of blissful Eden this was neither given,
 Nor could be given, possession of the good
 Which had been sighed for, antient thought fulfilled
 And dear Imaginations realized,
 Up to their highest measure, yea, and more.
 Embrace me, then, ye Hills, and close me in,
 Now in the clear and open day I feel 130
 Your guardianship; I take it to my heart;
 'Tis like the solemn shelter of the night.
 But I would call thee beautiful, for mild,
 And soft, and gay, and beautiful thou art,
 Dear Valley, having in thy face a smile
 Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou art pleased,
 Pleased with thy crags, and woody steeps, thy Lake,
 Its one green Island and its winding shores,
 The multitude of little rocky hills,
 Thy Church and Cottages of mountain stone— 140
 Clustered like stars, some few, but single most,
 And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
 Or glancing at each other cheerful looks,
 Like separated stars with clouds between.
 What want we? Have we not perpetual streams,
 Warm woods, and sunny hills, and fresh green fields,
 And mountains not less green, and flocks and herds,
 And thickets full of songsters, and the voice

Of lordly birds—an unexpected sound
 Heard now and then from morn to latest eve, 150
 Admonishing the man who walks below
 Of solitude and silence in the sky?
 These have we, and a thousand nooks of earth
 Have also these, but no where else is found—
 No where (or is it fancy?) can be found—
 The one sensation that is here; 'tis here,
 Here as it found its way into my heart
 In childhood, here as it abides by day,
 By night, here only; or in chosen minds
 That take it with them hence, where'er they go. 160
 'Tis (but I cannot name it) 'tis the sense
 Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
 A blended holiness of earth and sky,
 Something that makes this individual Spot,
 This small abiding-place of many men,
 A termination, and a last retreat,
 A Centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
 A Whole without dependence or defect,
 Made for itself, and happy in itself,
 Perfect Contentment, Unity entire. 170

Long is it since we met, to part no more,^o
 Since I and Emma heard each other's call
 And were Companions once again, like Birds
 Which by the intruding Fowler had been scared,
 Two of a scattered brood that could not bear
 To live in loneliness; 'tis long since we,
 Rememb'ring much and hoping more, found means
 To walk abreast, though in a narrow path,
 With undivided steps. Our home was sweet;
 Could it be less? If we were forced to change, 180
 Our home again was sweet; but still, for Youth,
 Strong as it seems and bold, is inly weak
 And diffident, the destiny of life
 Remained unfixed, and therefore we were still

[Lines 185-91 are missing]

We will be free, and, as we mean to live
 In culture of divinity and truth,

Will chuse the noblest Temple that we know.
 Not in mistrust or ignorance of the mind
 And of the power she has within herself
 To enoble all things made we this resolve;
 Far less from any momentary fit
 Of inconsiderate fancy, light and vain;
 But that we deemed it wise to take the help 200
 Which lay within our reach; and here, we knew,
 Help could be found of no mean sort; the spirit
 Of singleness and unity and peace.
 In this majestic self-sufficing world,
 This all in all of nature, it will suit,
 We said, no other [] on earth so well,
 Simplicity of purpose, love intense,
 Ambition not aspiring to the prize
 Of outward things, but for the prize within—
 Highest ambition; in the daily walks 210
 Of business, 'twill be harmony and grace
 For the perpetual pleasure of the sense,
 And for the Soul—I do not say too much,
 Though much be said—an image for the soul,
 A habit of Eternity and God.

Nor have we been deceived; thus far the effect
 Falls not below the loftiest of our hopes.
 Bleak season was it, turbulent and bleak,
 When hitherward we journeyed, and on foot,
 Through bursts of sunshine and through flying snows, 220
 Paced the long Vales, how long they were, and yet
 How fast that length of way was left behind,
 Wensley's long Vale and Sedbergh's naked heights.
 The frosty wind, as if to make amends
 For its keen breath, was aiding to our course
 And drove us onward like two Ships at sea.
 Stern was the face of nature; we rejoiced
 In that stern countenance, for our souls had there
 A feeling of their strength. The naked trees,
 The icy brooks, as on we passed, appeared 230
 To question us. 'Whence come ye? To what end?'
 They seemed to say. 'What would ye?' said the shower,
 'Wild Wanderers, whither through my dark domain?'
 The Sunbeam said, 'Be happy.' They were moved,

All things were moved; they round us as we went,
 We in the midst of them. And when the trance
 Came to us, as we stood by Hart-leap Well—
 The intimation of the milder day
 Which is to come, the fairer world than this—
 And raised us up, dejected as we were 240
 Among the records of that doleful place
 By sorrow for the hunted beast who there
 Had yielded up his breath, the awful trance—
 The vision of humanity, and of God
 The Mourner, God the Sufferer when the heart
 Of his poor Creatures suffers wrongfully—
 Both in the sadness and the joy we found
 A promise and an earnest that we twain,
 A pair seceding from the common world,
 Might in that hallowed spot to which our steps 250
 Were tending, in that individual nook,
 Might even thus early for ourselves secure,
 And in the midst of these unhappy times,
 A portion of the blessedness which love
 And knowledge will, we trust, hereafter give
 To all the Vales of earth and all mankind.

Thrice hath the winter moon been filled with light^o
 Since that dear day when Grasmere, our dear Vale,
 Received us; bright and solemn was the sky
 That faced us with a passionate welcoming, 260
 And led us to our threshold, to a home
 Within a home, what was to be, and soon,
 Our love within a love. Then darkness came,
 Composing darkness, with its quiet load
 Of full contentment, in a little shed
 Disturbed, uneasy in itself as seemed,
 And wondering at its new inhabitants.
 It loves us now, this Vale so beautiful
 Begins to love us! By a sullen storm,
 Two months unwearied of severest storm, 270
 It put the temper of our minds to proof,
 And found us faithful through the gloom, and heard
 The Poet mutter his prelusive songs
 With chearful heart, an unknown voice of joy
 Among the silence of the woods and hills,

Silent to any gladness of sound
 With all their Shepherds.

But the gates of Spring
 Are opened; churlish Winter hath giv'n leave
 That she should entertain for this one day,
 Perhaps for many genial days to come, 280
 His guests, and make them happy. They are pleased,
 But most of all the birds that haunt the flood,
 With the mild summons; inmates though they be
 Of Winter's household: they are jubilant
 This day, who drooped, or seemed to droop, so long;
 They shew their pleasure, and shall I do less?
 Happier of happy though I be, like them
 I cannot take possession of the sky,
 Mount with a thoughtless impulse and wheel there
 One of a mighty multitude, whose way 290
 And motion is a harmony and dance
 Magnificent. Behold them, how they shape
 Orb after orb their course still round and round
 Above the area of the Lake, their own
 Adopted region, girding it about
 In wanton repetition, yet therewith
 With that large circle evermore renewed:
 Hundreds of curves and circlets high and low,
 Backwards and forwards, progress intricate,
 As if one spirit was in all and swayed 300
 Their indefatigable flight. 'Tis done,
 Ten times or more I fancied it had ceased,
 And lo! the vanished company again
 Ascending,—list again—I hear their wings
 Faint, faint at first; and then an eager sound
 Passed in a moment—and as faint again!
 They tempt the sun to sport among their plumes;
 They tempt the water, and the gleaming ice,
 To skew them a fair image,—'tis themselves,
 Their own fair forms, upon the glimm'ring plain, 310
 Painted more soft and fair as they descend,
 Almost to touch,—then up again aloft,
 Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
 As if they scorned both resting-place and rest.
 Spring! for this day belongs to thee, rejoice!

Not upon me alone hath been bestowed,
 Me blessed with many onward-looking thoughts,
 The sunshine and mild air; oh surely these
 Are grateful, not the happy Quires of love,
 Thine own peculiar family, Sweet Spring, 320
 That sport among green leaves so blithe a train.
 But two are missing—two, a lonely pair
 Of milk-white Swans—ah, why are they not here?
 These above all, ah, why are they not here
 To share in this day's pleasure? From afar
 They came, like Emma and myself, to live
 Together here in peace and solitude,
 Chusing this Valley, they who had the choice
 Of the whole world. We saw them day by day,
 Through those two months of unrelenting storm, 330
 Conspicuous in the centre of the Lake,
 Their safe retreat; we knew them well—I guess
 That the whole Valley knew them—but to us
 They were more dear than may be well believed,
 Not only for their beauty and their still
 And placid way of life and faithful love
 Inseparable, not for these alone,
 But that their state so much resembled ours,
 They also having chosen this abode;
 They strangers, and we strangers; they a pair, 340
 And we a solitary pair like them.
 They should not have departed; many days
 I've looked for them in vain, nor on the wing
 Have seen them, nor in that small open space
 Of blue unfrozen water, where they lodged,
 And lived so long in quiet, side by side.
 Companions, brethren, consecrated friends,
 Shall we behold them yet another year
 Surviving, they for us, and we for them,
 And neither pair be broken?—nay, perchance 350
 It is too late already for such hope;
 The Shepherd may have seized the deadly tube,
 And parted them, incited by the prize
 Which, for the sake of those he loves at home
 And for the Lamb upon the mountain tops,
 He should have spared; or haply both are gone,

One death, and that were mercy giv'n to both.

I cannot look upon this favoured Vale
But that I seem, by harbouring this thought,
To wrong it, such unworthy recompense
Imagining, of confidence so pure. 360

Ah! if I wished to follow where the sight
Of all that is before my eyes, the voice
Which is as a presiding Spirit here
Would lead me, I should say unto myself:
They who are dwellers in this holy place
Must needs themselves be hallowed; they require
No benediction from the Stranger's lips,
For they are blessed already; none would give
The greeting 'Peace be with you' unto them 370
For peace they have, it cannot but be theirs,
And mercy, and forbearance—nay, not these;
There is no call for these; that office Love
Performs, and charity beyond the bounds
Of charity—an overflowing love,
Not for the creature only, but for all
Which is around them; love for every thing
Which in this happy Valley we behold!

Thus do we soothe ourselves, and when the thought
Is passed, we blame it not for having come. 380

What if I floated down a pleasant stream
And now am landed, and the motion gone,
Shall I reprove myself? Ah no, the stream
Is flowing, and will never cease to flow,
And I shall float upon that stream again.
By such forgetfulness the soul becomes,
Words cannot say how beautiful: then hail,
Hail to the visible Presence, hail to thee,
Delightful Valley, habitation fair!
And to whatever else of outward form 390
Can give us inward help, can purify,
And elevate, and harmonize, and soothe,
And steal away, and for a while deceive
And lap in pleasing rest, and bear us on
Without desire in full complacency,
Contemplating perfection absolute
And entertained as in a placid sleep.

But not betrayed by tenderness of mind
 That feared, or wholly overlooked, the truth
 Did we come hither, with romantic hope 400
 To find in midst of so much loveliness
 Love, perfect love, of so much majesty
 A like majestic frame of mind in those
 Who here abide, the persons like the place.
 Nor from such hope, or aught of such belief,
 Hath issued any portion of the joy
 Which I have felt this day. An awful voice,
 'Tis true, I in my walks have often heard,
 Sent from the mountains or the sheltered fields,
 Shout after shout-reiterated whoop 410
 In manner of a bird that takes delight
 In answering to itself, or like a hound
 Single at chace among the lonely woods—
 A human voice, how awful in the gloom
 Of coming night, when sky is dark, and earth
 Not dark, nor yet enlightened, but by snow
 Made visible, amid the noise of winds
 And beatings manifold of sheep that know
 Their summons, and are gathering round for food—
 That voice, the same, the very same, that breath 420
 Which was an utterance awful as the wind,
 Or any sound the mountains ever heard.

That Shepherd's voice, it may have reached mine ear
 Debased and under prophanation, made
 An organ for the sounds articulate
 Of ribaldry and blasphemy and wrath,
 Where drunkenness hath kindled senseless frays.
 I came not dreaming of unruffled life,
 Untainted manners; born among the hills,
 Bred also there, I wanted not a scale 430
 To regulate my hopes; pleased with the good,
 I shrink not from the evil in disgust,
 Or with immoderate pain. I look for man,
 The common Creature of the brotherhood,
 But little differing from the man elsewhere,
 For selfishness and envy and revenge,
 Ill neighbourhood—folly that this should be—
 Flattery and double-dealing, strife and wrong.

Yet is it something gained, it is in truth
 A mighty gain, that Labour here preserves 440
 His rosy face, a Servant only here
 Of the fire-side or of the open field,
 A Freeman, therefore sound and unimpaired;
 That extreme penury is here unknown,
 And cold and hunger's abject wretchedness,
 Mortal to body and the heaven-born mind;
 That they who want, are not too great a weight
 For those who can relieve; here may the heart
 Breathe in the air of fellow-suffering
 Dreadless, as in a kind of fresher breeze 450
 Of her own native element, the hand
 Be ready and unwearied without plea
 From task too frequent and beyond its power,
 For languor or indifference or despair.
 And as these lofty barriers break the force
 Of winds,—this deep vale, as it doth in part
 Conceal us from the storm, so here there is
 A Power and a protection for the mind,
 Dispensed indeed to other solitudes
 Favoured by noble privilege like this, 460
 Where kindred independence of estate
 Is prevalent, where he who tills the field,
 He, happy Man! is Master of the field
 And treads the mountain which his Father trod.
 Hence, and from other local circumstance,
 In this enclosure many of the old
 Substantial virtues have a firmer tone
 Than in the base and ordinary world.

Yon Cottage, would that it could tell a part
 Of its own story. Thousands might give ear, 470
 Might hear it and blush deep. There few years past
 In this his Native Valley dwelt a Man,
 The Master of a little lot of ground,
 A man of mild deportment and discourse,
 A Scholar also (as the phrase is here),
 For he drew much delight from those few books
 That lay within his reach, and for this cause
 Was by his Fellow-dalesmen honoured more.
 A Shepherd and a Tiller of the ground,

Studious withal, and healthy in his frame 480
 Of body, and of just and placid mind,
 He with his consort and his Children saw
 Days that were seldom touched by petty strife,
 Years safe from large misfortune, long maintained
 That course which men the wisest and most pure
 Might look on with entire complacency.
 Yet in himself and near him were there faults
 At work to undermine his happiness
 By little and by little. Active, prompt,
 And lively was the Housewife; in the Vale 490
 None more industrious; but her industry
 Was of that kind, 'tis said, which tended more
 To splendid neatness, to a shewy, trim,
 And overlaboured purity of house,
 Than to substantial thrift. He, on his part,
 Generous and easy-minded, was not free
 From carelessness, and thus, in course of time,
 These joint infirmities, combined perchance
 With other cause less obvious, brought decay 500
 Of worldly substance and distress of mind,
 Which to a thoughtful man was hard to shun
 And which he could not cure. A blooming Girl
 Served them, an Inmate of the House. Alas!
 Poor now in tranquil pleasure he gave way
 To thoughts of troubled pleasure; he became
 A lawless Suitor of the Maid, and she
 Yielded unworthily. Unhappy Man!
 That which he had been weak enough to do
 Was misery in remembrance; he was stung,
 Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles 510
 Of Wife and Children stung to agony.
 His temper urged him not to seek relief
 Amid the noise of revellers nor from draught
 Of lonely stupefaction; he himself
 A rational and suffering Man, himself
 Was his own world, without a resting-place.
 Wretched at home he had no peace abroad;
 Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
 Asked comfort of the open air, and found
 No quiet in the darkness of the night, 520

No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
 His flock he slighted: his paternal fields
 Were as a Clog to him, whose Spirit wished
 To fly, but whither? And yon gracious Church,
 That has a look so full of peace and hope
 And love, benignant Mother of the Vale,
 How fair amid her brood of Cottages!
 She was to him a sickness and reproach.
 I speak conjecturing from the little known,
 The much that to the last remained unknown; 530
 But this is sure: he died of his own grief,
 He could not bear the weight of his own shame.

That Ridge, which elbowing from the mountain-side
 Carries into the Plain its rocks and woods,
 Conceals a Cottage where a Father dwells
 In widowhood, whose Life's Co-partner died
 Long since, and left him solitary Prop
 Of many helpless Children. I begin
 With words which might be prelude to a Tale
 Of sorrow and dejection; but I feel, 540
 Though in the midst of sadness, as might seem,
 No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
 Have seen in that delightful family.
 Bright garland make they for their Father's brows,
 Those six fair Daughters budding yet, not one,
 Not one of all the band a full-blown flower!
 Go to the Dwelling: there Thou shalt have proof
 That He who takes away, yet takes not half
 Of what he seems to take, or gives it back,
 Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer; 550
 He gives it—the boon-produce of a soil
 Which Hope hath never watered. Thou shalt see
 A House, which, at small distance, will appear
 In no distinction to have passed beyond
 Its Fellows, will appear, like them, to have grown
 Out of the native Rock; but nearer view
 Will shew it not so grave in outward mien
 And soberly arrayed as for the most
 Are these rude mountain-dwellings—Nature's care,
 Mere friendless Nature's—but a studious work 560
 Of many fancies and of many hands,

A play thing and a pride; for such the air
 And aspect which the little Spot maintains
 In spite of lonely Winter's nakedness.
 They have their jasmine resting on the Porch,
 Their rose-trees, strong in health, that will be soon
 Roof-high; and here and there the garden wall
 Is topped with single stones, a shewy file
 Curious for shape or hue, some round, like Balls,
 Worn smooth and round by fretting of the Brook 570
 From which they have been gathered, others bright
 And sparry, the rough scatterings of the Hills.
 These ornaments the Cottage chiefly owes
 To one, a hardy Girl, who mounts the rocks;
 Such is her choice; she fears not the bleak wind;
 Companion of her Father, does for him
 Where'er he wanders in his pastoral course
 The service of a Boy, and with delight
 More keen and prouder daring: yet hath She,
 Within the garden, like the rest, a bed 580
 For her own flowers or favorite Herbs, a space
 Holden by sacred charter; and I guess
 She also helped to frame that tiny Plot
 Of garden ground which one day 'twas my chance
 To find among the woody rocks that rise
 Above the House, a Slip of smoother earth
 Planted with goose-berry bushes, and in one,
 Right in the centre of the prickly shrub,
 A mimic Bird's-nest, fashioned by the hand,
 Was stuck, a staring Thing of twisted hay, 590
 And one quaint Fir-tree towered above the Whole.
 But in the darkness of the night, then most
 This Dwelling charms me. Covered by the gloom,
 Then, heedless of good manners, I stop short
 And (who could help it?) feed by stealth my sight
 With prospect of the company within,
 Laid open through the blazing window: there
 I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
 Spinning amain, as if to overtake
 She knows not what, or teaching in her turn 600
 Some little Novice of the sisterhood
 That skill in this or other household work

Which from her Father's honored hands, herself
 While She was yet a Little-one, had learned.
 Mild Man! he is not gay, but they are gay,
 And the whole House is filled with gaiety.

From yonder grey-stone that stands alone
 Close to the foaming Stream, look up and see,
 Not less than half-way up the mountain-side,
 A dusky Spot, a little grove of firs

610

And seems still smaller than it is; the Dame
 Who dwells below, she told me that this grove,
 Just six weeks younger than her eldest Boy,
 Was planted by her Husband and herself
 For a convenient shelter which in storm
 Their sheep might draw to. 'And they knew it well,'
 Said she, 'for thither do we bear them food
 In time of heavy snow.' She then began

In fond obedience to her private thoughts
 To speak of her dead Husband: is there not
 An art, a music, and a stream of words

620

That shall be life, the acknowledged voice of life,
 Shall speak of what is done among the fields,
 Done truly there, or felt, of solid good
 And real evil, yet be sweet withal,
 More grateful, more harmonious than the breath,
 The idle breath of sweetest pipe attuned
 To pastoral fancies? Is there such a stream,
 Pure and unsullied, flowing from the heart
 With motions of true dignity and grace?

630

Or must we seek these things where man is not?
 Methinks I could repeat in tuneful verse
 Delicious as the gentlest breeze that sounds
 Through that aerial fir-grove, could preserve
 Some portion of its human history
 As gathered from that Matron's lips, and tell
 Of tears that have been shed at sight of it
 And moving dialogues between this Pair,
 Who in the prime of wedlock, with joint hands
 Did plant this grove, now flourishing, while they
 No longer flourish; he entirely gone,
 She withering in her loneliness. Be this
 A task above my skill: the silent mind

640

Has its own treasures, and I think of these,
Love what I see, and honour humankind.

No, We are not alone, we do not stand,
My Emma, here misplaced and desolate,
Loving what no one cares for but ourselves.

We shall not scatter through the plains and rocks
Of this fair Vale, and o'er its spacious heights,
Unprofitable kindness, bestowed

650

On Objects unaccustomed to the gifts
Of feeling, that were cheerless and forlorn
But few weeks past, and would be so again
If we were not; we do not tend a lamp
Whose lustre we alone participate,
Which is dependent upon us alone,
Mortal though bright, a dying, dying flame.

Look where we will, some human heart has been
Before us with its offering; not a tree

660

Sprinkles these little pastures, but the same
Hath furnished matter for a thought; perchance
To some one is as a familiar Friend.

Joy spreads and sorrow spreads; and this whole Vale,
Home of untutored Shepherds as it is,

Swarms with sensation, as with gleams of sunshine,
Shadows or breezes, scents or sounds. Nor deem
These feelings, though subservient more than ours
To every day's demand for daily bread,

And borrowing more their spirit and their shape
From self-respecting interests, deem them not
Unworthy therefore, and unhallowed—no,

670

They lift the animal being, do themselves
By nature's kind and ever present aid
Refine the selfishness from which they spring,
Redeem by love the individual sense
Of anxiousness with which they are combined.

Many are pure, the best of them are pure;
The best, and these, remember, most abound,
Are fit associates of the [] joy,

680

Joy of the highest and the purest minds.
They blend with it congenially: meanwhile,
Calmly they breathe their own undying life,
Lowly and unassuming as it is,

Through this their mountain sanctuary (long,
 Oh long may it remain inviolate!),
 Diffusing health and sober cheerfulness,
 And giving to the moments as they pass
 Their little boons of animating thought
 That sweeten labour, make it seem and feel 690
 To be no arbitrary weight imposed,
 But a glad function natural to Man.

Fair proof of this, Newcomer though I be,
 Already have I seen; the inward frame,
 Though slowly opening, opens every day.
 Nor am I less delighted with the show
 As it unfolds itself, now here, now there,
 Than is the passing Traveller, when his way
 Lies through some region then first trod by him
 (Say this fair Valley's self), when low-hung mists 700
 Break up and are beginning to recede.

How pleased he is to hear the murmuring streams,
 The many Voices, from he knows not where,
 To have about him, which way e'er he goes,
 Something on every side concealed from view,
 In every quarter some thing visible,
 Half-seen or wholly, lost and found again,
 Alternate progress and impediment,
 And yet a growing prospect in the main.

Such pleasure now is mine, and what if I, 710
 Herein less happy than the Traveller,
 Am sometimes forced to cast a painful look
 Upon unwelcome things, which unawares
 Reveal themselves? Not therefore is my mind
 Depressed, nor do I fear what is to come;
 But confident, enriched at every glance,
 The more I see the more is my delight.
 Truth justifies herself, and as she dwells
 With Hope, who would not follow where she leads?

Nor let me overlook those other loves 720
 Where no fear is, those humbler sympathies
 That have to me endeared the quietness
 Of this sublime retirement. I begin
 Already to inscribe upon my heart
 A liking for the small grey Horse that bears

The paralytic Man; I know the Ass
 On which the Cripple, in the Quarry maimed,
 Rides to and fro: I know them and their ways.
 The famous Sheep-dog, first in all the vale,
 Though yet to me a Stranger, will not be 730
 A Stranger long; nor will the blind Man's Guide,
 Meek and neglected Thing, of no renown.
 Who ever lived a Winter in one place,
 Beneath the shelter of one Cottage-roof,
 And has not had his Red-breast or his Wren?
 I have them both; and I shall have my Thrush
 In spring-time, and a hundred Warblers more;
 And if the banished Eagle Pair return,
 Helvellyn's Eagles, to their antient Hold, °
 Then shall I see, shall claim with those two Birds 740
 Acquaintance, as they soar amid the Heav'ns.
 The Owl that gives the name to Owlet-crag
 Have I heard shouting, and he soon will be
 A chosen one of my regards. See there
 The Heifer in yon little Croft belongs
 To one who holds it dear; with duteous care
 She reared it, and in speaking of her Charge
 I heard her scatter once a word or two,
 Domestic and in spirit Motherly,
 She being herself a Mother; happy Beast, 750
 If the caresses of a human voice
 Can make it so, and care of human hands.

And Ye as happy under Nature's care,
 Strangers to me and all men, or at least
 Strangers to all particular amity,
 All intercourse of knowledge or of love
 That parts the individual from the kind.
 Whether in large communities ye keep
 From year to year, not shunning man's abode,
 A settled residence, or be from far, 760
 Wild creatures, and of many homes, that come
 The gift of winds, and whom the winds again
 Take from us at your pleasure—yet shall ye
 Not want for this, your own subordinate place
 According to your claim, an underplace
 In my affections. Witness the delight

With which erewhile I saw that multitude
 Wheel through the sky and see them now at rest,
 Yet not at rest, upon the glassy lake.
 They cannot rest—they gambol like young whelps; 770
 Active as lambs, and overcome with joy,
 They try all frolic motions, flutter, plunge,
 And beat the passive water with their wings.
 Too distant are they for plain view, but lo!
 Those little fountains, sparkling in the sun,
 Which tell what they are doing, which rise up,
 First one and then another silver spout,
 As one or other takes the fit of glee,
 Fountains and spouts, yet rather in the guise
 Of plaything fire-works, which on festal nights 780
 Hiss hiss about the feet of wanton boys.
 How vast the compass of this theatre,
 Yet nothing to be seen but lovely pomp
 And silent majesty. The birch-tree woods
 Are hung with thousand thousand diamond drops
 Of melted hoar-frost, every tiny knot
 In the bare twigs, each little budding-place
 Cased with its several bead; what myriads there
 Upon one tree, while all the distant grove
 That rises to the summit of the steep 790
 Is like a mountain built of silver light:
 See yonder the same pageant, and again
 Behold the universal imagery
 At what a depth, deep in the Lake below.
 Admonished of the days of love to come,
 The raven croaks and fills the sunny air
 With a strange sound of genial harmony;
 And in and all about that playful band,
 Incapable although they be of rest,
 And in their fashion very rioters, 800
 There is a stillness; and they seem to make
 Calm revelry in that their calm abode.
 I leave them to their pleasure, and I pass,
 Pass with a thought the life of the whole year
 That is to come: the throngs of mountain flowers
 And lillies that will dance upon the lake.
 Then boldly say that solitude is not

Where these things are: he truly is alone,
 He of the multitude whose eyes are doomed
 To hold a vacant commerce day by day 810
 With that which he can neither know nor love,
 Dead things, to him thrice dead, or worse than this,
 With swarms of life, and worse than all, of men,
 His fellow men, that are to him no more
 Than to the Forest Hermit are the leaves
 That hang aloft in myriads—nay, far less,
 Far less for aught that comforts or defends
 Or lulls or cheers. Society is here:
 The true community, the noblest Frame
 Of many into one incorporate; 820
 That must be looked for here; paternal sway,
 One Household, under God, for high and low,
 One family and one mansion; to themselves
 Appropriate, and divided from the world
 As if it were a cave, a multitude
 Human and brute, possessors undisturbed
 Of this recess, their legislative Hall,
 Their Temple, and their glorious dwelling-place.
 Dismissing therefore all Arcadian dreams,
 All golden fancies of the golden age, 830
 The bright array of shadowy thoughts from times
 That were before all time, or are to be
 When time is not, the pageantry that stirs
 And will be stirring when our eyes are fixed
 On lovely objects and we wish to part
 With all remembrance of a jarring world,
 Give entrance to the sober truth; avow
 That Nature to this favourite Spot of ours
 Yields no exemption, but her awful rights
 Enforces to the utmost and exacts 840
 Her tribute of inevitable pain,
 And that the sting is added, man himself
 For ever busy to afflict himself.
 Yet temper this with one sufficient hope,
 What need of more? that we shall neither droop
 Nor pine for want of pleasure in the life
 Which is about us, nor through dearth of aught
 That keeps in health the insatiable mind;

That we shall have for knowledge and for love
 Abundance; and that, feeling as we do, 850
 How goodly, how exceeding fair, how pure
 From all reproach is this aetherial frame
 And this deep vale, its earthly counterpart,
 By which, and under which, we are enclosed
 To breathe in peace; we shall moreover find
 (If sound, and what we ought to be ourselves,
 If rightly we observe and justly weigh)
 The Inmates not unworthy of their home,
 The Dwellers of the Dwelling.

And if this
 Were not, we have enough within ourselves, 860
 Enough to fill the present day with joy
 And overspread the future years with hope—
 Our beautiful and quiet home, enriched
 Already with a Stranger whom we love^o
 Deeply, a Stranger of our Father's house,
 A never-resting Pilgrim of the Sea,
 Who finds at last an hour to his content
 Beneath our roof. And others whom we love
 Will seek us also, Sisters of our hearts,^o

And one, like them, a Brother of our hearts, 870
 Philosopher and Poet, in whose sight
 These mountains will rejoice with open joy.
 Such is our wealth: O Vale of Peace, we are
 And must be, with God's will, a happy band.
 But 'tis not to enjoy, for this alone
 That we exist; no, something must be done.

I must not walk in unreprieved delight
 These narrow bounds and think of nothing more,
 No duty that looks further and no care.
 Each Being has his office, lowly some 880
 And common, yet all worthy if fulfilled
 With zeal, acknowledgement that with the gift
 Keeps pace a harvest answering to the seed.
 Of ill-advised ambition and of pride
 I would stand clear, yet unto me I feel
 That an internal brightness is vouchsafed
 That must not die, that must not pass away.
 Why does this inward lustre fondly seek

And gladly blend with outward fellowship?
 Why shine they round me thus, whom thus I love? 890
 Why do they teach me, whom I thus revere?
 Strange question, yet it answers not itself.
 That humble Roof embowered among the trees,
 That calm fireside, it is not even in them,
 Blessed as they are, to furnish a reply
 That satisfies and ends in perfect rest.
 Possessions have I wholly, solely, mine,
 Something within, which yet is shared by none,
 Not even the nearest to me and most dear,
 Something which power and effort may impart. 900
 I would impart it; I would spread it wide,
 Immortal in the world which is to come.
 I would not wholly perish even in this,
 Lie down, and be forgotten in the dust,
 I and the modest partners of my days
 Making a silent company in death.
 It must not be, if I divinely taught
 Am privileged to speak as I have felt
 Of what in man is human or divine.
 While yet an innocent little-one, a heart 910
 That doubtless wanted not its tender moods,
 I breathed (for this I better recollect)
 Among wild appetites and blind desires,
 Motions of savage instinct, my delight
 And exaltation. Nothing at that time
 So welcome, no temptation half so dear
 As that which urged me to a daring feat.
 Deep pools, tall trees, black chasms, and dizzy crags,
 I loved to look at them, to stand and read
 Their looks forbidding, read and disobey, 920
 Sometimes in act, and evermore in thought.
 With impulses which only were by these
 Surpassed in strength, I heard of danger met
 Or sought with courage, enterprize forlorn
 By one, sole keeper of his own intent
 Or by a resolute few, who for the sake
 Of glory fronted multitudes in arms.
 Yea, to this day I swell with like desire;
 I cannot at this moment read a tale

Of two brave Vessels matched in deadly fight 930
 And fighting to the death, but I am pleased
 More than a wise Man ought to be; I wish,
 I burn, I struggle, and in soul am there.
 But me hath Nature tamed and bade me seek
 For other agitations or be calm,
 Hath dealt with me as with a turbulent Stream—
 Some Nurseling of the Mountains which she leads
 Through quiet meadows after it has learned
 Its strength and had its triumph and its joy,
 Its desperate course of tumult and of glee. 940
 That which in stealth by Nature was performed
 Hath Reason sanctioned: her deliberate Voice
 Hath said, 'Be mild and love all gentle things;
 Thy glory and thy happiness be there.
 Yet fear (though thou confide in me) no want
 Of aspirations which have been—of foes
 To wrestle with and victory to complete,
 Bounds to be leapt and darkness to explore.
 That which enflamed thy infant heart, the love,
 The longing, the contempt, the undaunted quest, 950
 These shall survive, though changed their office, these
 Shall live; it is not in their power to die.'
 Then farewell to the Warrior's deeds, farewell
 All hope which once and long was mine, to fill
 The heroic trumpet with the Muse's breath!
 Yet in this peaceful Vale we will not spend
 Unheard-of days, though loving peaceful thoughts;
 A Voice shall speak, and what will be the Theme?
 On Man, on Nature, and on human Life,
 Thinking in solitude, from time to time 960
 I feel sweet passions traversing my Soul
 Like Music; unto these, where'er I may,
 I would give utterance in numerous verse. °
 Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love, and hope—
 Hope for this earth and hope beyond the grave—
 Of virtue and of intellectual power;
 Of blessed consolations in distress;
 Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
 Of the individual mind that keeps its own
 Inviolatè retirement, and consists 970

With being limitless, the one great Life;
 I sing: fit audience let me find though few.^o
 ‘Fit audience find though few’—thus prayed the Bard,
 Holiest of Men. Urania, I shall need
 Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
 Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven.
 For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
 Deep, and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
 To which the Heaven of heavens is but a veil.
 All strength, all terror, single or in bands, 980
 That ever was put forth in personal form—
 Jehovah, with his thunder, and the quire
 Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones—
 I pass them unalarmed. The darkest Pit
 Of the profoundest Hell, chaos, night,
 Nor aught of [] vacancy scooped out
 By help of dreams can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our minds, into the mind of Man,
 My haunt, and the main region of my song. 990
 Beauty, whose living home is the green earth,
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 The craft of delicate spirits hath composed
 From earth’s materials, waits upon my steps,
 Pitches her tents before me where I move,
 An hourly Neighbour. Paradise, and groves
 Elysian, fortunate islands, fields like those of old
 In the deep ocean, wherefore should they be
 A History, or but a dream, when minds
 Once wedded to this outward frame of things 1000
 In love, find these the growth of common day?
 I, long before the blessed hour arrives,
 Would sing in solitude the spousal verse
 Of this great consummation, would proclaim—
 Speaking of nothing more than what we are—
 How exquisitely the individual Mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
 Of the whole species) to the external world
 Is fitted; and how exquisitely too—
 Theme this but little heard of among men— 1010
 The external world is fitted to the mind;

And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish: this is my great argument.

Such [] foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere, and travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of passions ravenous from each other's rage,
Must hear humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish, or must hang

1020

Brooding above the fierce confederate Storm
Of Sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of Cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment, that even these
Hearing, I be not heartless or forlorn!

Come, thou prophetic Spirit, Soul of Man,
Thou human Soul of the wide earth that hast
Thy metropolitan Temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets: unto me vouchsafe

1030

Thy guidance, teach me to discern and part
Inherent things from casual, what is fixed
From fleeting, that my verse may live, and be
Even as a light hung up in heaven to cheer
Mankind in times to come! And if with this
I blend 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,
His joys and sorrows and his hopes and fears,
With all his little realities of life—

1040

Be not this labour useless. If such theme
With highest things may [], then Great God,
Thou who art breath and being, way and guide,
And power and understanding, may my life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires and simple manners; nurse
My heart in genuine freedom; all pure thoughts
Be with me and uphold me to the end!

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FROM POEMS, IN TWO
VOLUMES (1807)

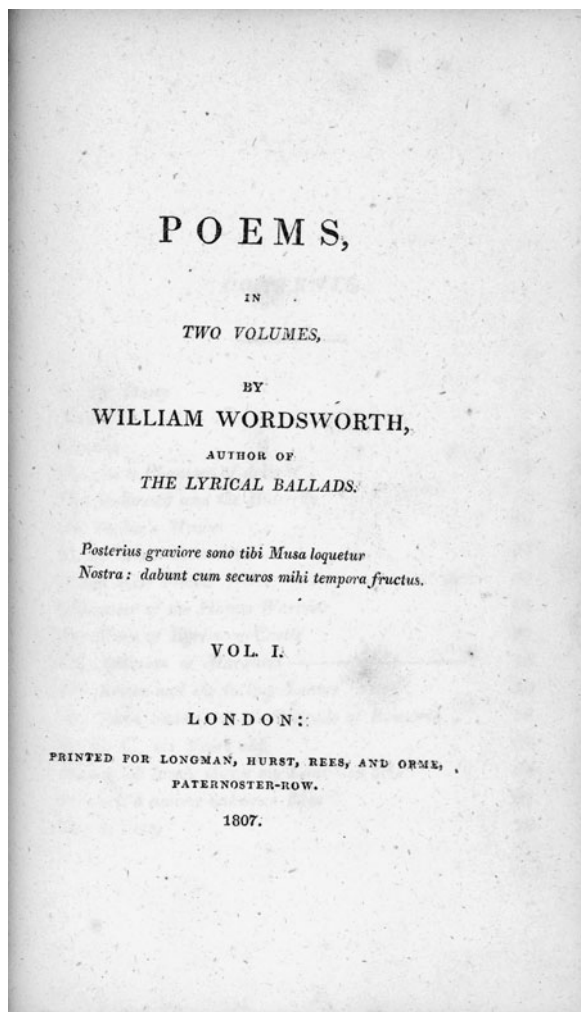


FIG. 4 Title-page, *Poems, In Two Volumes* (1807).

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To the Daisy

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

When soothed a while by milder airs,
Thee Winter in the garland wears 10
That thinly shades his few grey hairs;
 Spring cannot shun thee;
Whole summer fields are thine by right;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the Traveller in the lane;
If welcome once thou count'st it gain;
 Thou art not daunted, 20
Nor car'st if thou be set at naught;
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
 When such are wanted.

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

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie

Near the green holly,
 And wearily at length should fare;
 He need but look about, and there
 Thou art! a Friend at hand, to scare
 His melancholy.

40

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

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

50

When, smitten by the morning ray,
 I see thee rise alert and gay,
 Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
 With kindred motion:
 At dusk, I've seldom marked thee press
 The ground, as if in thankfulness
 Without some feeling, more or less,
 Of true devotion.

60

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

70

Child of the Year! that round dost run
 Thy course, bold lover of the sun,
 And chearful when the day's begun
 As morning Leveret,
 Thou long the Poet's praise shalt gain;
 Thou wilt be more beloved by men
 In times to come; thou not in vain
 Art Nature's Favorite.

80

'She was a Phantom of delight'

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

10

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

20

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine;
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath;
 A Traveller betwixt life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
 A perfect Woman; nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of an angel light.

30

The Sailor's Mother

One morning (raw it was and wet,
 A foggy day in winter time)
 A Woman in the road I met,
 Not old, though something past her prime:
 Majestic in her person, tall and straight;
 And like a Roman matron's was her mien and gait.

The ancient Spirit is not dead;
 Old times, thought I, are breathing there;
 Proud was I that my country bred
 Such strength, a dignity so fair: 10
 She begged an alms, like one in poor estate;
 I looked at her again, nor did my pride abate.

When from these lofty thoughts I woke,
 With the first word I had to spare
 I said to her, 'Beneath your Cloak
 What's that which on your arm you bear?'
 She answered soon as she the question heard,
 'A simple burthen, Sir, a little Singing-bird.'

And, thus continuing, she said,
 'I had a Son, who many a day 20
 Sailed on the seas; but he is dead;
 In Denmark he was cast away;
 And I have been as far as Hull, to see
 What clothes he might have left, or other property.

The Bird and Cage they both were his;
 'Twas my Son's Bird; and neat and trim
 He kept it: many voyages
 This Singing-bird hath gone with him;
 When last he sailed he left the Bird behind;
 As it might be, perhaps, from bodings of his mind. 30

He to a Fellow-lodger's care
 Had left it, to be watched and fed,
 Till he came back again; and there
 I found it when my Son was dead;
 And now, God help me for my little wit!
 I trail it with me, Sir! he took so much delight in it.'

Character of the Happy Warrior

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
 Whom every Man in arms should wish to be?
 —It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
 Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
 Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought:
 Whose high endeavours are an inward light
 That make the path before him always bright:
 Who, with a natural instinct to discern
 What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
 Abides by this resolve, and stops not there, 10
 But makes his moral being his prime care;
 Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
 And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
 Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
 In face of these doth exercise a power
 Which is our human-nature's highest dower;
 Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
 Of their bad influence, and their good receives;
 By objects, which might force the soul to abate
 Her feeling, rendered more compassionate; 20
 Is placable because occasions rise
 So often that demand such sacrifice;
 More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
 As tempted more; more able to endure,
 As more exposed to suffering and distress;
 Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
 'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
 Upon that law as on the best of friends;
 Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
 To evil for a guard against worse ill, 30
 And what in quality or act is best
 Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
 He fixes good on good alone, and owes
 To virtue every triumph that he knows:
 —Who, if he rise to station of command,
 Rises by open means; and there will stand
 On honourable terms, or else retire,
 And in himself possess his own desire;
 Who comprehends his trust, and to the same

Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim; 40
 And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
 For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
 Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
 Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
 Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
 Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
 A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
 But who, if he be called upon to face
 Some awful moment to which heaven has joined
 Great issues, good or bad for human-kind, 50
 Is happy as a Lover; and attired
 With sudden brightness like a Man inspired;
 And through the heat of conflict keeps the law
 In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
 Or if an unexpected call succeed,
 Come when it will, is equal to the need:
 —He who, though thus endued as with a sense
 And faculty for storm and turbulence,
 Is yet a Soul whose master bias leans
 To home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes; 60
 Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
 Are at his heart; and such fidelity
 It is his darling passion to approve;
 More brave for this, that he hath much to love:
 'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
 Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
 Or left unthought-of in obscurity,
 Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
 Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
 Plays, in the many games of life, that one 70
 Where what he most doth value must be won;
 Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
 Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
 Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
 Looks forward, persevering to the last,
 From well to better, daily self-surpast:
 Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
 For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
 Or He must go to dust without his fame,
 And leave a dead unprofitable name, 80

Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
 And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
 His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause;
 This is the happy Warrior; this is He
 Whom every Man in arms should wish to be.

To H.C., Six Years Old

O Thou! whose fancies from afar are brought;
 Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
 And fittest to unutterable thought
 The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
 Thou Faery Voyager! that dost float
 In such clear water, that thy Boat^o
 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; 10
 O blessed Vision! happy Child!
 That art so exquisitely wild,
 I think of thee with many fears
 For what may be thy lot in future years.

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
 Lord of thy house and hospitality;
 And grief, uneasy Lover! never rest
 But when she sate within the touch of thee.
 Oh! too industrious folly!
 Oh! vain and causeless melancholy! 20
 Nature will either end thee quite;
 Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
 Preserve for thee, by individual right,
 A young Lamb's heart among the full-grown flocks.
 What hast Thou to do with sorrow,
 Or the injuries of tomorrow?
 Thou art a Dew-drop, which the morn brings forth,
 Not doomed to jostle with unkindly shocks;
 Or to be trailed along the soiling earth;
 A Gem that glitters while it lives, 30
 And no forewarning gives;
 But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife,
 Slips in a moment out of life.

'Among all lovely things my Love had been'

Among all lovely things my Love had been;
 Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
 About her home; but she had never seen
 A Glow-worm, never one, and this I knew.

While riding near her home one stormy night
 A single Glow-worm did I chance to espy;
 I gave a fervent welcome to the sight,
 And from my Horse I leapt; great joy had I.

Upon a leaf the Glow-worm did I lay,
 To bear it with me through the stormy night: 10
 And, as before, it shone without dismay;
 Albeit putting forth a fainter light.

When to the Dwelling of my Love I came,
 I went into the Orchard quietly;
 And left the Glow-worm, blessing it by name,
 Laid safely by itself, beneath a Tree.

The whole next day, I hoped, and hoped with fear;
 At night the Glow-worm shone beneath the Tree:
 I led my Lucy to the spot, 'Look here!
 Oh! joy it was for her, and joy for me! 20

'I travelled among unknown Men'

I travelled among unknown Men,
 In Lands beyond the Sea;
 Nor England! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

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

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

Thy mornings shewed—thy nights concealed
 The bowers where Lucy played;
 And thine is, too, the last green field
 Which Lucy's eyes surveyed!

Ode to Duty

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!^o
 O Duty! if that name thou love
 Who art a Light to guide, a Rod
 To check the erring, and reprove;
 Thou who art victory and law
 When empty terrors overawe;
 From vain temptations dost set free;
 From strife and from despair; a glorious ministry.

There are who ask not if thine eye
 Be on them; who, in love and truth, 10
 Where no misgiving is, rely
 Upon the genial sense of youth:
 Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
 Who do thy work, and know it not:
 May joy be theirs while life shall last!
 And Thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast!

Serene will be our days and bright,
 And happy will our nature be,
 When love is an unerring light,
 And joy its own security. 20
 And blessed are they who in the main
 This faith, even now, do entertain:
 Live in the spirit of this creed;
 Yet find that other strength, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
 No sport of every random gust,
 Yet being to myself a guide,
 Too blindly have reposed my trust:

Resolved that nothing e'er should press
 Upon my present happiness, 30
 I shoved unwelcome tasks away;
 But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

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

Yet not the less would I throughout^o
 Still act according to the voice
 Of my own wish; and feel past doubt
 That my submissiveness was choice:
 Not seeking in the school of pride
 For 'precepts over dignified,'^o
 Denial and restraint I prize
 No farther than they breed a second Will more wise.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear^o
 The Godhead's most benignant grace; 50
 Nor know we any thing so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face;
 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
 And Fragrance in thy footing treads;
 Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;
 And the most ancient Heavens through Thee are
 fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!^o
 I call thee: I myself commend
 Unto thy guidance from this hour;
 Oh! let my weakness have an end! 60
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,^o
 The spirit of self-sacrifice;
 The confidence of reason give;
 And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

Beggars

She had a tall Man's height, or more;
 No bonnet screened her from the heat;
 A long drab-coloured Cloak she wore,
 A Mantle reaching to her feet:
 What other dress she had I could not know;
 Only she wore a Cap that was as white as snow.

In all my walks, through field or town,
 Such Figure had I never seen:
 Her face was of Egyptian brown:
 Fit person was she for a Queen, 10
 To head those ancient Amazonian files:
 Or ruling Bandit's Wife, among the Grecian Isles.

Before me begging did she stand,
 Pouring out sorrows like a sea;
 Grief after grief:—on English Land
 Such woes I knew could never be;
 And yet a boon I gave her; for the Creature
 Was beautiful to see; a Weed of glorious feature!°

I left her, and pursued my way;
 And soon before me did espy 20
 A pair of little Boys at play,
 Chasing a crimson butterfly;
 The Taller followed with his hat in hand,
 Wreathed round with yellow flow'rs, the gayest of the land.

The Other wore a rimless crown,
 With leaves of laurel stuck about:
 And they both followed up and down,
 Each whooping with a merry shout;
 Two Brothers seemed they, eight and ten years old;
 And like that Woman's face as gold is like to gold. 30

They bolted on me thus, and lo!
 Each ready with a plaintive whine;
 Said I, 'Not half an hour ago
 Your Mother has had alms of mine.'
 'That cannot be,' one answered, 'She is dead.'
 'Nay but I gave her pence, and she will buy you bread.'

‘She has been dead, Sir, many a day.’
 ‘Sweet Boys, you’re telling me a lie;
 It was your Mother, as I say—’
 And in the twinkling of an eye,
 ‘Come, come!’ cried one; and, without more ado,
 Off to some other play they both together flew.

40

To a Sky-Lark

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

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
 And today my heart is weary;
 Had I now the soul of a Faery,
 Up to thee would I fly.

There is madness about thee, and joy divine
 In that song of thine;
 Up with me, up with me, high and high,
 To thy banqueting-place in the sky!
 Joyous as Morning,
 Thou art laughing and scorning;
 Thou hast a nest, for thy love and thy rest:
 And, though little troubled with sloth,
 Drunken Lark! thou wouldn’st be loth
 To be such a Traveller as I.

 Happy, happy Liver!
 With a soul as strong as a mountain River,
 Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
 Joy and jollity be with us both!
 Hearing thee, or else some other,
 As merry a Brother,
 I on the earth will go plodding on,
 By myself, chearfully, till the day is done.

10

20

Alice Fell

The Post-boy drove with fierce career,
 For threat'ning clouds the moon had drowned;
 When suddenly I seemed to hear
 A moan, a lamentable sound.

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

At length I to the Boy called out,
 He stopped his horses at the word; 10
 But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
 Nor aught else like it could be heard.

The Boy then smacked his whip, and fast
 The horses scampered through the rain;
 And soon I heard upon the blast
 The voice, and bade him halt again.

Said I, alighting on the ground,
 'What can it be, this piteous moan?'
 And there a little Girl I found,
 Sitting behind the Chaise, alone. 20

'My Cloak!' the word was last and first,
 And loud and bitterly she wept,
 As if her very heart would burst;
 And down from off the Chaise she leapt.

'What ails you, Child?' She sobbed, 'Look here!'
 I saw it in the wheel entangled,
 A weather beaten Rag as e'er
 From any garden scare-crow dangled.

'Twas twisted betwixt nave and spoke;
 Her help she lent, and with good heed 30
 Together we released the Cloak;
 A wretched, wretched rag indeed!

'And whither are you going, Child,
 Tonight along these lonesome ways?'
 'To Durham' answered she half wild—
 'Then come with me into the chaise.'

She sate like one past all relief;
 Sob after sob she forth did send
 In wretchedness, as if her grief
 Could never, never, have an end. 40

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

And I to Durham, Sir, belong.’
 And then, as if the thought would choke
 Her very heart, her grief grew strong;
 And all was for her tattered Cloak.

The chaise drove on; our journey’s end
 Was nigh; and, sitting by my side, 50
 As if she’d lost her only friend
 She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the Tavern-door we post;
 Of Alice and her grief I told;
 And I gave money to the Host,
 To buy a new Cloak for the old.

‘And let it be a duffil grey,
 As warm a cloak as man can sell!’
 Proud Creature was she the next day,
 The little Orphan, Alice Fell! 60

Resolution and Independence

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

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

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;
 I saw the Hare that raced about with joy;
 I heard the woods, and distant waters, roar;
 Or heard them not, as happy as a Boy:
 The pleasant season did my heart employ:
 My old remembrances went from me wholly; 20
 And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy.

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

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

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

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,^o
 The sleepless Soul that perished in its pride;
 Of Him who walked in glory and in joy^o
 Behind his plough, upon the mountain-side:
 By our own spirits are we deified;
 We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
 But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace, 50
 A leading from above, a something given,
 Yet it befel, that, in this lonely place,
 When up and down my fancy thus was driven,
 And I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
 I saw a Man before me unawares:
 The oldest Man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

My course I stopped as soon as I espied
 The Old Man in that naked wilderness:
 Close by a Pond, upon the further side,
 He stood alone: a minute's space I guess 60
 I watched him, he continuing motionless:
 To the Pool's further margin then I drew;
 He being all the while before me full in view.

As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie^o
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
 Wonder to all who do the same espy
 By what means it could thither come, and whence;
 So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
 Like a Sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
 Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself. 70

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

Himself he propped, his body, limbs, and face,
 Upon a long grey Staff of shaven wood:
 And, still as I drew near with gentle pace, 80
 Beside the little pond or moorish flood
 Motionless as a Cloud the Old Man stood;
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
 And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the Pond
 Stirred with his Staff, and fixedly did look
 Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
 As if he had been reading in a book:
 And now such freedom as I could I took;
 And, drawing to his side, to him did say, 90
 'This morning gives us promise of a glorious day.'

A gentle answer did the Old Man make,
 In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
 And him with further words I thus bespake,
 'What kind of work is that which you pursue?
 This is a lonesome place for one like you.'
 He answered me with pleasure and surprize;
 And there was, while he spake, a fire about his eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
 Yet each in solemn order followed each, 100
 With something of a lofty utterance drest;
 Choice word, and measured phrase; above the reach
 Of ordinary men; a stately speech!
 Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
 Religious men, who give to God and Man their dues.

He told me that he to this pond had come
 To gather Leeches, being old and poor:
 Employment hazardous and wearisome!
 And he had many hardships to endure:
 From Pond to Pond he roamed, from moor to moor, 110
 Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance:
 And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

The Old Man still stood talking by my side;
 But now his voice to me was like a stream
 Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
 And the whole Body of the man did seem
 Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
 Or like a Man from some far region sent;
 To give me human strength, and strong admonishment.°

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills; 120
 The hope that is unwilling to be fed;
 Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
 And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
 And now, not knowing what the Old Man had said,
 My question eagerly did I renew,
 'How is it that you live, and what is it you do?'

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
 And said, that, gathering Leeches, far and wide
 He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
 The waters of the Ponds where they abide. 130
 'Once I could meet with them on every side;
 But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
 Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.'

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
 The Old Man's shape, and speech, all troubled me:
 In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
 About the weary moors continually,
 Wandering about alone and silently.
 While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
 He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed. 140

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

'Nuns fret not at their Convent's narrow room'

Nuns fret not at their Convent's narrow room;
 And Hermits are contented with their Cells;
 And Students with their pensive Citadels:
 Maids at the Wheel, the Weaver at his Loom,
 Sit blithe and happy; Bees that soar for bloom,
 High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,^o
 Will murmur by the hour in Foxglove bells:
 In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
 In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound 10
 Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground:
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
 Should find short solace there, as I have found.

'Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?'

Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
 Festively she puts forth in trim array;
 As vigorous as a Lark at break of day:
 Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
 What boots the enquiry? Neither friend nor foe
 She cares for; let her travel where she may,
 She finds familiar names, a beaten way
 Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
 Yet still I ask, what Haven is her mark?
 And, almost as it was when ships were rare, 10
 From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
 Crossing the waters; doubt, and something dark,
 Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
 Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

'With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh'

With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
 Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
 Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
 Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
 A goodly Vessel did I then espy
 Come like a Giant from a haven broad;
 And lustily along the Bay she strode,
 Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.°
 This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
 Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
 This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
 When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
 No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
 On went She, and due north her journey took.

10

Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802

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

10

“‘*Beloved Vale!*’ I said, “*when I shall con*””

‘Beloved Vale!’ I said, ‘when I shall con
 Those many records of my childish years,
 Remembrance of myself and of my peers
 Will press me down: to think of what is gone
 Will be an awful thought, if life have one.’
 But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
 Distressed me; I looked round, I shed no tears;
 Deep thought, or awful vision, I had none.
 By thousand petty fancies I was crossed,
 To see the Trees, which I had thought so tall, 10
 Mere dwarfs; the Brooks so narrow, Fields so small.
 A Juggler’s Balls old Time about him tossed;
 I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
 The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

‘*The world is too much with us*’

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
 Little we see in nature that is ours;
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
 This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
 The Winds that will be howling at all hours
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
 For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
 It moves us not—Great God! I’d rather be
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn; 10
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

'It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free'

It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free;
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
 The gentleness of heaven is on the Sea:
 Listen! the mighty Being is awake
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
 If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
 And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.

10

*Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais,
 August, 1802*

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

10

Calais, August, 1802

Is it a Reed that's shaken by the wind,
 Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
 Lords, Lawyers, Statesmen, Squires of low degree,
 Men known, and men unknown, Sick, Lame, and Blind,
 Post forward all, like Creatures of one kind,
 With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
 In France, before the new-born Majesty.
 'Tis ever thus. Ye Men of prostrate mind!
 A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
 But that's a loyal virtue, never sown 10
 In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
 When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown
 What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
 Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!

*To a Friend, Composed near Calais, On the Road
 leading to Ardres, August 7th, 1802*

Jones! when from Calais southward you and I
 Travelled on foot together; then this Way,
 Which I am pacing now, was like the May
 With festivals of new-born Liberty:
 A homeless sound of joy was in the Sky;
 The antiquated Earth, as one might say,
 Beat like the heart of Man: songs, garlands, play,
 Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
 And now, sole register that these things were,
 Two solitary greetings have I heard, 10
 'Good morrow, Citizen!' a hollow word,
 As if a dead Man spake it! Yet despair
 I feel not: happy am I as a Bird:
 Fair seasons yet will come, and hopes as fair.

'I grieved for Buonaparte'

I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain
 And an unthinking grief! the vital blood
 Of that Man's mind what can it be? What food
 Fed his first hopes? What knowledge could *He* gain?
 'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
 The Governor who must be wise and good,
 And temper with the sternness of the brain
 Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
 Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
 Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
 Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
 Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
 By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
 True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

10

Calais, August 15th, 1802

Festivals have I seen that were not names:
 This is young Buonaparte's natal day;
 And his is henceforth an established sway,
 Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
 Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
 Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay!
 Calais is not: and I have bent my way
 To the Sea-coast, noting that each man frames
 His business as he likes. Another time^o
 That was, when I was here long years ago:
 The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
 Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
 Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
 The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

10

On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic

Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;
 And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
 Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
 Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
 She was a Maiden City, bright and free;
 No guile seduced, no force could violate;
 And when She took unto herself a Mate^o
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
 And what if she had seen those glories fade,
 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay, 10
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
 When her long life hath reached its final day:
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
 Of that which once was great is passed away.

To Toussaint L'Ouverture

Toussaint, the most unhappy Man of Men!
 Whether the rural Milk-maid by her Cow
 Sing in thy hearing, or thou liest now
 Alone in some deep dungeon's earless den,
 O miserable Chieftain! where and when
 Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
 Wear rather in thy bonds a chearful brow:
 Though fallen Thyself, never to rise again,
 Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind 10
 Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
 There's not a breathing of the common wind
 That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
 Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
 And love, and Man's unconquerable mind.^o

September 1st, 1802

We had a fellow-Passenger who came
 From Calais with us, gaudy in array,
 A Negro Woman like a Lady gay,
 Yet silent as a woman fearing blame;
 Dejected, meek, yea pitiaibly tame,
 She sate, from notice turning not away,
 But on our proffered kindness still did lay
 A weight of languid speech, or at the same
 Was silent, motionless in eyes and face.
 She was a Negro Woman driv'n from France,
 Rejected like all others of that race,
 Not one of whom may now find footing there;
 This the poor Out-cast did to us declare,
 Nor murmured at the unfeeling Ordinance.

10

*Composed in the Valley, near Dover,
 On the Day of Landing*

Dear fellow Traveller! here we are once more.
 The Cock that crows, the Smoke that curls, that sound
 Of Bells, those Boys that in yon meadow-ground
 In white sleeved shirts are playing by the score,
 And even this little River's gentle roar,
 All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
 With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
 Myself so satisfied in heart before.
 Europe is yet in Bonds; but let that pass,
 Thought for another moment. Thou art free
 My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
 For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
 Of England once again, and hear and see,
 With such a dear Companion at my side.

10

September, 1802

Inland, within a hollow Vale, I stood,
 And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
 The Coast of France, the Coast of France how near!
 Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
 I shrunk, for verily the barrier flood
 Was like a Lake, or River bright and fair,
 A span of waters; yet what power is there!
 What mightiness for evil and for good!
 Even so doth God protect us if we be
 Virtuous and wise; Winds blow, and Waters roll, 10
 Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity,
 Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
 Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the Soul
 Only the Nations shall be great and free.

*Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation
of Switzerland*

Two Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
 One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice:
 In both from age to age Thou didst rejoice,
 They were thy chosen Music, Liberty!
 There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
 Thou fought'st against Him; but hast vainly striven;
 Thou from thy Alpine Holds at length art driven,
 Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
 Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
 Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left! 10
 For, high-soul'd Maid, what sorrow would it be
 That mountain Floods should thunder as before,
 And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
 And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

Written in London, September, 1802

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

London, 1802

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

'Great Men have been among us'

Great Men have been among us; hands that penned
 And tongues that uttered wisdom, better none:
 The later Sydney, Marvel, Harrington,
 Young Vane, and others who called Milton Friend.
 These Moralists could act and comprehend:
 They knew how genuine glory was put on;
 Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
 In splendor: what strength was, that would not bend
 But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange,
 Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then. 10
 Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
 No single Volume paramount, no code,
 No master spirit, no determined road;
 But equally a want of Books and Men!

'It is not to be thought of that the Flood'

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
 Of British freedom, which to the open Sea
 Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
 Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters, unwithstood,'^o
 Road by which all might come and go that would,
 And bear out freights of worth to foreign lands;
 That this most famous Stream in Bogs and Sands
 Should perish; and to evil and to good
 Be lost for ever. In our Halls is hung
 Armoury of the invincible Knights of old: 10
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
 Which Milton held. In every thing we are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

'When I have borne in memory what has tamed'

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
 Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
 When Men change Swords for Ledgers, and desert
 The Student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
 I had, my Country! am I to be blamed?
 But, when I think of Thee, and what Thou art,
 Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
 Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
 But dearly must we prize thee; we who find
 In thee a bulwark of the cause of men;
 And I by my affection was beguiled.
 What wonder, if a Poet, now and then,
 Among the many movements of his mind,
 Felt for thee as a Lover or a Child.

10

October, 1803

One might believe that natural miseries
 Had blasted France, and made of it a land
 Unfit for Men; and that in one great Band
 Her Sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
 But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
 Shed gentle favors; rural works are there;
 And ordinary business without care;
 Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please!
 How piteous then that there should be such dearth
 Of knowledge; that whole myriads should unite
 To work against themselves such fell despite:
 Should come in phrenzy and in drunken mirth,
 Impatient to put out the only light
 Of Liberty that yet remains on Earth!

10

October, 1803

These times touch moneyed Worldlings with dismay:
 Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
 With words of apprehension and despair:
 While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
 Men unto whom sufficient for the day
 And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
 Sound, healthy Children of the God of Heaven,
 Are cheerful as the rising Sun in May.
 What do we gather hence but firmer faith
 That every gift of noble origin 10
 Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath;
 That virtue and the faculties within
 Are vital, and that riches are akin
 To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death!

'England! the time is come when thou shouldst wean'

England! the time is come when thou shouldst wean
 Thy heart from its emasculating food;
 The truth should now be better understood;
 Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
 Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
 But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
 If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
 Aught good were destined, Thou wouldst step between.
 England! all nations in this charge agree:
 But worse, more ignorant in love and hate, 10
 Far, far more abject is thine Enemy:
 Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
 Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
 Oh grief! that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee!

October, 1803

When, looking on the present face of things,
 I see one Man, of Men the meanest too!
 Raised up to sway the World, to do, undo,
 With mighty Nations for his Underlings,
 The great events with which old story rings
 Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great;
 Nothing is left which I can venerate;
 So that almost a doubt within me springs
 Of Providence, such emptiness at length
 Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God! 10
 I measure back the steps which I have trod,
 And tremble, seeing, as I do, the strength
 Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
 I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

To the Men of Kent, October, 1803

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

October, 1803

Six thousand Veterans practised in War's game,
 Tried Men, at Killicranky were arrayed
 Against an equal Host that wore the Plaid,
 Shepherds and Herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
 The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
 And Garry thundering down his mountain-road
 Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
 Of the dead bodies. 'Twas a day of shame
 For them whom precept and the pedantry
 Of cold mechanic battle do enslave. 10
 Oh! for a single hour of that Dundee
 Who on that day the word of onset gave!
 Like conquest would the Men of England see;
 And her Foes find a like inglorious Grave.

Anticipation, October, 1803

Shout, for a mighty Victory is won!
 On British ground the Invaders are laid low;
 The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
 And left them lying in the silent sun,
 Never to rise again!—the work is done.
 Come forth, ye Old Men, now in peaceful show
 And greet your Sons! drums beat, and trumpets blow!
 Make merry, Wives! ye little Children stun
 Your Grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise! 10
 Clap, Infants, clap your hands! Divine must be
 That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
 And even the prospect of our Brethren slain,
 Hath something in it which the heart enjoys:—
 In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

Rob Roy's Grave

The History of Rob Roy is sufficiently known; his Grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small Pin-fold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the Traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A famous Man is Robin Hood,^o
 The English Ballad-singer's joy!
 And Scotland has a Thief as good,
 An Outlaw of as daring mood,
 She has her brave ROB ROY!^o
 Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
 And let us chaunt a passing Stave
 In honour of that Hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart,
 And wondrous length and strength of arm^o 10
 Nor craved he more to quell his Foes,
 Or keep his Friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as *wise* as brave;
 Forgive me if the phrase be strong;—
 A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
 Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave
 As wise in thought as bold in deed:
 For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed. 20

Said generous Rob, 'What need of Books?
 Burn all the Statutes and their shelves:
 They stir us up against our Kind;
 And worse, against Ourselves.

We have a passion, make a law,
 Too false to guide us or controul!
 And for the law itself we fight
 In bitterness of soul.

And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
 Distinctions that are plain and few: 30
 These find I graven on my heart:
That tells me what to do.

The Creatures see of flood and field,
 And those that travel on the wind!
 With them no strife can last; they live
 In peace, and peace of mind.

For why?—because the good old Rule
 Sufficeth them, the simple Plan,
 That they should take who have the power,
 And they should keep who can. 40

A lesson which is quickly learned,
 A signal this which all can see!
 Thus nothing here provokes the Strong
 To wanton cruelty.

All freakishness of mind is checked;
 He tamed, who foolishly aspires;
 While to the measure of his might
 Each fashions his desires.

All Kinds, and Creatures, stand and fall
 By strength of prowess or of wit: 50
 'Tis God's appointment who must sway,
 And who is to submit.

Since then,' said Robin, 'right is plain,
 And longest life is but a day;
 To have my ends, maintain my rights,
 I'll take the shortest way.'

And thus among these rocks he lived,
 Through summer's heat and winter's snow:
 The Eagle, he was Lord above,
 And Rob was Lord below. 60

So was it—*would*, at least, have been
 But through untowardness of fate:
 For Polity was then too strong;
 He came an age too late.

Or shall we say an age too soon?
 For, were the bold Man living *now*,
 How might he flourish in his pride,
 With buds on every bough!

Then rents and Factors, rights of chace,
 Sheriffs, and Lairds and their domains,
 Would all have seemed but paltry things,
 Not worth a moment's pains.

70

Rob Roy had never lingered here,
 To these few meagre Vales confined;
 But thought how wide the world, the times
 How fairly to his mind!

And to his Sword he would have said,
 'Do Thou my sovereign will enact
 From land to land through half the earth!
 Judge thou of law and fact!

80

'Tis fit that we should do our part;
 Becoming, that mankind should learn
 That we are not to be surpassed
 In fatherly concern.

Of old things all are over old,
 Of good things none are good enough:—
 We'll shew that we can help to frame
 A world of other stuff.

I, too, will have my Kings that take
 From me the sign of life and death:
 Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
 Obedient to my breath.'

90

And, if the word had been fulfilled,
 As *might* have been, then, thought of joy!
 France would have had her present Boast;^o
 And we our brave Rob Roy!

Oh! say not so; compare them not;
 I would not wrong thee, Champion brave!
 Would wrong thee no where; least of all
 Here standing by thy Grave.

100

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts,
 Wild Chieftain of a Savage Clan!
 Hadst this to boast of; thou didst love
 The *liberty* of Man.

And, had it been thy lot to live
 With us who now behold the light,
 Thou would'st have nobly stirred thyself,
 And battled for the Right.

For Robin was the poor Man's stay
 The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand;
 And all the oppressed, who wanted strength,
 Had Robin's to command. 110

Bear witness many a pensive sigh
 Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
 Alone upon Loch Veol's Heights,
 And by Loch Lomond's Braes!

And, far and near, through vale and hill,
 Are faces that attest the same;
 And kindle, like a fire new stirred,
 At sound of ROB ROY's name. 120

The Solitary Reaper

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

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
 So sweetly to reposing bands
 Of Travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian Sands: 10

No sweeter voice was ever heard
 In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

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

20

Or is it some more humble lay,
 Familiar matter of today?
 Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
 That has been, and may be again!

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

30

Stepping Westward

While my Fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Ketterine, one fine evening after sun-set, in our road to a Hut where in the course of our Tour we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed Women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, 'What you are stepping westward?'

'What you are stepping westward?'—'Yea'
 —'Twould be a wildish destiny,
 If we, who thus together roam
 In a strange Land, and far from home,
 Were in this place the guests of Chance:
 Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
 Though home or shelter he had none,
 With such a Sky to lead him on?

The dewy ground was dark and cold;
 Behind, all gloomy to behold; 10
 And stepping westward seemed to be
 A kind of *heavenly* destiny;
 I liked the greeting; 'twas a sound
 Of something without place or bound;
 And seemed to give me spiritual right
 To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
 Was walking by her native Lake:
 The salutation had to me
 The very sound of courtesy: 20
 Its power was felt; and while my eye
 Was fixed upon the glowing sky,
 The echo of the voice enwrought
 A human sweetness with the thought
 Of travelling through the world that lay
 Before me in my endless way.

Glen-Almain

OR THE NARROW GLEN

In this still place, remote from men,
 Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN;^o
 In this still place, where murmurs on
 But one meek Streamlet, only one:
 He sang of battles, and the breath
 Of stormy war, and violent death;
 And should, methinks, when all was past,
 Have rightfully been laid at last
 Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
 As by a spirit turbulent; 10
 Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
 And everything unreconciled;
 In some complaining, dim retreat,
 For fear and melancholy meet;
 But this is calm; there cannot be
 A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed?
 Or is it but a groundless creed?
 What matters it? I blame them not
 Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot 20
 Was moved; and in this way expressed
 Their notion of its perfect rest.
 A Convent, even a hermit's Cell
 Would break the silence of this Dell:
 It is not quiet, is not ease;
 But something deeper far than these:
 The separation that is here
 Is of the grave; and of austere
 And happy feelings of the dead:
 And, therefore, was it rightly said 30
 That Ossian, last of all his race!
 Lies buried in this lonely place.

*The Matron of Jedborough
 and Her Husband*

At Jedborough we went into private Lodgings for a few days; and the following Verses were called forth by the character, and domestic situation, of our Hostess.

Age! twine thy brows with fresh spring flowers!
 And call a train of laughing Hours;
 And bid them dance, and bid them sing;
 And Thou, too, mingle in the Ring!
 Take to thy heart a new delight;
 If not, make merry in despite!
 For there is one who scorns thy power.
 —But dance! for under Jedborough Tower
 There liveth in the prime of glee,
 A Woman, whose years are seventy-three, 10
 And She will dance and sing with thee!

Nay! start not at that Figure—there!
 Him who is rooted to his chair!
 Look at him—look again! for He
 Hath long been of thy Family.
 With legs that move not, if they can,
 And useless arms, a Trunk of Man,
 He sits, and with a vacant eye;
 A Sight to make a Stranger sigh!
 Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom: 20
 His world is in this single room:
 Is this a place for mirth and cheer?
 Can merry-making enter here?

The joyous Woman is the Mate
 Of Him in that forlorn estate!
 He breathes a subterraneous damp,
 But bright as Vesper shines her lamp:
 He is as mute as Jedborough Tower;
 She jocund as it was of yore,
 With all its bravery on; in times, 30
 When, all alive with merry chimes,
 Upon a sun-bright morn of May,
 It roused the Vale to Holiday.

I praise thee, Matron! and thy due
 Is praise; heroic praise, and true!
 With admiration I behold
 Thy gladness unsubdued and bold:
 Thy looks, thy gestures, all present
 The picture of a life well-spent:
 This do I see; and something more; 40
 A strength unthought of heretofore!
 Delighted am I for thy sake;
 And yet a higher joy partake.
 Our Human-nature throws away
 Its second Twilight, and looks gay:
 A Land of promise and of pride
 Unfolding, wide as life is wide.

Ah! see her helpless Charge! enclosed
 Within himself, as seems; composed;
 To fear of loss, and hope of gain, 50
 The strife of happiness and pain,
 Utterly dead! yet, in the guise
 Of little Infants, when their eyes
 Begin to follow to and fro
 The persons that before them go,
 He tracks her motions, quick or slow.
 Her buoyant Spirit can prevail
 Where common cheerfulness would fail:
 She strikes upon him with the heat
 Of July Suns; he feels it sweet; 60
 An animal delight though dim!
 'Tis all that now remains for him!

I looked, I scanned her o'er and o'er;
 The more I looked I wondered more:
 When suddenly I seemed to espy
 A trouble in her strong black eye;
 A remnant of uneasy light,
 A flash of something over-bright!
 And soon she made this matter plain;
 And told me, in a thoughtful strain, 70
 That she had borne a heavy yoke,
 Been stricken by a twofold stroke;
 Ill health of body; and had pined
 Beneath worse ailments of the mind.

So be it! but let praise ascend
 To Him who is our Lord and Friend!
 Who from disease and suffering
 Hath called for thee a second Spring;
 Repaid thee for that sore distress
 By no untimely joyousness; 80
 Which makes of thine a blissful state;
 And cheers thy melancholy Mate!

To a Highland Girl
(*At Inversneyde, upon Loch Lomond*)

Sweet Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:
And these gray Rocks; this household Lawn;
These Trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
The fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent Lake;
The little Bay, a quiet Road
That holds in shelter thy Abode; 10
In truth together ye do seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
Yet, dream and vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart:
God shield thee to thy latest years!
I neither know thee nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray 20
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here, scattered like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear 30
The freedom of a Mountaineer.
A face with gladness overspread!
Sweet looks, by human kindness bred!
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings

Of thoughts, that lie beyond the reach
 Of thy few words of English speech:
 A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife 40
 That gives thy gestures grace and life!
 So have I, not unmoved in mind,
 Seen birds of tempest-loving kind,
 Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
 For thee who art so beautiful?
 O happy pleasure! here to dwell
 Beside thee in some heathy dell;
 Adopt your homely ways and dress,
 A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess! 50
 But I could frame a wish for thee
 More like a grave reality:
 Thou art to me but as a wave
 Of the wild sea; and I would have
 Some claim upon thee, if I could,
 Though but of common neighbourhood.
 What joy to hear thee, and to see!
 Thy elder Brother I would be,
 Thy Father, anything to thee!

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace 60
 Hath led me to this lonely place.
 Joy have I had; and going hence
 I bear away my recompence.
 In spots like these it is we prize
 Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
 Then, why should I be loth to stir?
 I feel this place was made for her;
 To give new pleasure like the past,
 Continued long as life shall last.
 Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart, 70
 Sweet Highland Girl! from Thee to part;
 For I, methinks, till I grow old,
 As fair before me shall behold,
 As I do now, the Cabin small,
 The Lake, the Bay, the Waterfall;
 And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

*Address to the Sons of Burns, After visiting their
Father's Grave (August 14th, 1803)*

Ye now are panting up life's hill!
'Tis twilight time of good and ill,
And more than common strength and skill
 Must *ye* display
If ye would give the better will
 Its lawful sway.

Strong bodied if ye be to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware!
But if your Father's wit ye share,
 Then, then indeed,
Ye Sons of Burns! for watchful care
 There will be need.

10

For honest men delight will take
To shew you favor for his sake,
Will flatter you; and Fool and Rake
 Your steps pursue:
And of your Father's name will make
 A snare for you.

Let no mean hope your souls enslave;
Be independent, generous, brave!
Your Father such example gave,
 And such revere!
But be admonished by his Grave,
 And think, and fear!

20

Yarrow Unvisited

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

*'Busk ye, busk ye my bonny, bonny Bride,
Busk ye, busk ye my winsome Marrow!'*—)

From Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And, when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my *'winsome Marrow,'*^o
'Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow.'

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

There's Galla water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The Lintwhites sing in chorus;^o 20
There's pleasant Tiviot Dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow;
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

What's Yarrow but a River bare
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.'

—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
 My True-love sighed for sorrow; 30
 And looked me in the face, to think
 I thus could speak of Yarrow!

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

Let Beeves and home-bred Kine partake
 The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;^o
 The Swan on still St. Mary’s Lake
 Float double, Swan and Shadow!
 We will not see them; will not go,
 Today, nor yet tomorrow;
 Enough if in our hearts we know,
 There’s such a place as Yarrow.

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

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

To a Butterfly

Stay near me—do not take thy flight!
 A little longer stay in sight!
 Much converse do I find in Thee,
 Historian of my Infancy!
 Float near me; do not yet depart!
 Dead times revive in thee:
 Thou bringst, gay Creature as thou art!
 A solemn image to my heart,
 My Father's Family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
 The time, when in our childish plays
 My sister Emmeline and I
 Together chased the Butterfly!
 A very hunter did I rush
 Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
 I followed on from brake to bush;
 But She, God love her! feared to brush
 The dust from off its wings.

10

'My heart leaps up when I behold'

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

Written in March

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

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

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

'I wandered lonely as a Cloud'

I wandered lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er Vales and Hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of dancing Daffodils;
Along the Lake, beneath the trees,
Ten thousand dancing in the breeze.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:—
A Poet could not but be gay
In such a laughing company: 10
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the shew to me had brought:

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

The Sparrow's Nest

Look, five blue eggs are gleaming there!
 Few visions have I seen more fair,
 Nor many prospects of delight
 More pleasing than that simple sight!
 I started, seeming to espy
 The home and sheltered bed,
 The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
 My Father's House, in wet or dry,
 My Sister Emmeline and I^o
 Together visited.

10

She looked at it as if she feared it;
 Still wishing, dreading to be near it:
 Such heart was in her, being then
 A little Prattler among men.
 The Blessing of my later years
 Was with me when a Boy;
 She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
 And humble cares, and delicate fears;
 A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
 And love, and thought, and joy.

20

Gipsies

Yet are they here?—the same unbroken knot
 Of human Beings, in the self-same spot!
 Men, Women, Children, yea the frame
 Of the whole Spectacle the same!
 Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light:
 Now deep and red, the colouring of night;

That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
 Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
 —Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours, are gone while I
 Have been a Traveller under open sky, 10
 Much witnessing of change and chear,
 Yet as I left I find them here!

The weary Sun betook himself to rest.
 —Then issued Vesper from the fulgent West,
 Outshining like a visible God
 The glorious path in which he trod.
 And now, ascending, after one dark hour,
 And one night's diminution of her power,
 Behold the mighty Moon! this way
 She looks at them—but they 20
 Regard not her:—oh better wrong and strife
 Better vain deeds or evil than such life!
 The silent Heavens have goings on;
 The stars have tasks—but these have none.

To the Cuckoo

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
 I hear thee and rejoice:
 O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass,
 I hear thy restless shout:
 From hill to hill it seems to pass,
 About, and all about!

To me, no Babbler with a tale
 Of sunshine and of flowers, 10
 Thou tellest, Cuckoo! in the vale
 Of visionary hours.

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

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

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

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

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

To a Butterfly

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

This plot of Orchard-ground is ours; 10
 My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
 Stop here whenever you are weary,
 And rest as in a sanctuary!
 Come often to us, fear no wrong;
 Sit near us on the bough!
 We'll talk of sunshine and of song;
 And summer days, when we were young,
 Sweet childish days, that were as long
 As twenty days are now!

The Green Linnet

The May is come again:—how sweet
 To sit upon my Orchard-seat!
 And Birds and Flowers once more to greet,
 My last year's Friends together:
 My thoughts they all by turns employ;
 A whispering Leaf is now my joy,
 And then a Bird will be the toy
 That doth my fancy tether.

One have I marked, the happiest Guest
 In all this covert of the blest: 10
 Hail to Thee, far above the rest
 In joy of voice and pinion,
 Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
 Presiding Spirit here to-day,
 Dost lead the revels of the May,
 And this is thy dominion.

While Birds, and Butterflies, and Flowers
 Make all one Band of Paramours,
 Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
 Art sole in thy employment; 20
 A Life, a Presence like the Air,
 Scattering thy gladness without care,
 Too blessed with any one to pair,
 Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
 That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
 Behold him perched in ecstasies,
 Yet seeming still to hover;
 There! where the flutter of his wings
 Upon his back and body flings 30
 Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
 That cover him all over.

While thus before my eyes he gleams,
 A Brother of the Leaves he seems;
 When in a moment forth he teems
 His little song in gushes:
 As if it pleased him to disdain
 And mock the Form which he did feign,
 While he was dancing with the train
 Of Leaves among the bushes.

40

'By their floating Mill'

'—Pleasure is spread through the earth
 In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find.'

 By their floating Mill,
 Which lies dead and still,
 Behold yon Prisoners three!
 The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames;
 The Platform is small, but there's room for them all;
 And they're dancing merrily.

 From the shore come the notes
 To their Mill where it floats,
 To their House and their Mill tethered fast!
 To the small wooden isle where their work to beguile
 They from morning to even take whatever is given:—
 And many a blithe day they have past.

10

 In sight of the Spires
 All alive with the fires
 Of the Sun going down to his rest,
 In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
 They dance,—there are three, as jocund as free,
 While they dance on the calm river's breast.

 Man and Maidens wheel,
 They themselves make the Reel,
 And their Music's a prey which they seize;
 It plays not for them,—what matter! 'tis theirs;
 And if they had care it has scattered their cares,
 While they dance, crying, 'Long as ye please!'

20

They dance not for me,
 Yet mine is their glee!
 Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
 In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find;
 Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
 Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

30

The Showers of the Spring
 Rouze the Birds and they sing;
 If the Wind do but stir for his proper delight,^o
 Each Leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss,
 Each Wave, one and t'other, speeds after his Brother;
 They are happy, for that is their right!

Star Gazers

What crowd is this? what have we here! we must not pass it by;
 A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
 Long is it as a Barber's Poll, or Mast of little Boat,
 Some little Pleasure-Skiff, that doth on Thames's waters float.

The Show-man chuses well his place, 'tis Leicester's busy Square;
 And he's as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue and fair;
 Calm, though impatient is the Crowd; each is ready with the fee,
 And envies him that's looking—what an insight must it be!

Yet, Show-man, where can lie the cause? Shall thy Implement
 have blame,
 A Boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to shame?
 Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
 Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is this resplendent Vault?

10

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
 Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
 The silver Moon with all her Vales, and Hills of mightiest fame,
 Do they betray us when they're seen? and are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
 And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
 Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had,
 And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

20

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spectators rude,
 Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
 Have souls which never yet have ris'n, and therefore prostrate lie?
 No, no, this cannot be—Men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
 Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
 That doth reject all shew of pride, admits no outward sign,
 Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!

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

Power of Music

An Orpheus! An Orpheus!—yes, Faith may grow bold,^o
 And take to herself all the wonders of old;—
 Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same,^o
 In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there;—and he works on the crowd,
 He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
 He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim—
 Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him!

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
 The weary have life and the hungry have bliss; 10
 The mourner is cheared, and the anxious have rest;
 And the guilt-burthened Soul is no longer opprest.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the night
 So he where he stands is a centre of light;
 It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-faced Jack,
 And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste—
 What matter! he's caught—and his time runs to waste—
 The News-man is stopped, though he stops on the fret,
 And the half-breathless Lamp-lighter he's in the net! 20

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
 The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store;—
 If a Thief could be here he might pilfer at ease;
 She sees the Musician, 'tis all that she sees!

He stands, backed by the Wall;—he abates not his din;
 His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in,
 From the Old and the Young, from the Poorest; and there!
 The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the Hearers and proud be the Hand
 Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a Band; 30
 I am glad for him, blind as he is!—all the while
 If they speak 'tis to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a Giant in bulk and in height,
 Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
 Can he keep himself still, if he would? oh, not he!
 The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

There's a Cripple who leans on his Crutch; like a Tower
 That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour!—
 A Mother, whose Spirit in fetters is bound,
 While she dandles the babe in her arms to the sound. 40

Now, Coaches and Chariots, roar on like a stream;
 Here are twenty souls happy as Souls in a dream:
 They are deaf to your murmurs—they care not for you,
 Nor what ye are flying, or what ye pursue!

To the Daisy

With little here to do or see
 Of things that in the great world be,
 Sweet Daisy! oft I talk to thee,
 For thou art worthy,
 Thou unassuming Common-place
 Of Nature, with that homely face,
 And yet with something of a grace,
 Which Love makes for thee!

Oft do I sit by thee at ease,
 And weave a web of similies, 10
 Loose types of Things through all degrees,
 Thoughts of thy raising:
 And many a fond and idle name
 I give to thee, for praise or blame,
 As is the humour of the game,
 While I am gazing.

A Nun demure of lowly port,
 Or sprightly Maiden of Love's Court,
 In thy simplicity the sport^o
 Of all temptations; 20
 A Queen in crown of rubies drest,
 A Starveling in a scanty vest,
 Are all, as seem to suit thee best,
 Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops, with one eye^o
 Staring to threaten and defy,
 That thought comes next—and instantly
 The freak is over,
 The shape will vanish, and behold!
 A silver Shield with boss of gold, 30
 That spreads itself, some Faery bold
 In fight to cover.

I see thee glittering from afar;—
 And then thou art a pretty Star,
 Not quite so fair as many are
 In heaven above thee!
 Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
 Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
 May peace come never to his nest,
 Who shall reprove thee! 40

Sweet Flower! for by that name at last,
 When all my reveries are past,
 I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
 Sweet silent Creature!
 That breath'st with me in sun and air,
 Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
 My heart with gladness, and a share
 Of thy meek nature!

To the Same Flower

Bright Flower, whose home is every where!
 A Pilgrim bold in Nature's care,
 And all the long year through the heir
 Of joy or sorrow,
 Methinks that there abides in thee
 Some concord with humanity,
 Given to no other Flower I see
 The forest thorough!

Is it that Man is soon deprest?
 A thoughtless Thing! who, once unblest, 10
 Does little on his memory rest,
 Or on his reason,
 And Thou would'st teach him how to find
 A shelter under every wind,
 A hope for times that are unkind
 And every season?

Thou wander'st the wide world about,
 Unchecked by pride or scrupulous doubt,
 With friends to greet thee, or without,
 Yet pleased and willing; 20
 Meek, yielding to the occasion's call,
 And all things suffering from all,
 Thy function apostolical
 In peace fulfilling.

A Complaint

There is a change—and I am poor;
 Your Love hath been, nor long ago,
 A Fountain at my fond Heart's door,
 Whose only business was to flow;
 And flow it did; not taking heed
 Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
 Bless'd was I then all bliss above!
 Now, for this consecrated Fount
 Of murmuring, sparkling, living love, 10
 What have I? shall I dare to tell?
 A comfortless, and hidden WELL.

A Well of love—it may be deep—
 I trust it is, and never dry:
 What matter? if the Waters sleep
 In silence and obscurity.
 —Such change, and at the very door
 Of my fond Heart, hath made me poor.

'I am not One who much or oft delight'

I am not One who much or oft delight
 To season my fireside with personal talk,
 About Friends, who live within an easy walk,
 Or Neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
 And, for my chance-acquaintance, Ladies bright,
 Sons, Mothers, Maidens withering on the stalk,^o
 These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
 Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
 Better than such discourse doth silence long,
 Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
 To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
 By my half-kitchen my half-parlour fire,
 And listen to the flapping of the flame,
 Or kettle, whispering it's faint undersong.

10

'Yet life,' you say, 'is life; we have seen and see,
 And with a living pleasure we describe;
 And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
 The languid mind into activity.
 Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee,
 Are fostered by the comment and the gibe.'
 Even be it so: yet still among your tribe,
 Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
 Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
 More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
 And part far from them:—sweetest melodies^o
 Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
 Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes
 He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

20

Wings have we, and as far as we can go
 We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood, 30
 Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
 Which with the lofty sanctifies the low:
 Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
 Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
 Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
 Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
 There do I find a never-failing store
 Of personal themes, and such as I love best;
 Matter wherein right voluble I am:
 Two will I mention, dearer than the rest; 40
 The gentle Lady, married to the Moor;^o
 And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
 Great gains are mine: for thus I live remote
 From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
 Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
 Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
 Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
 And thus from day to day my little Boat
 Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably. 50
 Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
 Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares,
 The Poets, who on earth have made us Heirs
 Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
 Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
 Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

'Yes! full surely 'twas the Echo'

Yes! full surely 'twas the Echo,
 Solitary, clear, profound,
 Answering to Thee, shouting Cuckoo!
 Giving to thee Sound for Sound.

Whence the Voice? from air or earth?
 This the Cuckoo cannot tell;
 But a startling sound had birth,
 As the Bird must know full well;

Like the voice through earth and sky
 By the restless Cuckoo sent; 10
 Like her ordinary cry,
 Like—but oh how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
 Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
 Slaves of Folly, Love, or Strife,
 Voices of two different Natures?

Have not We too? Yes we have
 Answers, and we know not whence;
 Echoes from beyond the grave,
 Recognized intelligence? 20

Such within ourselves we hear
 Oft-times, ours though sent from far;
 Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
 For of God, of God they are!

Lines

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up
 With which she speaks when storms are gone,
 A mighty Unison of streams!
 Of all her Voices, One!

Loud is the Vale;—this inland Depth
 In peace is roaring like the Sea;
 Yon Star upon the mountain-top
 Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, ev'n to pain depressed,
 Importunate and heavy load!^o 10
 The Comforter hath found me here,
 Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad,
 Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
 For He must die who is their Stay,
 Their Glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth
 To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
 But when the Mighty pass away
 What is it more than this, 20

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
 Doth yet again to God return?—
 Such ebb and flow must ever be,
 Then wherefore should we mourn?

Elegiac Stanzas

Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm, painted by
 Sir George Beaumont.

I was thy Neighbour once, thou rugged Pile!
 Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
 I saw thee every day; and all the while
 Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
 So like, so very like, was day to day!
 Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
 It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
 No mood, which season takes away, or brings: 10
 I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
 Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

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

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile!
 Amid a world how different from this!
 Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
 On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss: 20

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

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

Such, in the fond delusion of my heart,
 Such Picture would I at that time have made: 30
 And seen the soul of truth in every part;
 A faith, a trust, that could not be betrayed.

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

Not for a moment could I now behold
 A smiling sea and be what I have been:
 The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
 This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. 40

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
 If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,°
 This Work of thine I blame not, but commend;
 This sea in anger, and the dismal shore.

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

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
 I love to see the look with which it braves, 50
 Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
 The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

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

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
 And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
 Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
 Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.° 60

Ode

Paulò majora canamus

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

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

Now, while the Birds thus sing a joyous song,
 And while the young Lambs bound 20
 As to the tabor's sound,
 To me alone there came a thought of grief:
 A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
 And I again am strong.

The Cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,
 No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
 I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
 The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
 And all the earth is gay, 30
 Land and sea
 Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every Beast keep holiday,
 Thou Child of Joy
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
 Shepherd Boy!

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make; I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal, 40
 The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day! if I were sullen
 While the Earth herself is adorning,
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the Children are pulling,
 On every side,
 In a thousand vallies far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
 And the Babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
 —But there's a Tree, of many one, 50
 A single Field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone:
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat:
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

 Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:°
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting, 60
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy; 70
 The Youth, who daily farther from the East
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;
 At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,

And no unworthy aim,

80

The homely Nurse doth all she can
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 A four year's Darling of a pigmy size!

See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his Mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his Father's eyes!

90

See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;

A wedding or a festival,

A mourning or a funeral;

And this hath now his heart,

And unto this he frames his song:

Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife;

But it will not be long

Ere this be thrown aside,

100

And with new joy and pride

The little Actor cons another part,

Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'^o

With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,

That Life brings with her in her Equipage;

As if his whole vocation

Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie

Thy Soul's immensity;

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep

110

Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,

That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,

Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—

Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!

On whom those truths do rest,

Which we are toiling all our lives to find;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality^o
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by;
 To whom the grave 120
 Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
 Of day or the warm light,
 A place of thought where we in waiting lie;
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
 Of untamed pleasures, on thy Being's height,
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
 The Years to bring the inevitable yoke,
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight, 130
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

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

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
 Perpetual benedictions: not indeed
 For that which is most worthy to be blest;
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed
 Of Childhood, whether fluttering or at rest, 140
 With new-born hope for ever in his breast:—
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise;
 But for those obstinate questionings^o
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized,
 High instincts, before which our mortal Nature
 Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprized: 150
 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 us, and make^o
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being
 Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
 To perish never;
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour, 160
 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. 170

Then, sing ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
 And let the young Lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound!
 We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts today
 Feel the gladness of the May!
 What though the radiance which was once so bright
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour 180
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind,
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be,
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering,
 In the faith that looks through death,
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And oh ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves, 190
 Think not of any severing of our loves!
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
 I only have relinquished one delight
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
 Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

OTHER POEMS 1800-1808

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'When first I journeyed hither'

When first I journeyed hither, to a home^o
And dwelling of my own, it was a cold
And stormy season, and from week to week
The pathways and the publick roads were clogged
With frequent showers of snow. Upon a hill
At a short distance from my House there stands
A stately fir-grove, whither I was wont
To hasten, for within its shade I found
Commodious harbour, a sequestered nook
Or cloister with an unincumbered floor. 10
Here in safe covert on the shallow snow,
And sometimes on a speck of visible earth,
The red-breast near me hopped, nor was I loth
To sympathize with vulgar coppice birds
That hither came. A single beech tree grew
Within this grove of firs, and on the fork
Of that one beech there was a thrush's nest,
A last year's nest conspicuously built
At such small elevation from the ground
That even an unbreeched Boy might look into it: 20
Sure sign I thought that they who in that house
Of nature and of love had made their home
Among the fir-trees, all the summer long
Dwelt in a quiet place: and oftentimes
A few sheep, stragglers of a scattered flock,
Were my companions and would look at me
From the remotest outskirts of the grove,
Some nook where they had made their final stand
Huddling together from two fears, the fear
Of me and of the storm. Full many an hour 30
Here did I lose. But in this grove, the trees
Had by the planter been so crouded each
Upon on the other, and withal had thriven
In such perplexed array that I in vain
Between their stems endeavoured to find out
A length of open space where I might walk
Backwards and forwards long as I had liking
In easy and mechanic thoughtlessness.
And, for this cause, I loved the shady grove

Less than I wished to love a place so sweet.

40

I have a Brother: many times the leaves^o
 Have faded, many times the spring has touched
 The heart of bird and beast since from the shores
 Of Windermere, from Esthwaite's chearful Lake
 And her grey cottages, from all the life
 And beauty of his native hills he went
 To be a Sea-boy on the barren seas.

When we had been divided fourteen years
 At length he came to sojourn a short while
 Beneath my roof, nor had the sun twice set
 Before he made discov'ry of this grove
 Whither from that time forward he repaired
 With daily visitation. Other haunts
 Meanwhile were mine but from the sultry heat
 One morning chancing to betake myself
 To this forsaken covert, there I found
 A hoary pathway traced around the trees
 And winding on with such an easy line
 Along a natural opening that I stood
 Much wondering at my own simplicity
 That I myself had ever failed in search
 Of what was now so obvious. With a sense
 Of lively joy did I behold this path
 Beneath the fir-trees, for at once I knew
 That by my Brother's steps it had been traced.
 My thoughts were pleased within me to perceive
 That hither he had brought a finer eye,
 A heart more wakeful: that more loth to part
 From place so lovely he had worn the track,
 One of his own deep paths! by pacing here
 With that habitual restlessness of foot
 Wherewith the Sailor measures o'er and o'er
 His short domain upon the Vessel's deck
 While she is travelling through the dreary seas.

50

60

70

When thou hadst gone away from Esthwaite's shore
 And taken thy first leave of these green hills
 And rocks that were the play-ground of thy youth,
 Year followed year my Brother! and we two
 Conversing not knew little in what mold
 Each other's minds were fashioned, and at length

80

When once again we met in Grasmere Vale
 Between us there was little other bond
 Than common feelings of fraternal love.
 But thou a School-boy to the Sea hadst carried
 Undying recollections, Nature there^o
 Was with thee, she who loved us both, she still
 Was with thee, and even so thou didst become
 A silent Poet! from the solitude
 Of the vast Sea didst bring a watchful heart
 Still couchant, an inevitable ear 90
 And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.
 Back to the joyless ocean thou art gone:
 And now I call the path-way by thy name
 And love the fir-grove with a perfect love.
 Thither do I repair when cloudless suns
 Shine hot or winds blow troublesome and strong;
 And there I sit at evening when the steep
 Of Silver-How, and Grasmere's silent Lake
 And one green Island gleam between the stems
 Of the close firs, a visionary scene! 100
 And while I gaze upon this spectacle
 Of clouded splendour, on this dream-like sight
 Of solemn loveliness, I think on thee
 My Brother, and on all which thou hast lost.
 Nor seldom, if I rightly guess, when Thou,
 Muttering the verses which I muttered first
 Among the mountains, through the midnight watch
 Art pacing to and fro' the Vessel's deck
 In some far region, here, while o'er my head
 At every impulse of the moving breeze 110
 The fir-grove murmurs with a sea-like sound,
 Alone I tread this path, for aught I know
 Timing my steps to thine, and with a store
 Of indistinguishable sympathies
 Mingling most earnest wishes for the day
 When We, and others whom we love shall meet
 A second time in Grasmere's happy Vale.

*'Farewell, thou little Nook of
mountain ground'*

Farewell, thou little Nook of mountain ground,
 Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
 Of Fairfield's mighty Temple that doth bound^o
 One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare,
 Sweet Garden-orchard! of all spots that are
 The loveliest surely man hath ever found.
 Farewell! we leave thee to heaven's peaceful care,
 Thee and the Cottage which thou dost surround.

Our Boat is safely anchored by the Shore;^o
 And safely she will ride when we are gone: 10
 And ye few things that lie about our door
 Shall have our best protection, every one;
 Fields, goods, and distant chattels we have none;
 This is the place which holds our private store
 Of things earth makes and sun doth shine upon;
 Here are they in our sight: we have no more.

Sunshine and showers be with you, bud and bell!
 For two months now in vain we shall be sought:^o
 We leave you here in solitude to dwell
 With these our latest gifts of tender thought, 20
 Thou like the morning in thy saffron coat
 Bright Gowan! and marsh-marygold, farewell!
 Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought
 And placed together near our rocky well.

We go for one to whom ye will be dear;
 And she will love this Bower, this Indian shed,
 Our own contrivance, building without peer:
 A gentle maid! whose heart is lowly bred,
 Her pleasures are in wild fields gathered;
 With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer 30
 She'll come to you; to you herself will wed;
 And love the blessed life which we lead here.

Dear Spot! whom we have watched with tender heed,
 Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
 Among the distant mountains, flower and weed
 Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
 Making all kindness registered and known;
 Thou for our sakes, though Nature's Child indeed,
 Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
 Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need;

40

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

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

50

O happy Garden! loved for hours of sleep,
 O quiet Garden! loved for waking hours,
 For soft half-slumbers that did gently steep
 Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of flowers,
 Belov'd for days of rest in fruit-tree bowers!
 Two burning months let summer overleap,
 And, coming back with her who will be ours,
 Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

60

Ejaculation at the Grave of Burns

I shiver, Spirit fierce and bold,
 At thought of what I now behold!
 As vapours breathed from dungeon cold
 Strike pleasure dead;
 So sadness comes out of the mold
 Where Burns is laid!

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

10

But wherefore tremble? 'tis no place
 Of pain and sorrow, but of grace;
 Of shelter, and of silent peace,
 And 'friendly aid':^o
 —Grasped is he now in that embrace
 For which he prayed!

To the Daisy

Sweet Flower! belike one day to have
 A place upon thy Poet's grave.
 I welcome thee once more;
 But He, who was, on land, at sea,
 My Brother, too, in loving thee
 Although he loved more silently,
 Sleeps by his native shore.

Ah! hopeful, hopeful was the day
 When to that Ship he went his way,
 To govern and to guide:
 His wish was gained; a little time
 Would bring him back in manhood's prime,
 And free for life, these hills to climb^o
 With all his wants supplied.

10

And hopeful, hopeful was the day^o
 When that stout Ship at anchor lay
 Beside the shores of Wight:
 The May had then made all things green;
 And goodly, also, to be seen
 Was that proud Ship, of Ships the Queen,
 His hope and his delight.

20

Yet then, when called ashore (I know
 The truth of this, he told me so)
 In more than happy mood
 To your abodes, Sweet Daisy Flowers!
 He oft would steal at leisure hours;
 And loved you glittering in the bowers,
 A starry multitude.

But hark the Word! the Ship is gone;
 Returns from her long course: anon
 Sets sail: in season due
 Once more on English earth they stand:
 But, when a third time from the land
 They parted, sorrow was at hand
 For Him and for his Crew.

30

Six weeks beneath the moving Sea^o
 He lay in slumber quietly,
 Unforced by wind or wave
 To quit the Ship for which he died,
 All claims of duty satisfied.
 And there they found him at her side
 And bore him to the grave.

40

Vain service! yet not vainly done
 For this, if other end were none,
 That he, who had been cast
 Upon a way of life unmeet
 For such a gentle Soul and sweet,
 Should find an undisturbed retreat
 Near what he loved, at last:

That neighbourhood of Wood and Field
 To him a resting-place should yield,
 A meek Man and a brave!
 The Birds shall sing, and Ocean make
 A mournful murmur for *his* sake;
 And Thou sweet Flower! shalt sleep and wake
 Upon his senseless Grave.

50

'I only looked for pain and grief'

I only looked for pain and grief
 And trembled as I drew more near;
 But God's unbounded love is here,
 And I have found relief.
 The precious Spot is all my own,
 Save only that this Plant unknown,^o
 A little one and lowly sweet,
 Not surely now without Heaven's grace,
 First seen, and seen, too, in this place,
 Is flowering at my feet.

10

The Shepherd Boy hath disappeared;
 The Buzzard, too, hath soared away;
 And undisturbed I now may pay
 My debt to what I feared.
 Sad register! but this is sure:
 Peace built on suffering will endure.
 But such the peace that will be ours.
 Though many suns, alas! must shine
 Ere tears shall cease from me and mine
 To fall in bitter show'rs.

20

The Sheep-boy whistled loud, and lo!
 Thereafter, having felt the shock,
 The Buzzard mounted from the rock
 Deliberate and slow:
 Lord of the air, he took his flight;
 Oh could he on that woeful night
 Have lent his wing, my Brother dear!
 For one poor moment's space to Thee
 And all who struggle with the Sea
 When safety is so near.

30

Thus in the weakness of my heart
 I said (but let that pang be still)
 When rising from the rock at will,
 I saw the Bird depart.
 And let me calmly bless the Power
 That meets me in this unknown Flower,

Affecting type of Him I mourn!
 With calmness suffer and believe,
 And grieve, and know that I must grieve,
 Not cheerless, though forlorn. 40

Here did we stop, and here looked round°
 While each into himself descends
 For that last thought of parting Friends
 That is not to be found.
 Our Grasmere vale was out of sight,
 Our home and his, his heart's delight,
 His quiet heart's delicious home.
 But time before him melts away,
 And he hath feeling of a day
 Of blessedness to come. 50

Here did we part, and halted here
 With One he loved, I saw him bound
 Downwards along the rocky ground
 As if with eager cheer.
 A lovely sight as on he went,
 For he was bold and innocent,
 Had lived a life of self-command.
 Heaven, did it seem to me and her,
 Had laid on such a Mariner
 A consecrating hand. 60

And therefore also do we weep
 To find that such a faith was dust,
 With sorrow, but for higher trust,
 How miserably deep!
 All vanished in a single word,
 A breath, a sound, and scarcely heard.
 Sea, Ship, drowned, shipwreck—so it came,
 The meek, the brave, the good was gone;
 He who had been our living John
 Was nothing but a name. 70

That was indeed a parting! oh,
 Glad am I, glad that it is past;
 For there were some on whom it cast
 Unutterable woe.
 But they as well as I have gains,
 The worthiest and the best; to pains

Like these, there comes a mild release;
 Even here I feel it, even this Plant
 So peaceful is ministrant
 Of comfort and of peace. 80

He would have loved thy modest grace,
 Meek flower! to Him I would have said,
 'It grows upon its native bed
 Beside our Parting-place;
 Close to the ground like dew it lies
 With multitude of purple eyes
 Spangling a cushion green like moss;
 But we will see it, joyful tide!
 Some day to see it in its pride
 The mountain we will cross.' 90

Well, well, if ever verse of mine
 Have power to make his merits known,
 Then let a monumental Stone
 Stand here—a sacred Shrine;
 And to the few who come this way,
 Traveller or Shepherd, let it say,
 Long as these mighty rocks endure,
 Oh do not Thou too fondly brood,
 Although deserving of all good,
 On any earthly hope, however pure! 100

'Distressful gift! this Book receives'

Distressful gift! this Book receives
 Upon its melancholy leaves,
 This poor ill-fated Book:
 I wrote, and when I reached the end
 Started to think that thou, my Friend,
 Upon the words which I had penned
 Must never, never look.

Alas, alas, it is a Tale
 Of Thee thyself fond heart and frail!
 The sadly-tuneful line, 10
 The written words that seem to throng
 The dismal page, the sound, the song,
 The murmur, all to thee belong:
 Too surely they are thine.

And so I write what neither Thou
Must look upon, nor others now,
Their tears would flow too fast;
Some solace thus I strive to gain,
Making a kind of secret chain,
If so I may, betwixt us twain
In memory of the past. 20

Oft have I handled, often eyed,
This book with boyish glee and pride,
The written page and white:
How have I turned them o'er and o'er,
One after one and score by score,
All filled or to be filled with store
Of verse for his delight.

He framed the Book which now I see,
This very Book upon my knee
He framed with dear intent
To travel with him night and day,
And in his private hearing say
Refreshing things whatever way
His weary Vessel went. 30

But now upon the written leaf
I look indeed with pain and grief,
I do, but gracious God,^o
Oh grant that I may never find
Worse matter or a heavier mind;
For those which yet remain behind
Grant this, and let me be resigned
Beneath thy chast'ning rod. 40

St Paul's

Pressed with conflicting thoughts of love and fear
 I parted from thee, Friend! and took my way
 Through the great City, pacing with an eye
 Downcast, ear sleeping, and feet masterless
 That were sufficient guide unto themselves,
 And step by step went pensively. Now, mark!
 Not how my trouble was entirely hushed,
 (That might not be) but how by sudden gift,
 Gift of Imagination's holy power,
 My soul in her uneasiness received
 An anchor of stability. It chanced
 That while I thus was pacing I raised up
 My heavy eyes and instantly beheld,
 Saw at a glance in that familiar spot,
 A visionary scene—a length of street
 Laid open in its morning quietness,
 Deep, hollow, unobstructed, vacant, smooth,
 And white with winter's purest white, as fair,
 As fresh and spotless as he ever sheds
 On field or mountain. Moving Form was none
 Save here and there a shadowy Passenger,
 Slow, shadowy, silent, dusky, and beyond
 And high above this winding length of street,
 This noiseless and unpeopled avenue,
 Pure, silent, solemn, beautiful, was seen
 The huge majestic Temple of St Paul
 In awful sequestration, through a veil,
 Through its own sacred veil of falling snow.

10

20

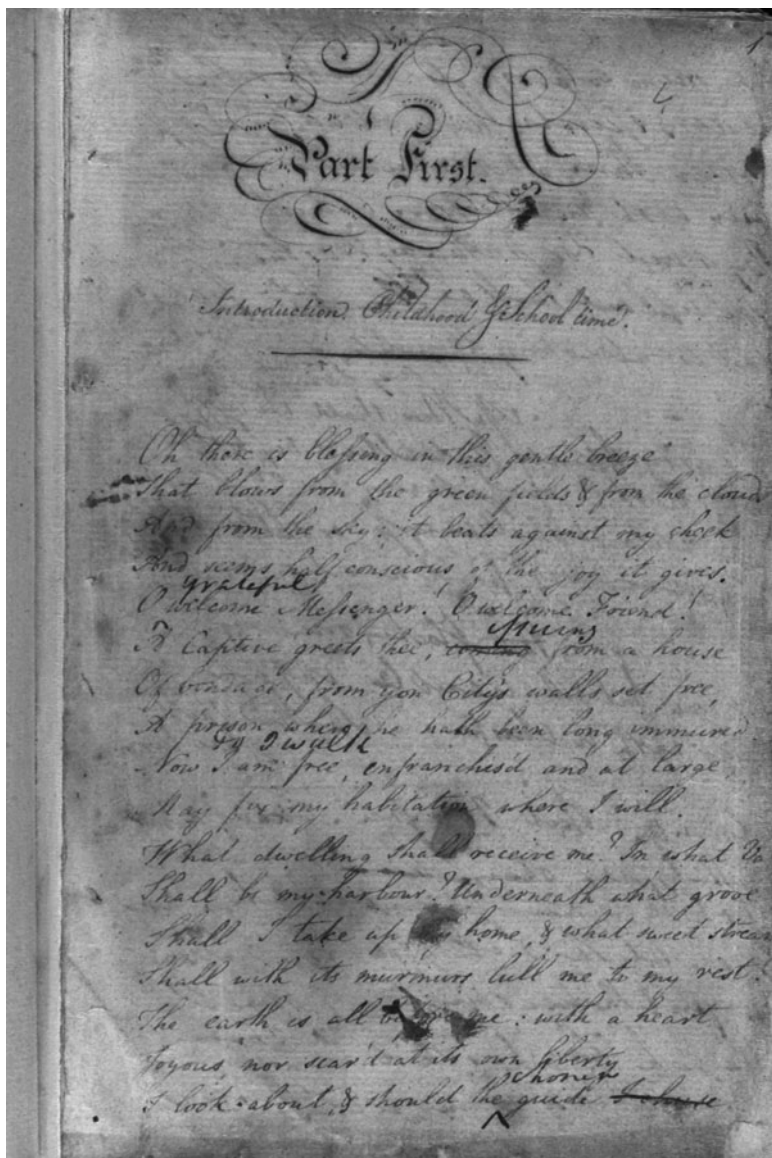


FIG. 5 *The Prelude*, 1805 text, I, 1-17. Fair-copy MS in the hand of Dorothy Wordsworth, with revision by William Wordsworth.

The Prelude

BOOK ONE

Introduction—Childhood and School-Time

Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze^o
 That blows from the green fields and from the clouds
 And from the sky: it beats against my cheek,
 And seems half-conscious of the joy it gives.
 O welcome Messenger! O welcome Friend!
 A captive greets thee, coming from a house
 Of bondage, from yon City's walls set free,
 A prison where he hath been long immured.
 Now I am free, enfranchised and at large,
 May fix my habitation where I will. 10
 What dwelling shall receive me? In what Vale
 Shall be my harbour? Underneath what grove
 Shall I take up my home, and what sweet stream
 Shall with its murmurs lull me to my rest?
 The earth is all before me: with a heart
 Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,
 I look about, and should the guide I chuse
 Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
 I cannot miss my way. I breathe again;
 Trances of thought and mountings of the mind 20
 Come fast upon me: it is shaken off,
 As by miraculous gift 'tis shaken off,
 That burthen of my own unnatural self,
 The heavy weight of many a weary day
 Not mine, and such as were not made for me.
 Long months of peace (if such bold word accord
 With any promises of human life),
 Long months of ease and undisturbed delight
 Are mine in prospect; whither shall I turn
 By road or pathway or through open field, 30
 Or shall a twig or any floating thing
 Upon the river, point me out my course?

Enough that I am free; for months to come
 May dedicate myself to chosen tasks;

May quit the tiresome sea and dwell on shore,
 If not a Settler on the soil, at least
 To drink wild water, and to pluck green herbs,
 And gather fruits fresh from their native bough.
 Nay more, if I may trust myself, this hour
 Hath brought a gift that consecrates my joy; 40
 For I, methought, while the sweet breath of Heaven
 Was blowing on my body, felt within
 A corresponding mild creative breeze,
 A vital breeze which travelled gently on
 O'er things which it had made, and is become
 A tempest, a redundant energy^o
 Vexing its own creation. 'Tis a power
 That does not come unrecognized, a storm,
 Which, breaking up a long-continued frost
 Brings with it vernal promises, the hope 50
 Of active days, of dignity and thought,
 Of prowess in an honorable field,
 Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and delight,
 The holy life of music and of verse.

Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to make
 A present joy the matter of my Song,
 Pour out, that day, my soul in measured strains,
 Even in the very words which I have here
 Recorded: to the open fields I told
 A prophecy: poetic numbers came 60
 Spontaneously, and clothed in priestly robe
 My spirit, thus singled out, as it might seem,
 For holy services: great hopes were mine;
 My own voice cheered me, and, far more, the mind's
 Internal echo of the imperfect sound;
 To both I listened, drawing from them both
 A chearful confidence in things to come.

Whereat, being not unwilling now to give
 A respite to this passion, I paced on
 Gently, with careless steps, and came, erelong, 70
 To a green shady place where down I sate
 Beneath a tree, slackening my thoughts by choice,
 And settling into gentler happiness.
 'Twas Autumn, and a calm and placid day,

With warmth as much as needed from a sun
 Two hours declined towards the west, a day
 With silver clouds, and sunshine on the grass,
 And, in the sheltered grove where I was couched
 A perfect stillness. On the ground I lay
 Passing through many thoughts, yet mainly such 80
 As to myself pertained. I made a choice
 Of one sweet Vale whither my steps should turn,^o
 And saw, methought, the very house and fields
 Present before my eyes: nor did I fail
 To add, meanwhile, assurance of some work
 Of glory, there forthwith to be begun,
 Perhaps, too, there performed. Thus long I lay
 Cheared by the genial pillow of the earth
 Beneath my head, soothed by a sense of touch
 From the warm ground, that balanced me, else lost 90
 Entirely, seeing nought, nought hearing, save
 When here and there, about the grove of Oaks
 Where was my bed, an acorn from the trees
 Fell audibly, and with a startling sound.

Thus occupied in mind, I lingered here
 Contented, nor rose up until the sun
 Had almost touched the horizon; bidding then
 A farewell to the City left behind,
 Even with the chance equipment of that hour
 I journeyed towards the Vale that I had chosen. 100
 It was a splendid evening, and my soul
 Did once again make trial of the strength
 Restored to her afresh; nor did she want
 Eolian visitations; but the harp^o
 Was soon defrauded, and the banded host
 Of harmony dispersed in straggling sounds
 And, lastly, utter silence. 'Be it so,
 It is an injury,' said I, 'to this day
 To think of any thing but present joy.'
 So like a Peasant I pursued my road 110
 Beneath the evening sun, nor had one wish
 Again to bend the sabbath of that time
 To a servile yoke. What need of many words?
 A pleasant loitering journey, through two days
 Continued, brought me to my hermitage.

I spare to speak, my Friend, of what ensued—
 The admiration and the love, the life
 In common things; the endless store of things
 Rare, or at least so seeming, every day
 Found all about me in one neighbourhood, 120
 The self-congratulation, the complete^o
 Composure, and the happiness entire.
 But speedily a longing in me rose
 To brace myself to some determined aim,
 Reading or thinking, either to lay up
 New stores, or rescue from decay the old
 By timely interference. I had hopes
 Still higher, that with a frame of outward life,
 I might endue, might fix in a visible home
 Some portion of those phantoms of conceit 130
 That had been floating loose about so long,
 And to such Beings temperately deal forth
 The many feelings that oppressed my heart.
 But I have been discouraged; gleams of light
 Flash often from the East, then disappear
 And mock me with a sky that ripens not
 Into a steady morning: if my mind,
 Remembering the sweet promise of the past,
 Would gladly grapple with some noble theme,
 Vain is her wish; where'er she turns she finds 140
 Impediments from day to day renewed.

And now it would content me to yield up
 Those lofty hopes awhile for present gifts
 Of humbler industry. But, O dear Friend!
 The Poet, gentle creature as he is,
 Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times,
 His fits when he is neither sick nor well,
 Though no distress be near him but his own
 Unmanageable thoughts. The mind itself,
 The meditative mind, best pleased, perhaps, 150
 While she, as duteous as the Mother Dove,^o
 Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,
 But hath less quiet instincts, goadings on
 That drive her as in trouble through the groves.
 With me is now such passion, which I blame
 No otherwise than as it lasts too long.

When, as becomes a man who would prepare
 For such a glorious work, I through myself
 Make rigorous inquisition, the report
 Is often chearing; for I neither seem 160
 To lack, that first great gift! the vital soul,
 Nor general truths which are themselves a sort
 Of Elements and Agents, Under-Powers,
 Subordinate helpers of the living mind.
 Nor am I naked in external things,
 Forms, images; nor numerous other aids
 Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil,
 And needful to build up a Poet's praise.
 Time, place, and manners; these I seek, and these
 I find in plenteous store; but nowhere such 170
 As may be singled out with steady choice;
 No little Band of yet remembered names
 Whom I, in perfect confidence, might hope
 To summon back from lonesome banishment
 And make them inmates in the hearts of men
 Now living, or to live in times to come.
 Sometimes, mistaking vainly, as I fear,
 Proud spring-tide swellings for a regular sea,
 I settle on some British theme, some old
 Romantic tale, by Milton left unsung;° 180
 More often resting at some gentle place
 Within the groves of Chivalry, I pipe
 Among the Shepherds, with reposing Knights
 Sit by a Fountain-side, and hear their tales.
 Sometimes, more sternly moved, I would relate
 How vanquished Mithridates northward passed;°
 And, hidden in the cloud of years, became
 That Odin, Father of a Race, by whom
 Perished the Roman Empire: how the Friends
 And Followers of Sertorius, out of Spain° 190
 Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate Isles;
 And left their usages, their arts, and laws,
 To disappear by a slow gradual death;
 To dwindle and to perish one by one
 Starved in those narrow bounds: but not the Soul
 Of Liberty, which fifteen hundred years
 Survived, and, when the European came,

With skill and power that could not be withstood,
 Did, like a pestilence, maintain its hold,
 And wasted down by glorious death that Race 200
 Of natural Heroes: or I would record
 How in tyrannic times some unknown man,
 Unheard of in the Chronicles of Kings,
 Suffered in silence for the love of truth;
 How that one Frenchman, through continued force^o
 Of meditation on the inhuman deeds
 Of the first Conquerors of the Indian Isles,
 Went single in his ministry across
 The Ocean, not to comfort the Oppressed,
 But, like a thirsty wind, to roam about, 210
 Withering the Oppressor: how Gustavus found^o
 Help at his need in Dalecarlia's Mines:
 How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name^o
 Of Wallace to be found like a wild flower,
 All over his dear Country, left the deeds
 Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,
 To people the steep rocks and river banks,
 Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
 Of independence and stern liberty.
 Sometimes it suits me better to shape out 220
 Some Tale from my own heart, more near akin
 To my own passions and habitual thoughts,
 Some variegated story, in the main
 Lofty, with interchange of gentler things.
 But deadening admonitions will succeed
 And the whole beauteous Fabric seems to lack
 Foundation, and, withal, appears throughout
 Shadowy and unsubstantial. Then, last wish,
 My last and favourite aspiration! then
 I yearn towards some philosophic Song 230
 Of Truth that cherishes our daily life;
 With meditations passionate from deep
 Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse
 Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre;^o
 But from this awful burthen I full soon
 Take refuge, and beguile myself with trust
 That mellow years will bring a riper mind
 And clearer insight. Thus from day to day

I live, a mockery of the brotherhood
 Of vice and virtue, with no skill to part 240
 Vague longing that is bred by want of power,
 From paramount impulse not to be withstood,
 A timorous capacity, from prudence;
 From circumspection, infinite delay.
 Humility and modest awe themselves
 Betray me, serving often for a cloak
 To a more subtle selfishness, that now
 Doth lock my functions up in blank reserve,
 Now dupes me by an over-anxious eye
 That with a false activity beats off 250
 Simplicity and self-presented truth.
 —Ah! better far than this, to stray about
 Voluptuously through fields and rural walks,
 And ask no record of the hours, given up
 To vacant musing, unreproved neglect
 Of all things, and deliberate holiday;
 Far better never to have heard the name
 Of zeal and just ambition than to live
 Thus baffled by a mind that every hour
 Turns recreant to her task, takes heart again, 260
 Then feels immediately some hollow thought
 Hang like an interdict upon her hopes.
 This is my lot; for either still I find
 Some imperfection in the chosen theme,
 Or see of absolute accomplishment
 Much wanting, so much wanting, in myself,
 That I recoil and droop, and seek repose
 In listlessness from vain perplexity,
 Unprofitably travelling towards the grave,
 Like a false steward who hath much received^o 270
 And renders nothing back.

—Was it for this^o

That one, the fairest of all Rivers, loved
 To blend his murmurs with my Nurse's song,
 And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
 And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
 That flowed along my dreams? For this, didst Thou,
 O Derwent, travelling over the green Plains
 Near my 'sweet Birthplace', didst thou, beauteous Stream,^o

Make ceaseless music through the night and day
 Which with its steady cadence, tempering 280
 Our human waywardness, composed my thoughts
 To more than infant softness, giving me,
 Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
 A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
 Which Nature breathes among the hills and groves?
 When, having left his Mountains, to the Towers
 Of Cockermouth that beauteous River came,
 Behind my Father's House he passed, close by,
 Along the margin of our Terrace Walk.
 He was a Playmate whom we dearly loved. 290
 Oh! many a time have I, a five years' Child,
 A naked Boy, in one delightful Rill,
 A little Mill-race severed from his stream,
 Made one long bathing of a summer's day,
 Basked in the sun, and plunged, and basked again
 Alternate all a summer's day, or coursed
 Over the sandy fields, leaping through groves
 Of yellow grunsel, or when crag and hill,
 The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
 Were bronzed with a deep radiance, stood alone 300
 Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
 On Indian Plains, and from my Mother's hut
 Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport,
 A naked Savage, in the thunder shower.

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
 Fostered alike by beauty and by fear;
 Much favored in my birthplace, and no less
 In that beloved Vale to which, erelong,
 I was transplanted. Well I call to mind^o
 ('Twas at an early age, ere I had seen 310
 Nine summers) when upon the mountain slope
 The frost and breath of frosty wind had snapped
 The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
 To wander half the night among the Cliffs
 And the smooth Hollows, where the woodcocks ran
 Along the open turf. In thought and wish
 That time, my shoulder all with springes hung,^o
 I was a fell destroyer. On the heights

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
 My anxious visitation, hurrying on, 320
 Still hurrying, hurrying onward; moon and stars
 Were shining o'er my head; I was alone,
 And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
 That was among them. Sometimes it befel
 In these night-wanderings, that a strong desire
 O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toils
 Became my prey; and, when the deed was done
 I heard among the solitary hills
 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds 330
 Of undistinguishable motion, steps
 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less in springtime when on southern banks
 The shining sun had from his knot of leaves
 Decoyed the primrose flower, and when the Vales
 And woods were warm, was I a plunderer then
 In the high places, on the lonesome peaks
 Where'er, among the mountains and the winds,
 The Mother Bird had built her lodge. Though mean
 My object, and inglorious, yet the end 340
 Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung
 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
 And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
 But ill sustained, and almost, as it seemed,
 Suspended by the blast which blew amain,
 Shouldering the naked crag; Oh! at that time,
 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
 With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
 Blow through my ears! the sky seemed not a sky
 Of earth, and with what motion moved the clouds! 350

The mind of Man is framed even like the breath
 And harmony of music. There is a dark
 Invisible workmanship that reconciles
 Discordant elements, and makes them move
 In one society. Ah me! that all
 The terrors, all the early miseries,
 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes, that all
 The thoughts and feelings which have been infused

Into my mind, should ever have made up
 The calm existence that is mine when I
 Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end! 360
 Thanks likewise for the means! But I believe
 That Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame
 A favored Being, from his earliest dawn
 Of infancy doth open out the clouds,
 As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
 With gentlest visitation; not the less,
 Though haply aiming at the self-same end,
 Does it delight her sometimes to employ
 Severer interventions, ministry 370
 More palpable, and so she dealt with me.

One evening (surely I was led by her)
 I went alone into a Shepherd's Boat,
 A Skiff that to a Willow tree was tied
 Within a rocky Cave, its usual home.
 'Twas by the shores of Patterdale, a Vale^o
 Wherein I was a Stranger, thither come
 A School-boy Traveller, at the Holidays.
 Forth rambled from the Village Inn alone,
 No sooner had I sight of this small Skiff, 380
 Discovered thus by unexpected chance,
 Than I unloosed her tether and embarked.
 The moon was up, the Lake was shining clear
 Among the hoary mountains; from the Shore
 I pushed, and struck the oars and struck again
 In cadence, and my little Boat moved on
 Even like a Man who walks with stately step
 Though bent on speed. It was an act of stealth
 And troubled pleasure; not without the voice
 Of mountain-echoes did my Boat move on, 390
 Leaving behind her still on either side
 Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
 Until they melted all into one track
 Of sparkling light. A rocky Steep uprose
 Above the Cavern of the Willow tree
 And now, as suited one who proudly rowed
 With his best skill, I fixed a steady view
 Upon the top of that same craggy ridge,

The bound of the horizon, for behind
 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky. 400
 She was an elfin Pinnacle; lustily
 I dipped my oars into the silent Lake,
 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my Boat
 Went heaving through the water, like a Swan;
 When from behind that craggy Steep, till then
 The bound of the horizon, a huge Cliff,
 As if with voluntary power instinct,
 Upreared its head. I struck, and struck again,
 And, growing still in stature, the huge Cliff
 Rose up between me and the stars, and still, 410
 With measured motion, like a living thing,
 Strode after me. With trembling hands I turned,
 And through the silent water stole my way
 Back to the Cavern of the Willow tree.
 There, in her mooring-place, I left my Bark,
 And, through the meadows homeward went, with grave
 And serious thoughts; and after I had seen
 That spectacle, for many days, my brain
 Worked with a dim and undetermined sense 420
 Of unknown modes of being; in my thoughts
 There was a darkness, call it solitude,
 Or blank desertion, no familiar shapes
 Of hourly objects, images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
 But huge and mighty Forms that do not live
 Like living men moved slowly through my mind
 By day and were the trouble of my dreams.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
 Thou Soul that art the Eternity of Thought!
 That giv'st to forms and images a breath 430
 And everlasting motion! not in vain,
 By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
 Of Childhood didst Thou intertwine for me
 The passions that build up our human Soul,
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,
 But with high objects, with enduring things,
 With life and nature, purifying thus
 The elements of feeling and of thought,
 And sanctifying, by such discipline,

Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart. 440

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods
At noon, and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling Lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills I homeward went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
'Twas mine among the fields both day and night, 450
And by the waters all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons:—happy time
It was, indeed, for all of us; to me
It was a time of rapture: clear and loud
The village clock tolled six; I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting, like an untired horse,
That cares not for its home.—All shod with steel, 460
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chace
And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,
The Pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din,
Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees, and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound 470
Of melancholy, not unnoticed; while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the image of a star
That gleamed upon the ice. And oftentimes

When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks, on either side, 480
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
 The rapid line of motion; then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short, yet still the solitary Cliffs
 Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had rolled
 With visible motion her diurnal round.
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature, in the sky 490
 Or on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
 And Souls of lonely places! can I think
 A vulgar hope was yours when Ye employed
 Such ministry, when Ye through many a year
 Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
 On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
 Impressed upon all forms the characters^o
 Of danger or desire, and thus did make
 The surface of the universal earth
 With triumph, and delight, and hope, and fear, 500
 Work like a sea?

Not uselessly employed,
 I might pursue this theme through every change
 Of exercise and play, to which the year
 Did summon us in its delightful round.
 We were a noisy crew, the sun in heaven
 Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours,
 Nor saw a race in happiness and joy
 More worthy of the fields where they were sown.
 I would record with no reluctant voice
 The woods of autumn and their hazel bowers 510
 With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,
 True symbol of the foolishness of hope,
 Which with its strong enchantment led us on
 By rocks and pools, shut out from every star
 All the green summer, to forlorn cascades
 Among the windings of the mountain brooks.
 —Unfading recollections! at this hour

The heart is almost mine with which I felt
 From some hill-top, on sunny afternoons
 The Kite high up among the fleecy clouds 520
 Pull at its rein, like an impatient Courser,
 Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,
 Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly
 Dashed headlong; and rejected by the storm.

Ye lowly Cottages in which we dwelt,
 A ministration of your own was yours,
 A sanctity, a safeguard, and a love!
 Can I forget you, being as ye were
 So beautiful among the pleasant fields
 In which ye stood? Or can I here forget 530
 The plain and seemly countenance with which
 Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet had ye
 Delights and exultations of your own.
 Eager and never weary we pursued
 Our home amusements by the warm peat-fire
 At evening, when with pencil and with slate,
 In square divisions parcelled out, and all
 With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er,
 We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head
 In strife too humble to be named in Verse. 540
 Or round the naked table, snow-white deal,
 Cherry or maple, sate in close array,
 And to the combat, Lu or Whist, led on
 A thick-ribbed Army; not as in the world
 Neglected and ungratefully thrown by
 Even for the very service they had wrought,
 But husbanded through many a long campaign.
 Uncouth assemblage was it, where no few
 Had changed their functions, some, plebeian cards,
 Which Fate beyond the promise of their birth 550
 Had glorified, and called to represent
 The persons of departed Potentates.
 Oh! with what echoes on the Board they fell!
 Ironic Diamonds, Clubs, Hearts, Diamonds, Spades,
 A congregation piteously akin.
 Cheap matter did they give to boyish wit,
 Those sooty knaves, precipitated down

With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out of Heaven;
 The paramount Ace, a moon in her eclipse;
 Queens, gleaming through their splendour's last decay; 560
 And Monarchs, surly at the wrongs sustained
 By royal visages. Meanwhile, abroad
 The heavy rain was falling, or the frost
 Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth,
 And, interrupting oft the impassioned game,
 From Esthwaite's neighbouring Lake the splitting ice,
 While it sank down towards the water, sent,
 Among the meadows and the hills, its long
 And dismal yellings, like the noise of wolves
 When they are howling round the Bothnic Main. ° 570

Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
 How Nature by extrinsic passion first
 Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand
 And made me love them, may I well forget
 How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
 Of subtler origin; how I have felt,
 Not seldom, even in that tempestuous time,
 Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense
 Which seem, in their simplicity, to own
 An intellectual charm, that calm delight 580
 Which, if I err not, surely must belong
 To those first-born affinities that fit
 Our new existence to existing things,
 And, in our dawn of being, constitute
 The bond of union betwixt life and joy.

Yes, I remember, when the changeful earth,
 And twice five seasons on my mind had stamped
 The faces of the moving year, even then,
 A Child, I held unconscious intercourse
 With the eternal Beauty, drinking in 590
 A pure organic pleasure from the lines
 Of curling mist, or from the level plain
 Of waters coloured by the steady clouds.
 The Sands of Westmoreland, the Creeks and Bays
 Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell
 How when the Sea threw off his evening shade
 And to the Shepherd's huts beneath the crags

Did send sweet notice of the rising moon,
 How I have stood, to fancies such as these,
 Engrafted in the tenderness of thought, 600
 A stranger, linking with the spectacle
 No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
 And bringing with me no peculiar sense
 Of quietness or peace, yet I have stood,
 Even while mine eye has moved o'er three long leagues
 Of shining water, gathering, as it seemed,
 Through every hair-breadth of that field of light,
 New pleasure, like a bee among the flowers.

Thus, often in those fits of vulgar joy
 Which, through all seasons, on a child's pursuits 610
 Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
 Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
 And is forgotten; even then I felt
 Gleams like the flashing of a shield. The earth
 And common face of Nature spake to me
 Rememberable things; sometimes, 'tis true,
 By chance collisions and quaint accidents
 Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed
 Of evil-minded fairies, yet not vain,
 Nor profitless, if haply they impressed 620
 Collateral objects and appearances,
 Albeit lifeless then, and doomed to sleep
 Until maturer seasons called them forth
 To impregnate and to elevate the mind.
 —And if the vulgar joy by its own weight
 Wearied itself out of the memory,
 The scenes which were a witness of that joy
 Remained, in their substantial lineaments
 Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
 Were visible, a daily sight. And thus 630
 By the impressive discipline of fear,
 By pleasure and repeated happiness,
 So frequently repeated, and by force
 Of obscure feelings representative
 Of joys that were forgotten, these same scenes,
 So beauteous and majestic in themselves,
 Though yet the day was distant, did at length

Become habitually dear, and all
 Their hues and forms were by invisible links
 Allied to the affections.

640

I began

My story early, feeling, as I fear,
 The weakness of a human love, for days
 Disowned by memory, ere the birth of spring
 Planting my snowdrops among winter snows.
 Nor will it seem to thee, my Friend! so prompt^o
 In sympathy, that I have lengthened out,
 With fond and feeble tongue, a tedious tale.
 Meanwhile, my hope has been that I might fetch
 Invigorating thoughts from former years,
 Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,
 And haply meet reproaches, too, whose power
 May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
 To honorable toil. Yet should these hopes^o
 Be vain, and thus should neither I be taught
 To understand myself, nor thou to know
 With better knowledge how the heart was framed
 Of him thou lovest, need I dread from thee
 Harsh judgments, if I am so loth to quit
 Those recollected hours that have the charm
 Of visionary things, and lovely forms
 And sweet sensations, that throw back our life^o
 And almost make our Infancy itself
 A visible scene, on which the sun is shining.

650

660

One end hereby at least hath been attained,
 My mind hath been revived, and if this mood
 Desert me not, I will forthwith bring down,
 Through later years, the story of my life.
 The road lies plain before me; 'tis a theme
 Single and of determined bounds; and hence
 I chuse it rather at this time, than work
 Of ampler or more varied argument,
 Where I might be discomfited and lost,
 And certain hopes are with me, that to thee
 This labour will be welcome, honored Friend.

670

BOOK TWO

School-Time (continued)

Thus far, O Friend! have we, though leaving much
 Unvisited, endeavoured to retrace
 My life through its first years, and measured back
 The way I travelled when I first began
 To love the woods and fields. The passion yet
 Was in its birth, sustained, as might befall,
 By nourishment that came unsought; for still,
 From week to week, from month to month, we lived
 A round of tumult. Duly were our games
 Prolonged in summer till the day-light failed; 10
 No chair remained before the doors, the bench
 And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
 The Labourer, and the Old Man who had sate,
 A later lingerer, yet the revelry
 Continued, and the loud uproar: at last,
 When all the ground was dark, and the huge clouds
 Were edged with twinkling stars, to bed we went,
 With weary joints, and with a beating mind.
 Ah! is there one who ever has been young,
 And needs a monitory voice to tame 20
 The pride of virtue, and of intellect?
 And is there one, the wisest and the best
 Of all mankind, who does not sometimes wish
 For things which cannot be, who would not give,
 If so he might, to duty and to truth
 The eagerness of infantine desire?
 A tranquillizing spirit presses now
 On my corporeal frame: so wide appears
 The vacancy between me and those days,
 Which yet have such self-presence in my mind 30
 That, sometimes, when I think of them, I seem
 Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
 And of some other Being. A grey Stone
 Of native rock, left midway in the Square
 Of our small market Village, was the home
 And centre of these joys, and when returned

After long absence, thither I repaired,
 I found that it was split, and gone to build
 A smart Assembly-room that perked and flared^o
 With wash and rough-cast, elbowing the ground 40
 Which had been ours. But let the fiddle scream,
 And be ye happy! yet, my Friends! I know
 That more than one of you will think with me
 Of those soft starry nights, and that old Dame
 From whom the stone was named, who there had sate
 And watched her Table with its huxter's wares,
 Assiduous thro' the length of sixty years.

We ran a boisterous race; the year span round
 With giddy motion. But the time approached
 That brought with it a regular desire 50
 For calmer pleasures, when the beauteous forms
 Of Nature were collaterally attached
 To every scheme of holiday delight,
 And every boyish sport, less grateful else,
 And languidly pursued.

When summer came
 It was the pastime of our afternoons
 To beat along the plain of Windermere
 With rival oars, and the selected bourne
 Was now an Island musical with birds
 That sang for ever; now a Sister Isle 60
 Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown
 With lillies of the valley like a field;
 And now a third small Island where remained
 An old stone Table, and a mouldered Cave,
 A Hermit's history. In such a race,
 So ended, disappointment could be none,
 Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:
 We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,
 Conquered and Conqueror. Thus the pride of strength,
 And the vain-glory of superior skill 70
 Were interfused with objects which subdued
 And tempered them, and gradually produced
 A quiet independence of the heart.
 And to my Friend, who knows me, I may add,
 Unapprehensive of reproof, that hence

Ensued a diffidence and modesty,
 And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,
 The self-sufficing power of solitude.

No delicate viands sapped our bodily strength;
 More than we wished we knew the blessing then 80
 Of vigorous hunger, for our daily meals
 Were frugal, Sabine fare! and then, exclude^o
 A little weekly stipend, and we lived
 Through three divisions of the quartered year
 In pennyless poverty. But now, to School
 Returned from the half-yearly holidays,
 We came with purses more profusely filled,
 Allowance which abundantly sufficed
 To gratify the palate with repasts
 More costly than the Dame of whom I spake, 90
 That ancient Woman, and her board supplied.
 Hence inroads into distant Vales, and long
 Excursions far away among the hills,
 Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,
 Or in the woods, or near a river side,
 Or by some shady fountain, while soft airs^o
 Among the leaves were stirring, and the sun
 Unfelt, shone sweetly round us in our joy.

Nor is my aim neglected, if I tell
 How twice in the long length of those half-years 100
 We from our funds, perhaps, with bolder hand
 Drew largely, anxious for one day, at least,
 To feel the motion of the galloping Steed;
 And with the good old Inn-keeper, in truth,
 On such occasion sometimes we employed
 Sly subterfuge; for the intended bound
 Of the day's journey was too distant far
 For any cautious man, a Structure famed^o
 Beyond its neighbourhood, the antique Walls
 Of that large Abbey which within the Vale 110
 Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour built,
 Stands yet, a mouldering Pile, with fractured Arch,
 Belfry, and Images, and living Trees,
 A holy Scene! Along the smooth green turf
 Our Horses grazed: to more than inland peace

Left by the sea wind passing overhead
 (Though wind of roughest temper) trees and towers
 May in that Valley oftentimes be seen,
 Both silent and both motionless alike;
 Such is the shelter that is there, and such 120
 The safeguard for repose and quietness.

Our steeds remounted, and the summons given,
 With whip and spur we by the Chantry flew
 In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged Knight,
 And the stone-Abbot, and that single Wren
 Which one day sang so sweetly in the Nave
 Of the old Church, that, though from recent showers
 The earth was comfortless, and, touched by faint
 Internal breezes, sobbings of the place,
 And respirations, from the roofless walls 130
 The shuddering ivy dripped large drops, yet still,
 So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible Bird
 Sang to itself, that there I could have made
 My dwelling-place, and lived for ever there
 To hear such music. Through the Walls we flew
 And down the valley, and a circuit made
 In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth
 We scampered homeward. Oh! ye Rocks and Streams,
 And that still Spirit of the evening air!
 Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt 140
 Your presence, when with slackened step we breathed^o
 Along the sides of the steep hills, or when,
 Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea,
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

Upon the Eastern Shore of Windermere,
 Above the crescent of a pleasant Bay,
 There stood an Inn, no homely-featured Shed,
 Brother of the surrounding Cottages,
 But 'twas a splendid place, the door beset
 With Chaises, Grooms, and Liveries, and within 150
 Decanters, Glasses, and the blood-red Wine.^o
 In ancient times, or ere the Hall was built
 On the large Island, had this Dwelling been
 More worthy of a Poet's love, a Hut,
 Proud of its one bright fire, and sycamore shade.

But though the rhymes were gone which once inscribed
 The threshold, and large golden characters
 On the blue-frosted Signboard had usurped
 The place of the old Lion, in contempt
 And mockery of the rustic painter's hand, 160
 Yet to this hour the spot to me is dear
 With all its foolish pomp. The garden lay
 Upon a slope surmounted by the plain
 Of a small Bowling-green; beneath us stood
 A grove, with gleams of water through the trees
 And over the tree-tops; nor did we want
 Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream.
 And there, through half an afternoon, we played
 On the smooth platform, and the shouts we sent
 Made all the mountains ring. But ere the fall 170
 Of night, when in our pinnace we returned
 Over the dusky Lake, and to the beach
 Of some small Island steered our course with one,
 The Minstrel of our troop, and left him there,^o
 And rowed off gently, while he blew his flute
 Alone upon the rock, Oh! then the calm
 And dead still water lay upon my mind
 Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky
 Never before so beautiful, sank down
 Into my heart, and held me like a dream. 180

Thus daily were my sympathies enlarged,
 And thus the common range of visible things
 Grew dear to me: already I began
 To love the sun, a Boy I loved the sun,
 Not as I since have loved him, as a pledge
 And surety of our earthly life, a light
 Which while we view we feel we are alive,
 But, for this cause, that I had seen him lay
 His beauty on the morning hills, had seen
 The western mountain touch his setting orb 190
 In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess
 Of happiness, my blood appeared to flow
 With its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy.
 And from like feelings, humble though intense,
 To patriotic and domestic love

Analogous, the moon to me was dear;
 For I would dream away my purposes,
 Standing to look upon her while she hung
 Midway between the hills, as if she knew
 No other region but belonged to thee, 200
 Yea, appertained by a peculiar right
 To thee and thy grey huts, my darling Vale!

Those incidental charms which first attached
 My heart to rural objects, day by day
 Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell
 How Nature, intervenient till this time,
 And secondary, now at length was sought
 For her own sake. But who shall parcel out
 His intellect, by geometric rules,
 Split, like a province, into round and square? 210
 Who knows the individual hour in which
 His habits were first sown, even as a seed,
 Who that shall point, as with a wand, and say,
 'This portion of the river of my mind
 Came from yon fountain?' Thou, my Friend! art one
 More deeply read in thy own thoughts; to thee
 Science appears but, what in truth she is,
 Not as our glory and our absolute boast,
 But as a succedaneum, and a prop
 To our infirmity. Thou art no slave 220
 Of that false secondary power, by which
 In weakness we create distinctions, then
 Deem that our puny boundaries are things
 Which we perceive, and not which we have made.
 To thee, unblinded by these outward shows,
 The unity of all has been revealed,
 And thou wilt doubt with me, less aptly skilled
 Than many are to class the cabinet^o
 Of their sensations, and, in voluble phrase,
 Run through the history and birth of each 230
 As of a single independent thing.
 Hard task to analyse a soul, in which,
 Not only general habits and desires,
 But each most obvious and particular thought,
 Not in a mystical and idle sense,

But in the words of reason deeply weighed,
Hath no beginning.

Blessed the infant Babe,
(For with my best conjectures I would trace
The progress of our being) blest the Babe,
Nursed in his Mother's arms, the Babe who sleeps 240
Upon his Mother's breast, who, when his soul
Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul,
Doth gather passion from his Mother's eye!
Such feelings pass into his torpid life
Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind,
Even in the first trial of its powers,
Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
In one appearance, all the elements
And parts of the same object, else detached
And loth to coalesce. Thus, day by day, 250
Subjected to the discipline of love,
His organs and recipient faculties
Are quickened, are more vigorous, his mind spreads,
Tenacious of the forms which it receives.
In one beloved presence, nay and more,
In that most apprehensive habitude
And those sensations which have been derived
From this beloved Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
All objects through all intercourse of sense. 260
No outcast he, bewildered and depressed;
Along his infant veins are interfused
The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature, that connect him with the world.
Emphatically such a Being lives,
An inmate of this *active* universe;
From nature largely he receives; nor so
Is satisfied, but largely gives again,
For feeling has to him imparted strength,
And powerful in all sentiments of grief, 270
Of exultation, fear, and joy, his mind,
Even as an agent of the one great mind,
Creates, creator and receiver both,
Working but in alliance with the works
Which it beholds.—Such, verily, is the first

Poetic spirit of our human life;
 By uniform controul of after years
 In most abated or suppressed, in some,
 Through every change of growth or of decay,
 Pre-eminent till death. 280

From early days,
 Beginning not long after that first time
 In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch
 I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart,
 I have endeavoured to display the means
 Whereby the infant sensibility,
 Great birthright of our Being, was in me
 Augmented and sustained. Yet is a path
 More difficult before me, and I fear
 That in its broken windings we shall need
 The chamois' sinews, and the eagle's wing: 290

For now a trouble came into my mind
 From unknown causes. I was left alone,
 Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why.
 The props of my affections were removed,
 And yet the building stood, as if sustained
 By its own spirit! All that I beheld
 Was dear to me, and from this cause it came,
 That now to Nature's finer influxes
 My mind lay open, to that more exact
 And intimate communion which our hearts 300
 Maintain with the minuter properties
 Of objects which already are beloved,
 And of those only. Many are the joys
 Of youth; but oh! what happiness to live
 When every hour brings palpable access
 Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,
 And sorrow is not there. The seasons came,
 And every season to my notice brought
 A store of transitory qualities
 Which, but for this most watchful power of love 310
 Had been neglected, left a register
 Of permanent relations, else unknown.
 Hence life, and change, and beauty, solitude
 More active, even, than 'best society',^o
 Society made sweet as solitude

By silent inobtrusive sympathies,
 And gentle agitations of the mind
 From manifold distinctions, difference
 Perceived in things, where to the common eye,
 No difference is; and hence, from the same source 320
 Sublimier joy. For I would walk alone,
 In storm and tempest, or in starlight nights
 Beneath the quiet Heavens; and, at that time,
 Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
 To breathe an elevated mood, by form
 Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
 Beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are
 The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
 Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
 Thence did I drink the visionary power. 330
 I deem not profitless those fleeting moods
 Of shadowy exultation: not for this,
 That they are kindred to our purer mind
 And intellectual life; but that the soul,
 Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
 Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
 Of possible sublimity, to which,
 With growing faculties she doth aspire,
 With faculties still growing, feeling still
 That whatsoever point they gain, they still 340
 Have something to pursue.

And not alone
 In grandeur and in tumult, but no less
 In tranquil scenes, that universal power
 And fitness in the latent qualities
 And essences of things, by which the mind
 Is moved by feelings of delight, to me
 Came strengthened with a superadded soul,
 A virtue not its own. My morning walks
 Were early; oft, before the hours of School^o
 I travelled round our little Lake, five miles 350
 Of pleasant wandering, happy time! more dear
 For this, that one was by my side, a Friend
 Then passionately loved; with heart how full
 Will he peruse these lines, this page, perhaps
 A blank to other men! for many years

Have since flowed in between us; and our minds
 Both silent to each other, at this time
 We live as if those hours had never been.
 Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch
 Far earlier, and before the vernal thrush 360
 Was audible, among the hills I sate
 Alone, upon some jutting eminence
 At the first hour of morning, when the Vale
 Lay quiet in an utter solitude.
 How shall I trace the history, where seek
 The origin of what I then have felt?
 Oft in those moments such a holy calm
 Did overspread my soul, that I forgot
 That I had bodily eyes, and what I saw
 Appeared like something in myself, a dream, 370
 A prospect in my mind.

'Twere long to tell
 What spring and autumn, what the winter snows,
 And what the summer shade, what day and night,
 The evening and the morning, what my dreams
 And what my waking thoughts supplied, to nurse
 That spirit of religious love in which
 I walked with Nature. But let this at least
 Be not forgotten, that I still retained
 My first creative sensibility,
 That by the regular action of the world 380
 My soul was unsubdued. A plastic power^o
 Abode with me, a forming hand, at times
 Rebellious, acting in a devious mood,
 A local spirit of its own, at war
 With general tendency, but for the most
 Subservient strictly to the external things
 With which it communed. An auxiliar light
 Came from my mind which on the setting sun
 Bestowed new splendor; the melodious birds,
 The gentle breezes, fountains that ran on, 390
 Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed
 A like dominion; and the midnight storm
 Grew darker in the presence of my eye.
 Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
 And hence my transport.

Nor should this, perchance,
 Pass unrecorded, that I still had loved
 The exercise and produce of a toil
 Than analytic industry to me
 More pleasing, and whose character I deem
 Is more poetic, as resembling more
 Creative agency. I mean to speak 400
 Of that interminable building reared
 By observation of affinities
 In objects where no brotherhood exists
 To common minds. My seventeenth year was come,
 And, whether from this habit rooted now
 So deeply in my mind, or from excess
 Of the great social principle of life,
 Coercing all things into sympathy,
 To unorganic natures I transferred 410
 My own enjoyments, or, the power of truth
 Coming in revelation, I conversed
 With things that really are, I at this time
 Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.
 Thus did my days pass on, and now at length
 From Nature and her overflowing soul
 I had received so much that all my thoughts
 Were steeped in feeling. I was only then
 Contented when with bliss ineffable
 I felt the sentiment of Being spread 420
 O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still,
 O'er all, that, lost beyond the reach of thought
 And human knowledge, to the human eye
 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart,
 O'er all that leaps, and runs, and shouts, and sings,
 Or beats the gladsome air, o'er all that glides
 Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself
 And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
 If such my transports were, for in all things
 I saw one life, and felt that it was joy. 430
 One song they sang, and it was audible,
 Most audible then when the fleshly ear,
 O'ercome by grosser prelude of that strain,
 Forgot its functions, and slept undisturbed.

If this be error, and another faith
 Find easier access to the pious mind,
 Yet were I grossly destitute of all
 Those human sentiments which make this earth
 So dear, if I should fail, with grateful voice
 To speak of you, Ye Mountains and Ye Lakes, 440
 And sounding Cataracts! Ye Mists and Winds
 That dwell among the hills where I was born.
 If, in my youth, I have been pure in heart,
 If, mingling with the world, I am content
 With my own modest pleasures, and have lived,
 With God and Nature communing, removed
 From little enmities and low desires,
 The gift is yours; if in these times of fear, °
 This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,
 If, 'mid indifference and apathy 450
 And wicked exultation, when good men,
 On every side fall off we know not how,
 To selfishness, disguised in gentle names
 Of peace, and quiet, and domestic love,
 Yet mingled, not unwillingly, with sneers
 On visionary minds; if in this time
 Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
 Despair not of our nature; but retain
 A more than Roman confidence, a faith
 That fails not, in all sorrow my support, 460
 The blessing of my life, the gift is yours,
 Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed
 My lofty speculations; and in thee
 For this uneasy heart of ours I find
 A never-failing principle of joy,
 And purest passion.

Thou, my Friend! wert reared
 In the great City, 'mid far other scenes;
 But we, by different roads at length have gained
 The self-same bourne. And for this cause to Thee
 I speak, unapprehensive of contempt, 470
 The insinuated scoff of coward tongues,
 And all that silent language which so oft
 In conversation betwixt man and man
 Blots from the human countenance all trace

Of beauty and of love. For Thou hast sought
 The truth in solitude, and Thou art one,
 The most intense of Nature's worshippers,
 In many things my Brother, chiefly here
 In this my deep devotion.

Fare Thee well!

Health, and the quiet of a healthful mind
 Attend thee! seeking oft the haunts of men,
 And yet more often living with Thyself,
 And for Thyself, so haply shall thy days
 Be many, and a blessing to mankind.

480

BOOK THREE

Residence at Cambridge

It was a dreary morning when the Chaise^o
 Rolled over the flat Plains of Huntingdon
 And, through the open windows, first I saw
 The long-backed Chapel of King's College rear
 His pinnacles above the dusky groves.
 Soon afterwards, we espied upon the road,
 A student clothed in Gown and tasselled Cap;
 He passed; nor was I master of my eyes
 Till he was left a hundred yards behind.
 The Place, as we approached, seemed more and more
 To have an eddy's force, and sucked us in
 More eagerly at every step we took.
 Onward we drove beneath the Castle, down
 By Magdalene Bridge we went and crossed the Cam,
 And at the *Hoop* we landed, famous Inn.

10

My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope;
 Some Friends I had, acquaintances who there
 Seemed Friends, poor simple Schoolboys, now hung round
 With honour and importance; in a world
 Of welcome faces up and down I roved;
 Questions, directions, counsel and advice
 Flowed in upon me from all sides, fresh day
 Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seemed
 A man of business and expence, and went
 From shop to shop about my own affairs,

20

To Tutors or to Tailors, as befel,
From street to street with loose and careless heart.

I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roamed
Delighted, through the motley spectacle;
Gowns grave or gaudy, Doctors, Students, Streets, 30
Lamps, Gateways, Flocks of Churches, Courts and Towers:
Strange transformation for a mountain Youth,
A northern Villager. As if by word
Of magic or some Fairy's power, at once
Behold me rich in monies, and attired
In splendid clothes, with hose of silk, and hair
Glittering like rimy trees when frost is keen.^o
My lordly Dressing-gown I pass it by,
With other signs of manhood which supplied
The lack of beard.—The weeks went roundly on, 40
With invitations, suppers, wine, and fruit,
Smooth housekeeping within, and all without
Liberal and suiting Gentleman's array!

The Evangelist St. John my Patron was,
Three gloomy Courts are his; and in the first
Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure!
Right underneath, the College kitchens made
A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,
But hardly less industrious; with shrill notes
Of sharp command and scolding intermixed. 50
Near me was Trinity's loquacious Clock,
Who never let the Quarters, night or day,
Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours
Twice over with a male and female voice.
Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;
And, from my Bedroom, I in moonlight nights
Could see, right opposite, a few yards off,
The Antechapel, where the Statue stood
Of Newton, with his Prism and silent Face.

Of College labours, of the Lecturer's Room, 60
All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,
With loyal Students, faithful to their books,
Half-and-half Idlers, hardy Recusants,^o
And honest Dunces;—of important Days,
Examinations, when the Man was weighed

As in the balance,—of excessive hopes,
 Tremblings withal, and commendable fears,
 Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad
 I make short mention; things they were which then
 I did not love, nor do I love them now. 70
 Such glory was but little sought by me,
 And little won. But it is right to say
 That even so early, from the first crude days
 Of settling-time in this my new abode,
 Not seldom I had melancholy thoughts,
 From personal and family regards,
 Wishing to hope without a hope; some fears
 About my future worldly maintenance,
 And, more than all, a strangeness in my mind,
 A feeling that I was not for that hour, 80
 Nor for that place. But wherefore be cast down?
 Why should I grieve? I was a chosen Son.
 For hither I had come with holy powers
 And faculties, whether to work or feel:
 To apprehend all passions and all moods
 Which time, and place, and season do impress
 Upon the visible universe, and work
 Like changes there by force of my own mind.
 I was a Freeman; in the purest sense
 Was free, and to majestic ends was strong. 90
 I do not speak of learning, moral truth,
 Or understanding; 'twas enough for me
 To know that I was otherwise endowed.
 When the first glitter of the show was passed,
 And the first dazzle of the taper light,
 As if with a rebound my mind returned
 Into its former self. Oft did I leave
 My Comrades, and the Crowd, Buildings and Groves,
 And walked along the fields, the level fields,
 With Heaven's blue concave reared above my head; 100
 And now it was, that, thro' such change entire,
 And this first absence from those shapes sublime
 Wherewith I had been conversant, my mind
 Seemed busier in itself than heretofore;
 At least, I more directly recognised
 My powers and habits: let me dare to speak

A higher language, say that now I felt
 The strength and consolation which were mine.
 As if awakened, summoned, roused, constrained,
 I looked for universal things; perused 110
 The common countenance of earth and heaven;
 And, turning the mind in upon itself,
 Pored, watched, expected, listened; spread my thoughts
 And spread them with a wider creeping; felt
 Incumbences more awful, visitings
 Of the Upholder, of the tranquil Soul,
 Which underneath all passion lives secure
 A steadfast life. But peace! it is enough
 To notice that I was ascending now
 To such community with highest truth. 120

A track pursuing not untrod before,
 From deep analogies by thought supplied,
 Or consciousnesses not to be subdued,
 To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower,
 Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,
 I gave a moral life, I saw them feel,
 Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
 Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
 That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
 Thus much for the one Presence, and the Life 130
 Of the great whole; suffice it here to add
 That whatsoe'er of Terror or of Love,
 Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
 From transitory passion, unto this
 I was as wakeful, even, as waters are
 To the sky's motion; in a kindred sense
 Of passion was obedient as a lute
 That waits upon the touches of the wind.
 So was it with me in my solitude;
 So often among multitudes of men. 140
 Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich,
 I had a world about me; 'twas my own,
 I made it; for it only lived to me,
 And to the God who looked into my mind.
 Such sympathies would sometimes shew themselves
 By outward gestures and by visible looks.

Some called it madness: such, indeed, it was,
 If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,
 If steady moods of thoughtfulness, matured
 To inspiration, sort with such a name; 150
 If prophesy be madness; if things viewed
 By Poets in old time, and higher up
 By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,
 May in these tutored days no more be seen
 With undisordered sight: but leaving this
 It was no madness: for I had an eye
 Which in my strongest workings, evermore
 Was looking for the shades of difference
 As they lie hid in all exterior forms,
 Near or remote, minute or vast, an eye 160
 Which from a stone, a tree, a withered leaf,
 To the broad ocean and the azure heavens,
 Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,
 Could find no surface where its power might sleep,
 Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,
 And by an unrelenting agency
 Did bind my feelings, even as in a chain.

And here, O Friend! have I retraced my life
 Up to an eminence, and told a tale
 Of matters which, not falsely, I may call 170
 The glory of my youth. Of Genius, Power,
 Creation and Divinity itself
 I have been speaking, for my theme has been
 What passed within me. Not of outward things
 Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,
 Symbols or actions; but of my own heart
 Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.
 O Heavens! how awful is the might of Souls,
 And what they do within themselves, while yet
 The yoke of earth is new to them, the world 180
 Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.
 This is, in truth, heroic argument,^o
 And genuine prowess, which I wished to touch
 With hand however weak; but in the main
 It lies far hidden from the reach of words.
 Points have we all of us within our souls,

Where all stand single; this I feel, and make
 Breathings for incommunicable powers.
 Yet each man is a memory to himself,
 And, therefore, now that I must quit this theme, 190
 I am not heartless; for there's not a man
 That lives who hath not had his godlike hours,
 And knows not what majestic sway we have,
 As natural beings in the strength of Nature.

Enough: for now into a populous Plain
 We must descend.—A Traveller I am,
 And all my Tale is of myself; even so,
 So be it, if the pure in heart delight
 To follow me; and Thou, O honored Friend!
 Who in my thoughts art ever at my side, 200
 Uphold, as heretofore, my fainting steps.

It hath been told already, how my sight
 Was dazzled by the novel show, and how,
 Erelong, I did into myself return.
 So did it seem, and so, in truth, it was.
 Yet this was but short lived: thereafter came
 Observance less devout. I had made a change
 In climate; and my nature's outward coat
 Changed also, slowly and insensibly.
 To the deep quiet and majestic thoughts 210
 Of loneliness succeeded empty noise
 And superficial pastimes; now and then
 Forced labour, and, more frequently, forced hopes;
 And, worse than all, a treasonable growth
 Of indecisive judgements that impaired
 And shook the mind's simplicity. And yet
 This was a gladsome time. Could I behold,
 Who less insensible than sodden clay
 On a sea River's bed at ebb of tide,
 Could have beheld with undelighted heart, 220
 So many happy Youths, so wide and fair
 A congregation, in its budding-time
 Of health, and hope, and beauty; all at once
 So many divers samples of the growth
 Of life's sweet season, could have seen unmoved
 That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers

Upon the matron temples of a Place
 So famous through the world? To me, at least,
 It was a goodly prospect: for, through youth,
 Though I had been trained up to stand unpropped, 230
 And independent musings pleased me so
 That spells seemed on me when I was alone,
 Yet could I only cleave to solitude
 In lonesome places; if a throng was near
 That way I leaned by nature; for my heart
 Was social, and loved idleness and joy.

Not seeking those who might participate
 My deeper pleasures (nay I had not once,
 Though not unused to mutter lonesome songs,
 Even with myself divided such delight, 240
 Or looked that way for aught that might be cloathed
 In human language), easily I passed
 From the remembrances of better things,
 And slipped into the weekday works of youth,
 Unburthened, unalarmed, and unprofaned.
 Caverns there were within my mind, which sun
 Could never penetrate, yet did there not
 Want store of leafy arbours where the light
 Might enter in at will. Companionships,
 Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all; 250
 We sauntered, played, we rioted, we talked
 Unprofitable talk at morning hours,
 Drifted about along the streets and walks,
 Read lazily in lazy books, went forth
 To gallop through the country in blind zeal
 Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
 Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars
 Come out, perhaps without one quiet thought.

Such was the tenor of the opening act
 In this new life. Imagination slept, 260
 And yet not utterly. I could not print
 Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
 Of generations of illustrious Men,
 Unmoved; I could not always lightly pass
 Through the same Gateways; sleep where they had slept,
 Wake where they waked, range that enclosure old,

That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.
 Place also by the side of this dark sense
 Of nobler feeling, that those spiritual
 Men, Even the great Newton's own ethereal Self, 270
 Seemed humbled in these precincts, thence to be
 The more beloved, invested here with tasks
 Of life's plain business, as a daily garb;
 Dictators at the plough, a change that left^o
 All genuine admiration unimpaired.

Beside the pleasant Mills of Trompington^o
 I laughed with Chaucer; in the hawthorn shade
 Heard him (while birds were warbling) tell his tales
 Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard, 280
 Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State,
 Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
 With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,
 I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend.
 Yea, our blind Poet, who, in his later day,
 Stood almost single, uttering odious truth,
 Darkness before, and danger's voice behind;^o
 Soul awful! if the earth has ever lodged
 An awful Soul, I seemed to see him here
 Familiarly, and in his Scholar's dress
 Bounding before me, yet a stripling Youth, 290
 A Boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
 Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
 And conscious step of purity and pride.

Among the Band of my Compeers was one,
 My class-fellow at School, whose chance it was
 To lodge in the Apartments which had been,
 Time out of mind, honored by Milton's name;
 The very shell reputed of the abode
 Which he had tenanted. O temperate Bard!
 One afternoon, the first time I set foot 300
 In this thy innocent Nest and Oratory,
 Seated with others in a festive ring
 Of common-place convention, I to thee
 Poured out libations, to thy memory drank,
 Within my private thoughts, till my brain reeled,
 Never so clouded by the fumes of wine

Before that hour, or since. Thence forth I ran
 From that assembly, through a length of streets,
 Ran, Ostrich-like, to reach our Chapel Door
 In not a desperate or opprobrious time, 310
 Albeit long after the importunate Bell
 Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra voice^o
 No longer haunting the dark winter night.
 Call back, O Friend! a moment to thy mind,
 The place itself and fashion of the rites.
 Upshouldering in a dislocated lump,
 With shallow ostentatious carelessness,
 My Surplice, gloried in, and yet despised,
 I clove in pride through the inferior throng
 Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood 320
 On the last skirts of their permitted ground,
 Beneath the pealing Organ. Empty thoughts!
 I am ashamed of them; and that great Bard,
 And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample mind
 Hast stationed me for reverence and love,
 Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour
 In some of its unworthy vanities,
 Brother of many more.

In this mixed sort

The months passed on, remissly, not given up
 To wilful alienation from the right, 330
 Or walks of open scandal; but in vague
 And loose indifference, easy likings, aims
 Of a low pitch; duty and zeal dismissed,
 Yet Nature, or a happy course of things
 Not doing in their stead the needful work.
 The memory languidly revolved, the heart
 Reposed in noontide rest; the inner pulse
 Of contemplation almost failed to beat.
 Rotted as by a charm, my life became
 A floating island, an amphibious thing, 340
 Unsound, of spungy texture, yet withal,
 Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
 And pleasant flowers.—The thirst of living praise,
 A reverence for the glorious Dead, the sight
 Of those long Vistos, Catacombs in which
 Perennial minds lie visibly entombed,

Have often stirred the heart of youth, and bred
A fervent love of rigorous discipline.
Alas! such high commotion touched not me;
No look was in these walls to put to shame 350
My easy spirits, and discountenance
Their light composure, far less to instil
A calm resolve of mind, firmly addressed
To puissant efforts. Nor was this the blame
Of others, but my own; I should, in truth,
As far as doth concern my single self
Misdemean most widely, lodging it elsewhere.
For I, bred up in Nature's lap, was even
As a spoiled Child; and rambling like the wind
As I had done in daily intercourse 360
With those delicious rivers, solemn heights,
And mountains; ranging like a fowl of the air,
I was ill tutored for captivity,
To quit my pleasure, and from month to month,
Take up a station calmly on the perch
Of sedentary peace. Those lovely forms
Had also left less space within my mind,
Which, wrought upon instinctively, had found
A freshness in those objects of its love,
A winning power, beyond all other power. 370
Not that I slighted Books; that were to lack
All sense; but other passions had been mine,
More fervent, making me less prompt, perhaps,
To in-door study than was wise or well,
Or suited to my years. Yet I could shape
The image of a Place which, soothed and lulled
As I had been, trained up in paradise
Among sweet garlands and delightful sounds,
Accustomed in my loneliness to walk
With Nature magisterially, yet I, 380
Methinks, could shape the image of a Place
Which with its aspect should have bent me down
To instantaneous service, should at once
Have made me pay to science and to arts
And written lore, acknowledged my liege Lord,
A homage, frankly offered up, like that
Which I had paid to Nature. Toil and pains

In this recess which I have bodied forth
 Should spread from heart to heart; and stately groves,
 Majestic edifices, should not want
 A corresponding dignity within. 390
 The congregating temper, which pervades
 Our unripe years, not wasted, should be made
 To minister to works of high attempt,
 Which the enthusiast would perform with love;
 Youth should be awed, possessed, as with a sense
 Religious, of what holy joy there is
 In knowledge, if it be sincerely sought
 For its own sake, in glory, and in praise,
 If but by labour won, and to endure. 400
 The passing Day should learn to put aside
 Her trappings here, should strip them off, abashed
 Before antiquity, and stedfast truth,
 And strong book-mindedness; and over all
 Should be a healthy, sound simplicity,
 A seemly plainness, name it as you will,
 Republican or pious.

If these thoughts

Be a gratuitous emblazonry
 That does but mock this recreant age, at least
 Let Folly and False-seeming, we might say, 410
 Be free to affect whatever formal gait
 Of moral or scholastic discipline
 Shall raise them highest in their own esteem;
 Let them parade, among the Schools at will;
 But spare the House of God. Was ever known
 The witless Shepherd who would drive his Flock
 With serious repetition to a pool
 Of which 'tis plain to sight they never taste?
 A weight must surely hang on days begun
 And ended with worst mockery. Be wise, 420
 Ye Presidents and Deans, and to your Bells
 Give seasonable rest; for 'tis a sound
 Hollow as ever vexed the tranquil air;
 And your officious doings bring disgrace
 On the plain Steeples of our English Church,
 Whose worship 'mid remotest village trees

Suffers for this. Even Science, too, at hand^o
 In daily sight of such irreverence,
 Is smitten thence with an unnatural taint,
 Loses her just authority, falls beneath
 Collateral suspicion, else unknown. 430
 This obvious truth did not escape me then,
 Unthinking as I was, and I confess
 That, having in my native hills given loose
 To a Schoolboy's dreaming, I had raised a pile
 Upon the basis of the coming time,
 Which now before me melted fast away,
 Which could not live, scarcely had life enough
 To mock the Builder. Oh! what joy it were
 To see a Sanctuary for our Country's Youth, 440
 With such a spirit in it as might be
 Protection for itself, a Virgin grove,
 Primaeval in its purity and depth;
 Where, though the shades were filled with cheerfulness,
 Nor indigent of songs, warbled from crowds
 In under-coverts, yet the countenance
 Of the whole place should wear a stamp of awe;
 A habitation sober and demure
 For ruminating creatures, a domain
 For quiet things to wander in, a haunt 450
 In which the Heron might delight to feed
 By the shy rivers, and the Pelican^o
 Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought
 Might sit and sun himself. Alas! alas!
 In vain for such solemnity we look;
 Our eyes are crossed by Butterflies, our ears
 Hear chattering Popinjays; the inner heart
 Is trivial, and the impresses without
 Are of a gaudy region.

Different sight

Those venerable Doctors saw of old 460
 When all who dwelt within these famous Walls
 Led in abstemiousness a studious life,
 When, in forlorn and naked chambers cooped
 And crowded, o'er their ponderous Books they sate
 Like caterpillars eating out their way

In silence, or with keen devouring noise
 Not to be tracked or fathered. Princes then
 At matins froze, and couched at curfew-time,
 Trained up, through piety and zeal, to prize
 Spare diet, patient labour, and plain weeds. 470
 O Seat of Arts! renowned throughout the world,
 Far different service in those homely days
 The Nurslings of the Muses underwent
 From their first childhood. In that glorious time,
 When Learning, like a Stranger come from far,
 Sounding through Christian Lands her Trumpet, rouzed
 The Peasant and the King; when Boys and Youths,
 The growth of ragged villages and huts,
 Forsook their homes, and, errant in the quest
 Of Patron, famous School or friendly Nook, 480
 Where, pensioned, they in shelter might sit down,
 From Town to Town and through wide-scattered Realms
 Journeyed with their huge folios in their hands;
 And often, starting from some covert place,
 Saluted the chance-comer on the road,
 Crying, 'an obolus, a penny give^o
 To a poor Scholar'; when illustrious Men,
 Lovers of truth, by penury constrained,^o
 Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon, read
 Before the doors or windows of their Cells 490
 By moonshine, through mere lack of taper light.

But peace to vain regrets! We see but darkly
 Even when we look behind us; and best things
 Are not so pure by nature that they needs
 Must keep to all, as fondly all believe,
 Their highest promise. If the Mariner,
 When at reluctant distance he hath passed
 Some fair enticing Island, did but know
 What fate might have been his, could he have brought
 His Bark to land upon the wished-for spot, 500
 Good cause full often would he have to bless
 The belt of churlish Surf that scared him thence,
 Or haste of the inexorable wind.
 For me, I grieve not; happy is the man,
 Who only misses what I missed, who falls
 No lower than I fell.

I did not love,
 As hath been noticed heretofore, the guise
 Of our scholastic studies; could have wished
 The river to have had an ampler range,
 And freer pace; but this I tax not; far, 510
 Far more I grieved to see among the Band
 Of those who in the field of contest stood
 As combatants, passions that did to me
 Seem low and mean; from ignorance of mine,
 In part, and want of just forbearance, yet
 My wiser mind grieves now for what I saw.
 Willingly did I part from these, and turn
 Out of their track, to travel with the shoal
 Of more unthinking Natures; easy Minds
 And pillowy, and not wanting love that makes 520
 The day pass lightly on, when foresight sleeps,
 And wisdom, and the pledges interchanged
 With our own inner being are forgot.

To Books, our daily fare prescribed, I turned
 With sickly appetite, and when I went,
 At other times, in quest of my own food,
 I chaced not steadily the manly deer,
 But laid me down to any casual feast
 Of wild wood-honey; or, with truant eyes
 Unruly, peeped about for vagrant fruit. 530
 And, as for what pertains to human life,
 The deeper passions working round me here,
 Whether of envy, jealousy, pride, shame,
 Ambition, emulation, fear, or hope,
 Or those of dissolute pleasure, were by me
 Unshared, and only now and then observed,
 So little was their hold upon my being,
 As outward things that might administer
 To knowledge or instruction. Hushed, meanwhile,
 Was the under soul, locked up in such a calm, 540
 That not a leaf of the great nature stirred.

Yet was this deep vacation not given up
 To utter waste. Hitherto I had stood
 In my own mind remote from human life,
 At least from what we commonly so name,

Even as a shepherd on a promontory,
 Who, lacking occupation, looks far forth
 Into the endless sea, and rather makes
 Than finds what he beholds. And sure it is,
 That this first transit from the smooth delights 550
 And wild outlandish walks of simple youth,
 To something that resembled an approach
 Towards mortal business, to a privileged world
 Within a world, a midway residence
 With all its intervenient imagery,
 Did better suit my visionary mind,
 Far better, than to have been bolted forth,
 Thrust out abruptly into Fortune's way
 Among the conflicts of substantial life;
 By a more just gradation did lead on 560
 To higher things, more naturally matured,
 For permanent possession, better fruits
 Whether of truth or virtue, to ensue.

In playful zest of fancy did we note,
 (How could we less?) the manners and the ways
 Of those who in the livery were arrayed
 Of good or evil fame; of those with whom
 By frame of academic discipline
 Perforce we were connected, men whose sway
 And whose authority of Office served 570
 To set our minds on edge, and did no more.
 Nor wanted we rich pastime of this kind,
 Found everywhere, but chiefly, in the ring
 Of the grave Elders, Men unscoured, grotesque
 In character, tricked out like aged trees
 Which, through the lapse of their infirmity,
 Give ready place to any random seed
 That chuses to be reared upon their trunks.

Here on my view, confronting as it were
 Those Shepherd Swains whom I had lately left, 580
 Did flash a different image of old age;
 How different! yet both withal alike,
 A Book of rudiments for the unpractised sight,
 Objects embossed! and which with sedulous care
 Nature holds up before the eye of Youth

In her great School; with further view, perhaps,
 To enter early on her tender scheme
 Of teaching comprehension with delight,
 And mingling playful with pathetic thoughts.

The surfaces of artificial life 590
 And manners finely spun, the delicate race
 Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and down
 Through that state arras woven with silk and gold;
 This wily interchange of snaky hues,
 Willingly and unwillingly revealed
 I had not learned to watch, and at this time
 Perhaps, had such been in my daily sight
 I might have been indifferent thereto,
 As Hermits are to tales of distant things.
 Hence for these rarities elaborate 600
 Having no relish yet, I was content
 With the more homely produce, rudely piled
 In this our coarser warehouse. At this day
 I smile in many a mountain solitude
 At passages and fragments that remain
 Of that inferior exhibition, played
 By wooden images, a theatre
 For Wake or Fair. And oftentimes do flit
 Remembrances before me of old Men,
 Old Humourists who have been long in their graves, 610
 And having almost in my mind put off
 Their human names, have into Phantoms passed,
 Of texture midway betwixt life and books.
 I play the Loiterer: 'tis enough to note
 That here, in dwarf proportions, were expressed
 The limbs of the great world, its goings-on
 Collaterally pourtrayed, as in mock fight,
 A Tournament of blows, some hardly dealt,
 Though short of mortal combat; and whate'er
 Might of this pageant be supposed to hit 620
 A simple Rustic's notice, this way less,
 More that way, was not wasted upon me.
 —And yet this spectacle may well demand
 A more substantial name, no mimic shew,
 Itself a living part of a live whole,

A creek of the vast sea. For all Degrees
 And Shapes of spurious fame and short-lived praise
 Here sate in state, and fed with daily alms,
 Retainers won away from solid good.
 And here was Labour, his own Bond-slave; Hope 630
 That never set the pains against the prize;
 Idleness, halting with his weary clog;
 And poor misguided Shame, and witless Fear,
 And simple Pleasure, foraging for Death,
 Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray;
 Feuds, Factions, Flatteries, Enmity, and Guile,
 Murmuring Submission, and bald Government;
 The Idol weak as the Idolater;
 And Decency and Custom starving Truth;
 And blind Authority, beating with his Staff 640
 The Child that might have led him; Emptiness
 Followed, as of good omen; and meek Worth
 Left to itself unheard of, and unknown.

Of these and other kindred notices
 I cannot say what portion is in truth
 The naked recollection of that time,
 And what may rather have been called to life
 By after-meditation. But delight,
 That, in an easy temper lulled asleep,
 Is still with innocence its own reward, 650
 This surely was not wanting. Carelessly
 I gazed, roving as through a Cabinet
 Or wide Museum (thronged with fishes, gems,
 Birds, crocodiles, shells) where little can be seen,
 Well understood, or naturally endeared,
 Yet still does every step bring something forth
 That quickens, pleases, stings; and here and there
 A casual rarity is singled out
 And has its brief perusal, then gives way
 To others, all supplanted in their turn. 660
 Meanwhile, amid this gaudy Congress, framed
 Of things by nature most unneighbourly,
 The head turns round, and cannot right itself;
 And, though an aching and a barren sense
 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,

With few wise longings and but little love,
 Yet something to the memory sticks at last,
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

Thus in submissive idleness, my Friend,
 The labouring time of Autumn, Winter, Spring,
 Nine months, rolled pleasingly away; the tenth
 Returned me to my native hills again.

670

BOOK FOUR

Summer Vacation

A pleasant sight it was when, having clomb
 The Heights of Kendal, and that dreary Moor
 Was crossed, at length, as from a rampart's edge,
 I overlooked the bed of Windermere.
 I bounded down the hill, shouting amain
 A lusty summons to the farther shore
 For the old Ferryman; and when he came
 I did not step into the well-known Boat
 Without a cordial welcome. Thence right forth
 I took my way, now drawing towards home,
 To that sweet Valley where I had been reared.^o
 'Twas but a short hour's walk ere, veering round,
 I saw the snow-white Church upon its hill
 Sit like a thronèd Lady, sending out
 A gracious look all over its domain.
 Glad greetings had I, and some tears, perhaps,
 From my old Dame, so motherly and good,
 While she perused me with a Parent's pride.
 The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew
 Upon thy grave, good Creature! While my heart
 Can beat I never will forget thy name.
 Heaven's blessing be upon thee where thou liest,
 After thy innocent and busy stir
 In narrow cares, thy little daily growth
 Of calm enjoyments, after eighty years,
 And more than eighty, of untroubled life,
 Childless, yet by the strangers to thy blood
 Honoured with little less than filial love.
 Great joy was mine to see thee once again,

10

20

Thee and thy dwelling, and a throng of things 30
 About its narrow precincts all beloved,
 And many of them seeming yet my own.
 Why should I speak of what a thousand hearts
 Have felt, and every man alive can guess?
 The rooms, the court, the garden were not left
 Long unsaluted, and the spreading Pine
 And broad stone Table underneath its boughs,
 Our summer seat in many a festive hour;
 And that unruly Child of mountain birth,
 The froward Brook, which soon as he was boxed 40
 Within our Garden, found himself at once,
 As if by trick insidious and unkind,
 Stripped of his voice, and left to dimple down
 Without an effort and without a will,
 A channel paved by the hand of man.
 I looked at him, and smiled, and smiled again,
 And in the press of twenty thousand thoughts,
 'Ha,' quoth I, 'pretty Prisoner, are you there!'
 And now, reviewing soberly that hour,
 I marvel that a fancy did not flash 50
 Upon me, and a strong desire, straitway,
 At sight of such an emblem that shewed forth
 So aptly my late course of even days
 And all their smooth enthrallment, to pen down
 A satire on myself. My aged Dame
 Was with me, at my side: She guided me;
 I willing, nay—nay—wishing to be led.
 The face of every neighbour whom I met
 Was as a volume to me; some I hailed
 Far off, upon the road, or at their work, 60
 Unceremonious greetings, interchanged
 With half the length of a long field between.
 Among my Schoolfellows I scattered round
 A salutation that was more constrained,
 Though earnest, doubtless with a little pride,
 But with more shame, for my habiliments,
 The transformation, and the gay attire.

Delighted did I take my place again
 At our domestic Table: and, dear Friend!
 Relating simply as my wish hath been 70

A Poet's history, can I leave untold
 The joy with which I laid me down at night
 In my accustomed bed, more welcome now,
 Perhaps, than if it had been more desired
 Or been more often thought of with regret?
 That bed whence I had heard the roaring wind
 And clamorous rain, that Bed where I, so oft,
 Had lain awake, on breezy nights, to watch
 The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
 Of a tall Ash, that near our Cottage stood, 80
 And watched her with fixed eyes, while to and fro
 In the dark summit of the moving Tree
 She rocked with every impulse of the wind.

Among the faces which it pleased me well
 To see again, was one by ancient right
 Our Inmate, a rough Terrier of the hills,
 By birth and call of Nature pre-ordained
 To hunt the badger and unearth the fox
 Among the impervious crags; but, having been
 From youth our own adopted, he had passed 90
 Into a gentler service. And when first
 The boyish spirit flagged, and day by day
 Along my veins I kindled with the stir,
 The fermentation and the vernal heat
 Of Poesy, affecting private shades
 Like a sick lover, then this Dog was used
 To watch me, an attendant and a friend
 Obsequious to my steps, early and late,
 Though often of such dilatory walk
 Tired, and uneasy at the halts I made. 100
 A hundred times when, in these wanderings,
 I have been busy with the toil of verse,
 Great pains and little progress, and at once
 Some fair enchanting image in my mind
 Rose up, full-formed like Venus from the sea,
 Have I sprung forth towards him, and let loose
 My hand upon his back with stormy joy,
 Caressing him again, and yet again.
 And when, in the public roads at eventide
 I sauntered, like a river murmuring 110

And talking to itself, at such a season
 It was his custom to jog on before;
 But, duly, whensoever he had met
 A passenger approaching, would he turn
 To give me timely notice, and straitway,
 Punctual to such admonishment, I hushed
 My voice, composed my gait, and shaped myself
 To give and take a greeting that might save
 My name from piteous rumours, such as wait
 On men suspected to be crazed in brain.

120

Those walks, well worthy to be prized and loved—
 Regretted! that word, too, was on my tongue,
 But they were richly laden with all good,
 And cannot be remembered but with thanks
 And gratitude, and perfect joy of heart—
 Those walks did now, like a returning spring,
 Come back on me again. When first I made
 Once more the circuit of our little Lake
 If ever happiness hath lodged with man,
 That day consummate happiness was mine,
 Wide-spreading, steady, calm, contemplative.
 The sun was set, or setting, when I left
 Our cottage door, and evening soon brought on
 A sober hour, not winning or serene,
 For cold and raw the air was, and untuned:
 But, as a face we love is sweetest then
 When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look
 It chance to wear is sweetest if the heart
 Have fulness in itself, even so with me
 It fared that evening. Gently did my soul
 Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
 Naked as in the presence of her God.
 As on I walked, a comfort seemed to touch
 A heart that had not been disconsolate,
 Strength came where weakness was not known to be,
 At least not felt; and restoration came,
 Like an intruder, knocking at the door
 Of unacknowledged weariness. I took
 The balance in my hand and weighed myself.
 I saw but little, and thereat was pleased;

130

140

Little did I remember, and even this 150
 Still pleased me more; but I had hopes and peace
 And swellings of the spirits, was rapt and soothed,
 Conversed with promises, had glimmering views
 How Life pervades the undecaying mind,
 How the immortal Soul with God-like power
 Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
 That time can lay upon her; how on earth,
 Man, if he do but live within the light
 Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad 160
 His being with a strength that cannot fail.
 Nor was there want of milder thoughts, of love,
 Of innocence, and holiday repose,
 And more than pastoral quiet, in the heart
 Of amplest projects, and a peaceful end
 At last, or glorious, by endurance won.

Thus musing, in a wood I sate me down,
 Alone, continuing there to muse: meanwhile
 The mountain heights were slowly overspread
 With darkness, and before a rippling breeze 170
 The long Lake lengthened out its hoary line;
 And in the sheltered coppice where I sate,
 Around me, from among the hazel leaves,
 Now here, now there, stirred by the straggling wind,
 Came intermittingly a breath-like sound,
 A respiration short and quick, which oft,
 Yea, might I say, again and yet again,
 Mistaking for the panting of my Dog,
 The off-and-on Companion of my walk,
 I turned my head, to look if he were there. 180

A freshness also found I at this time
 In human Life, the life I mean of those
 Whose occupations really I loved.
 The prospect often touched me with surprize,
 Crowded and full, and changed, as seemed to me,
 Even as a garden in the heat of Spring,
 After an eight-days' absence. For (to omit
 The things which were the same and yet appeared
 So different) amid this solitude,
 The little Vale where was my chief abode, 190

'Twas not indifferent to a youthful mind
 To note, perhaps, some sheltered Seat in which
 An old Man had been used to sun himself,
 Now empty; pale-faced Babes whom I had left
 In arms, known children of the neighbourhood,
 Now rosy prattlers, tottering up and down;
 And growing Girls whose beauty, filched away
 With all its pleasant promises, was gone
 To deck some slighted Playmate's homely cheek.

Yes, I had something of another eye, 200
 And often, looking round, was moved to smiles,
 Such as a delicate work of humour breeds.
 I read, without design, the opinions, thoughts,
 Of those plain-living people, in a sense
 Of love and knowledge; with another eye
 I saw the quiet Woodman in the Woods,
 The Shepherd on the Hills. With new delight,
 This chiefly, did I view my grey-haired Dame,
 Saw her go forth to Church, or other work
 Of state, equipped in monumental trim, 210
 Short Velvet Cloak (her Bonnet of the like)
 A Mantle such as Spanish Cavaliers
 Wore in old time. Her smooth domestic life,
 Affectionate without uneasiness,
 Her talk, her business pleased me, and no less
 Her clear though shallow stream of piety,
 That ran on Sabbath days a fresher course.
 With thoughts unfelt till now, I saw her read
 Her Bible on the Sunday afternoons;
 And loved the book, when she had dropped asleep, 220
 And made of it a pillow for her head.

Nor less do I remember to have felt
 Distinctly manifested at this time
 A dawning, even as of another sense,
 A human-heartedness about my love
 For objects hitherto the gladsome air
 Of my own private being, and no more;
 Which I had loved, even as a blessed Spirit
 Or Angel, if he were to dwell on earth,
 Might love, in individual happiness. 230

But now there opened on me other thoughts,
 Of change, congratulation, and regret,
 A new-born feeling. It spread far and wide;
 The trees, the mountains shared it, and the brooks,
 The stars of Heaven, now seen in their old haunts,
 White Sirius, glittering over the southern crags,
 Orion with his belt, and those fair Seven,^o
 Acquaintances of every little child,
 And Jupiter, my own beloved Star.
 Whatever shadings of mortality 240
 Had fallen upon these objects heretofore
 Were different in kind; not tender: strong,
 Deep, gloomy were they and severe, the scatterings
 Of Childhood; and, moreover, had given way,
 In later youth, to beauty, and to love
 Enthusiastic, to delight and joy.

As one who hangs down-bending from the side
 Of a slow-moving Boat, upon the breast
 Of a still water, solacing himself
 With such discoveries as his eye can make, 250
 Beneath him, in the bottom of the deeps,
 Sees many beauteous sights, weeds, fishes, flowers,
 Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,
 Yet often is perplexed, and cannot part
 The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
 Mountains and clouds, from that which is indeed
 The region, and the things which there abide
 In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam
 Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
 And motions that are sent he knows not whence, 260
 Impediments that make his task more sweet;
 —Such pleasant office have we long pursued
 Incumbent o'er the surface of past time
 With like success; nor have we often looked
 On more alluring shows (to me, at least,)
 More soft, or less ambiguously descried,
 Than those which now we have been passing by,
 And where we still are lingering. Yet, in spite
 Of all these new employments of the mind,
 There was an inner falling-off. I loved, 270

Loved deeply, all that I had loved before,
 More deeply even than ever; but a swarm
 Of heady thoughts jostling each other, gawds,
 And feast, and dance, and public revelry,
 And sports and games (less pleasing in themselves,
 Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh
 Of manliness and freedom) these did now
 Seduce me from the firm habitual quest
 Of feeding pleasures, from that eager zeal,
 Those yearnings which had every day been mine, 280
 A wild, unworldly-minded Youth, given up
 To Nature and to Books, or, at the most,
 From time to time, by inclination shipped,
 One among many, in societies,
 That were, or seemed, as simple as myself.
 But now was come a change; it would demand
 Some skill, and longer time than may be spared,
 To paint, even to myself, these vanities,
 And how they wrought. But, sure it is that now
 Contagious air did oft environ me, 290
 Unknown among these haunts in former days.
 The very garments that I wore appeared
 To prey upon my strength, and stopped the course
 And quiet stream of self-forgetfulness.
 Something there was about me that perplexed
 The authentic sight of reason, pressed too closely
 On that religious dignity of mind,
 That is the very faculty of truth;
 Which wanting, either, from the very first,
 A function never lighted up, or else 300
 Extinguished, Man, a creature great and good,
 Seems but a pageant plaything with wild claws,
 And this great frame of breathing elements
 A senseless Idol.

That vague heartless chace
 Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange
 For Books and Nature at that early age.
 'Tis true, some casual knowledge might be gained
 Of character or life; but at that time,
 Of manners put to school I took small note,
 And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere. 310

Far better had it been to exalt the mind
 By solitary study, to uphold
 Intense desire by thought and quietness.
 And yet, in chastisement of these regrets,
 The memory of one particular hour
 Doth here rise up against me. In a throng,
 A festal company of Maids and Youths,
 Old Men, and Matrons staid, promiscuous rout,^o
 A medley of all tempers, I had passed
 The night in dancing, gaiety and mirth; 320
 With din of instruments, and shuffling feet,
 And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,
 And unaimed prattle flying up and down,
 Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there
 Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,
 That mounted up like joy into the head,
 And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,
 The cock had crowed, the sky was bright with day.
 Two miles I had to walk along the fields
 Before I reached my home. Magnificent 330
 The morning was, a memorable pomp,
 More glorious than I ever had beheld.
 The Sea was laughing at a distance; all
 The solid Mountains were as bright as clouds,
 Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;^o
 And, in the meadows and the lower grounds,
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn,
 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
 And Labourers going forth into the fields.
 —Ah! need I say, dear Friend, that to the brim 340
 My heart was full? I made no vows, but vows
 Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
 Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
 A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
 In blessedness, which even yet remains.

Strange rendezvous my mind was at that time,
 A party-coloured shew of grave and gay,
 Solid and light, short-sighted and profound,
 Of inconsiderate habits and sedate,
 Consorting in one mansion unreprieved. 350

I knew the worth of that which I possessed,
 Though slighted and misused. Besides, in truth,
 That Summer, swarming as it did with thoughts
 Transient and loose, yet wanted not a store
 Of primitive hours, when, by these hindrances
 Unthwarted, I experienced in myself
 Conformity as just as that of old
 To the end and written spirit of God's works,
 Whether held forth in Nature or in Man.

From many wanderings that have left behind 360
 Remembrances not lifeless, I will here^o
 Single out one, then pass to other themes.

A favorite pleasure hath it been with me,
 From time of earliest youth, to walk alone
 Along the public Way, when, for the night
 Deserted, in its silence it assumes
 A character of deeper quietness
 Than pathless solitudes. At such an hour
 Once, ere these summer months were passed away,
 I slowly mounted up a steep ascent 370

Where the road's wat'ry surface, to the ridge
 Of that sharp rising, glittered in the moon
 And seemed before my eyes another stream
 Creeping with silent lapse to join the brook
 That murmured in the valley. On I went
 Tranquil, receiving in my own despite
 Amusement, as I slowly passed along,
 From such near objects as from time to time
 Perforce intruded on the listless sense
 Quiescent, and disposed to sympathy 380

With an exhausted mind, worn out by toil,
 And all unworthy of the deeper joy
 Which waits on distant prospect, cliff, or sea,
 The dark blue vault, and universe of stars.
 Thus did I steal along that silent road,
 My body from the stillness drinking in
 A restoration like the calm of sleep,
 But sweeter far. Above, before, behind,
 Around me, all was peace and solitude;
 I looked not round, nor did the solitude 390

Speak to my eye; but it was heard and felt.
 O happy state! what beauteous pictures now
 Rose in harmonious imagery—they rose
 As from some distant region of my soul
 And came along like dreams; yet such as left
 Obscurely mingled with their passing forms
 A consciousness of animal delight,
 A self-possession felt in every pause
 And every gentle movement of my frame.

While thus I wandered, step by step led on, 400
 It chanced a sudden turning of the road
 Presented to my view an uncouth shape,
 So near, that, slipping back into the shade
 Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well,
 Myself unseen. He was of stature tall,
 A foot above man's common measure tall,
 Stiff in his form, and upright, lank and lean;
 A man more meagre, as it seemed to me,
 Was never seen abroad by night or day.
 His arms were long, and bare his hands; his mouth 410
 Shewed ghastly in the moonlight; from behind
 A milestone propped him, and his figure seemed
 Half-sitting, and half-standing. I could mark
 That he was clad in military garb,
 Though faded, yet entire. He was alone,
 Had no attendant, neither Dog, nor Staff,
 Nor knapsack; in his very dress appeared
 A desolation, a simplicity
 That seemed akin to solitude. Long time
 Did I peruse him with a mingled sense 420
 Of fear and sorrow. From his lips, meanwhile,
 There issued murmuring sounds, as if of pain
 Or of uneasy thought; yet still his form
 Kept the same steadiness, and at his feet
 His shadow lay, and moved not. In a Glen
 Hard by, a Village stood, whose roofs and doors
 Were visible among the scattered trees,
 Scarce distant from the spot an arrow's flight.
 I wished to see him move, but he remained
 Fixed to his place, and still from time to time 430
 Sent forth a murmuring voice of dead complaint,

Groans scarcely audible. Without self-blame
 I had not thus prolonged my watch; and now,
 Subduing my heart's specious cowardice,
 I left the shady nook where I had stood,
 And hailed him. Slowly from his resting-place
 He rose, and with a lean and wasted arm
 In measured gesture lifted to his head,
 Returned my salutation, then resumed
 His station as before. And when, ere long, 440
 I asked his history, he in reply
 Was neither slow nor eager, but unmoved,
 And with a quiet, uncomplaining voice,
 A stately air of mild indifference,
 He told, in simple words, a Soldier's tale
 That in the Tropic Islands he had served,
 Whence he had landed scarcely ten days past,
 That on his landing he had been dismissed,
 And now was travelling to his native home.
 At this, I turned and looked towards the Village 450
 But all were gone to rest; the fires all out;
 And every silent window to the Moon
 Shone with a yellow glitter. 'No one there,'
 Said I, 'is waking, we must measure back
 The way which we have come: behind yon wood
 A Labourer dwells, and, take it on my word
 He will not murmur should we break his rest,
 And with a ready heart will give you food
 And lodging for the night.' At this he stooped,
 And from the ground took up an oaken Staff, 460
 By me yet unobserved, a Traveller's Staff,
 Which, I suppose, from his slack hand had dropped,
 And lain till now neglected in the grass.

Towards the Cottage without more delay
 We shaped our course. As it appeared to me,
 He travelled without pain, and I beheld
 With ill-suppressed astonishment his tall
 And ghastly figure moving at my side;
 Nor, while we journeyed thus could I forbear
 To question him of what he had endured 470
 From hardship, battle, or the pestilence.
 He, all the while, was in demeanour calm,

Concise in answer; solemn and sublime
 He might have seemed, but that in all he said
 There was a strange half-absence, and a tone
 Of weakness and indifference, as of one
 Remembering the importance of his theme
 But feeling it no longer. We advanced
 Slowly, and, ere we to the wood were come
 Discourse had ceased. Together on we passed, 480
 In silence, through the shades, gloomy and dark;
 Then, turning up along an open field
 We gained the Cottage. At the door I knocked,
 Calling aloud, 'my Friend, here is a Man
 By sickness overcome; beneath your roof
 This night let him find rest, and give him food,
 If food he need, for he is faint and tired.'
 Assured that now my Comrade would repose
 In comfort, I entreated that henceforth
 He would not linger in the public ways 490
 But ask for timely furtherance and help
 Such as his state required. At this reproof,
 With the same ghastly mildness in his look,
 He said, 'My trust is in the God of Heaven
 And in the eye of him that passes me.'
 The Cottage door was speedily unlocked,
 And now the Soldier touched his hat again
 With his lean hand, and in a voice that seemed
 To speak with a reviving interest,
 Till then unfelt, he thanked me; I returned 500
 The blessing of the poor unhappy Man;
 And so we parted. Back I cast a look,
 And lingered near the door a little space;
 Then sought with quiet heart my distant home.

BOOK FIVE

Books

Even in the steadiest mood of reason, when
 All sorrow for thy transitory pains
 Goes out, it grieves me for thy state, O Man,
 Thou paramount Creature! and thy race, while ye

Shall sojourn on this planet; not for woes
 Which thou endurest; that weight, albeit huge,
 I charm away; but for those palms atchieved
 Through length of time, by study and hard thought,
 The honours of thy high endowments; there
 My sadness finds its fuel. Hitherto, 10
 In progress through this Verse, my mind hath looked
 Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
 As her prime Teacher, intercourse with man
 Established by the sovereign Intellect,
 Who through that bodily Image hath diffused
 A soul divine which we participate,
 A deathless spirit. Thou also, Man, hast wrought,
 For commerce of thy nature with itself,
 Things worthy of unconquerable life;
 And yet we feel, we cannot chuse but feel, 20
 That these must perish. Tremblings of the heart
 It gives, to think that the immortal being
 No more shall need such garments; and yet Man,
 As long as he shall be the Child of Earth,
 Might almost 'weep to have' what he may lose,^o
 Nor be himself extinguished, but survive
 Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.
 A thought is with me sometimes, and I say,
 'Should earth by inward throes be wrenched throughout,
 Or fire be sent from far to wither all 30
 Her pleasant habitations, and dry up
 Old Ocean in his bed left singed and bare,
 Yet would the living Presence still subsist
 Victorious; and composure would ensue,
 And kindlings like the morning; presage sure,
 Though slow, perhaps, of a returning day.'
 But all the meditations of mankind,
 Yea, all the adamantine holds of truth,
 By reason built, or passion, which itself
 Is highest reason in a soul sublime; 40
 The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,
 Sensuous or intellectual, wrought by men,
 Twin labourers and heirs of the same hopes,
 Where would they be? Oh! why hath not the mind
 Some element to stamp her image on

In nature somewhat nearer to her own?
 Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad
 Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?

One day, when in the hearing of a Friend,
 I had given utterance to thoughts like these, 50
 He answered with a smile that, in plain truth,
 'Twas going far to seek disquietude;
 But on the front of his reproof, confessed
 That he, at sundry seasons, had himself
 Yielded to kindred hauntings. And forthwith
 Added, that once upon a summer's noon,
 While he was sitting in a rocky cave
 By the sea-side, perusing, as it chanced,
 The famous History of the Errant Knight
 Recorded by Cervantes, these same thoughts^o 60
 Came to him; and to height unusual rose
 While listlessly he sate, and having closed
 The Book, had turned his eyes towards the Sea.
 On Poetry and geometric Truth,
 The knowledge that endures, upon these two,
 And their high privilege of lasting life,
 Exempt from all internal injury,
 He mused: upon these chiefly: and at length,
 His senses yielding to the sultry air,
 Sleep seized him, and he passed into a dream. 70
 He saw before him an Arabian Waste,^o
 A Desert, and he fancied that himself
 Was sitting there in the wide wilderness,
 Alone, upon the sands. Distress of mind
 Was growing in him when, behold! at once
 To his great joy a Man was at his side,
 Upon a dromedary mounted high.
 He seemed an Arab of the Bedouin Tribes;
 A Lance he bore, and underneath one arm
 A Stone, and, in the opposite hand, a Shell 80
 Of a surpassing brightness. Much rejoiced
 The dreaming Man that he should have a Guide
 To lead him through the Desert; and he thought,
 While questioning himself what this strange freight
 Which the Newcomer carried through the Waste

Could mean, the Arab told him that the Stone,
 To give it in the language of the Dream,
 Was Euclid's Elements; 'and this,' said he,
 'This other,' pointing to the Shell, 'this Book
 Is something of more worth.' 'And, at the word, 90
 The Stranger', said my Friend continuing,
 'Stretched forth the Shell towards me, with command
 That I should hold it to my ear. I did so,
 And heard that instant in an unknown Tongue,
 Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,
 A loud prophetic blast of harmony,
 An Ode, in passion uttered, which foretold
 Destruction to the Children of the Earth
 By deluge now at hand. No sooner ceased
 The Song, but with calm look, the Arab said 100
 That all was true; that it was even so
 As had been spoken; and that he himself
 Was going then to bury those two Books:
 The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
 And wedded man to man by purest bond
 Of nature, undisturbed by space or time;
 The other that was a God, yea many Gods,
 Had voices more than all the winds, and was
 A joy, a consolation, and a hope.'
 My friend continued, 'Strange as it may seem, 110
 I wondered not, although I plainly saw
 The one to be a Stone, the other a Shell,
 Nor doubted once but that they both were Books,
 Having a perfect faith in all that passed.
 A wish was now engendered in my fear
 To cleave unto this Man, and I begged leave
 To share his errand with him. On he passed
 Not heeding me; I followed, and took note
 That he looked often backward with wild look,
 Grasping his twofold treasure to his side. 120
 Upon a Dromedary, Lance in rest,
 He rode, I keeping pace with him, and now
 I fancied that he was the very Knight
 Whose Tale Cervantes tells, yet not the Knight,
 But was an Arab of the Desert too;

Of these was neither, and was both at once.
 His countenance, meanwhile, grew more disturbed,
 And, looking backwards when he looked, I saw
 A glittering light, and asked him whence it came.
 "It is," said he, "the waters of the deep
 Gathering upon us," quickening then his pace 130
 He left me: I called after him aloud;
 He heeded not; but with his twofold charge
 Beneath his arm, before me full in view
 I saw him riding o'er the Desert Sands,
 With the fleet waters of the drowning world
 In chace of him; whereat I waked in terror,
 And saw the Sea before me, and the Book,
 In which I had been reading at my side.'

Full often, taking from the world of sleep 140
 This Arab Phantom, which my Friend beheld,
 This Semi-Quixote, I to him have given
 A substance, fancied him a living man,
 A gentle Dweller in the Desert, crazed
 By love and feeling and internal thought,
 Protracted among endless solitudes;
 Have shaped him, in the oppression of his brain,
 Wandering upon this quest, and thus equipped.
 And I have scarcely pitied him; have felt
 A reverence for a Being thus employed, 150
 And thought that in the blind and awful lair
 Of such a madness, reason did lie couched.
 Enow there are on earth to take in charge
 Their Wives, their Children, and their virgin Loves,
 Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear;
 Enow to think of these; yea, will I say,
 In sober contemplation of the approach
 Of such great overthrow, made manifest
 By certain evidence, that I, methinks,
 Could share that Maniac's anxiousness, could go 160
 Upon like errand. Oftentimes, at least,
 Me hath such deep entrancement half-possessed,
 When I have held a volume in my hand
 Poor earthly casket of immortal Verse!
 Shakespeare, or Milton, Labourers divine!

Mighty, indeed supreme, must be the power
 Of living Nature, which could thus so long
 Detain me from the best of other thoughts.
 Even in the lisping time of Infancy,
 And later down, in prattling Childhood, even 170
 While I was travelling back among those days,
 How could I ever play an ingrate's part?°
 Once more should I have made those bowers resound,
 And intermingled strains of thankfulness
 With their own thoughtless melodies. At least,
 It might have well beseeemed me to repeat
 Some simply fashioned tale; to tell again,
 In slender accents of sweet Verse, some tale
 That did bewitch me then, and soothes me now.
 O Friend! O Poet! Brother of my soul, 180
 Think not that I could ever pass along
 Untouched by these remembrances; no, no,
 But I was hurried forward by a stream,
 And could not stop. Yet wherefore should I speak,
 Why call upon a few weak words to say
 What is already written in the hearts
 Of all that breathe? what in the path of all
 Drops daily from the tongue of every child,
 Wherever Man is found. The trickling tear
 Upon the cheek of listening Infancy 190
 Tells it, and the insuperable look
 That drinks as if it never could be full.

That portion of my story I shall leave
 There registered: whatever else there be
 Of power or pleasure, sown or fostered thus,
 Peculiar to myself, let that remain
 Where it lies hidden in its endless home
 Among the depths of time. And yet it seems
 That here, in memory of all books which lay
 Their sure foundations in the heart of Man, 200
 Whether by native prose or numerous verse,°
 That in the name of all inspired Souls,
 From Homer, the great Thunderer; from the voice
 Which roars along the bed of Jewish Song;
 And that, more varied and elaborate,

Those trumpet-tones of harmony that shake
 Our Shores in England; from those loftiest notes
 Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made
 For Cottagers and Spinners at the wheel,
 And weary Travellers when they rest themselves 210
 By the highways and hedges; ballad tunes,
 Food for the hungry ears of little Ones,
 And of old Men who have survived their joy;
 It seemeth, in behalf of these, the works
 And of the Men who framed them, whether known,
 Or sleeping nameless in their scattered graves,
 That I should here assert their rights, attest
 Their honours, and should, once for all, pronounce
 Their benediction; speak of them as Powers
 For ever to be hallowed; only less, 220
 For what we may become, and what we need,
 Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God.

Rarely, and with reluctance, would I stoop
 To transitory themes; yet I rejoice,
 And, by these thoughts admonished, must speak out
 Thanksgivings from my heart, that I was reared
 Safe from an evil which these days have laid
 Upon the Children of the Land, a pest
 That might have dried me up, body and soul.
 This Verse is dedicate to Nature's self, 230
 And things that teach as Nature teaches, then
 Oh where had been the Man, the Poet where?
 Where had we been, we two, beloved Friend,
 If we, in lieu of wandering, as we did,
 Through heights and hollows, and bye-spots of tales
 Rich with indigenous produce, open ground
 Of Fancy, happy pastures ranged at will!
 Had been attended, followed, watched, and noosed,^o
 Each in his several melancholy walk,
 Stringed like a poor man's Heifer at its feed, 240
 Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;
 Or rather like a stalled ox shut out
 From touch of growing grass; that may not taste
 A flower till it have yielded up its sweets.
 A prelibation to the mower's scythe.

Behold the Parent Hen amid her Brood,
 Though fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part
 And straggle from her presence, still a Brood,
 And she herself from the maternal bond
 Still undischarged; yet doth she little more 250
 Than move with them in tenderness and love,
 A centre of the circle which they make;
 And, now and then, alike from need of theirs,
 And call of her own natural appetites,
 She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food
 Which they partake at pleasure. Early died^o
 My honoured Mother; she who was the heart
 And hinge of all our learnings and our loves:
 She left us destitute, and as we might
 Trooping together. Little suits it me 260
 To break upon the sabbath of her rest
 With any thought that looks at others' blame,
 Nor would I praise her but in perfect love.
 Hence am I checked: but I will boldly say,
 In gratitude, and for the sake of truth,
 Unheard by her, that she, not falsely taught,
 Fetching her goodness rather from time past
 Than shaping novelties from those to come,
 Had no presumption, no such jealousy;
 Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust 270
 Our Nature, but had virtual faith that he,^o
 Who fills the Mother's breasts with innocent milk,
 Doth also for our nobler part provide,
 Under his great correction and controul,
 As innocent instincts, and as innocent food.
 This was her creed, and therefore she was pure
 From feverish dread of error or mishap
 And evil, overweeningly so called;
 Was not puffed up by false unnatural hopes;
 Nor selfish with unnecessary cares; 280
 Nor with impatience from the season asked
 More than its timely produce; rather loved
 The hours for what they are than from regards
 Glanced on their promises in restless pride.
 Such was she; not from faculties more strong
 Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,

And spot in which she lived, and through a grace
 Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,
 A heart that found benignity and hope,
 Being itself benign. 290

My drift hath scarcely,
 I fear, been obvious; for I have recoiled
 From showing as it is the monster birth
 Engendered by these too industrious times.
 Let few words paint it: 'tis a Child, no Child,
 But a dwarf Man; in knowledge, virtue, skill;
 In what he is not, and in what he is,
 The noontide shadow of a man complete;
 A worshipper of worldly seemliness,
 Not quarrelsome; for that were far beneath
 His dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er 300
 As generous as a fountain; selfishness
 May not come near him, gluttony or pride;
 The wandering Beggars propagate his name,
 Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun.
 Yet deem him not for this a naked dish
 Of goodness merely; he is garnished out.
 Arch are his notices, and nice his sense^o
 Of the ridiculous; deceit and guile,
 Meanness and falsehood, he detects, can treat
 With apt and graceful laughter; nor is blind 310
 To the broad follies of the licensed world;
 Though shrewd, yet innocent himself withal
 And can read lectures upon innocence.
 He is fenced round, nay armed, for aught we know
 In panoply complete; and fear itself,
 Natural or supernatural alike,
 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
 Touches him not. Briefly, the moral part
 Is perfect, and in learning and in books
 He is a prodigy. His discourse moves slow, 320
 Massy and ponderous as a prison door,
 Tremendously embossed with terms of art;^o
 Rank growth of propositions overruns
 The Stripling's brain; the path in which he treads
 Is choked with grammars; cushion of Divine
 Was never such a type of thought profound

As is the pillow where he rests his head.
 The Ensigns of the Empire which he holds,
 The globe and sceptre of his royalties,
 Are telescopes, and crucibles, and maps. 330
 Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,
 And tell you all their cunning; he can read^o
 The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;
 He knows the policies of foreign Lands;
 Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,
 The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
 Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
 Takes nothing upon trust: his Teachers stare,
 The Country People pray for God's good grace,
 And tremble at his deep experiments. 340
 All things are put to question; he must live
 Knowing that he grows wiser every day,
 Or else not live at all; and seeing, too,
 Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart.
 Meanwhile old Grandame Earth is grieved to find
 The playthings, which her love designed for him,
 Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers
 Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.

Now this is hollow, 'tis a life of lies 350
 From the beginning, and in lies must end.
 Forth bring him to the air of common sense,
 And, fresh and shewy as it is, the Corps
 Slips from us into powder. Vanity
 That is his soul, there lives he, and there moves;
 It is the soul of every thing he seeks;
 That gone, nothing is left which he can love.
 Nay, if a thought of purer birth should rise
 To carry him towards a better clime,
 Some busy helper still is on the watch 360
 To drive him back and pound him like a Stray
 Within the pincfold of his own conceit,^o
 Which is his home, his natural dwelling place.
 Oh! give us once again the Wishing-Cap^o
 Of Fortunatus, and the invisible Coat
 Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,

And Sabra in the forest with St. George!
 The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap
 One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

These mighty workmen of our later age 370
 Who with a broad highway have overbridged
 The froward chaos of futurity,
 Tamed to their bidding; they who have the art
 To manage books, and things, and make them work
 Gently on infant minds, as does the sun
 Upon a flower; the Tutors of our Youth
 The Guides, the Wardens of our faculties,
 And Stewards of our labour, watchful men
 And skilful in the usury of time,
 Sages, who in their prescience would controul 380
 All accidents, and to the very road
 Which they have fashioned would confine us down,
 Like engines, when will they be taught^o
 That in the unreasoning progress of the world
 A wiser Spirit is at work for us,
 A better eye than theirs, most prodigal
 Of blessings, and most studious of our good,
 Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?

There was a Boy, ye knew him well, ye Cliffs^o
 And Islands of Winander! many a time 390
 At evening, when the stars had just begun
 To move along the edges of the hills,
 Rising or setting, would he stand alone
 Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering Lake,
 And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
 Pressed closely, palm to palm, and to his mouth
 Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
 Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls
 That they might answer him.—And they would shout
 Across the wat'ry Vale, and shout again, 400
 Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
 And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
 Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
 Of mirth and jocund din! And when it chanced
 That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,
 Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung

Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprize
 Has carried far into his heart the voice
 Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind 410
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
 Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven, received
 Into the bosom of the steady Lake.

This Boy was taken from his Mates, and died
 In childhood, ere he was full ten years old.
 —Fair are the woods, and beauteous is the spot,
 The Vale where he was born; the Churchyard hangs
 Upon a Slope above the Village School,
 And there, along that bank, when I have passed
 At evening, I believe that oftentimes 420
 A full half-hour together I have stood
 Mute—looking at the Grave in which he lies.
 Even now, methinks, before my sight I have
 That self-same Village Church; I see her sit,
 The throned Lady spoken of erewhile,
 On her green hill; forgetful of this Boy
 Who slumbers at her feet; forgetful, too,
 Of all her silent neighbourhood of graves,
 And listening only to the gladsome sounds
 That, from the rural School ascending, play 430
 Beneath her and about her. May she long
 Behold a race of young Ones like to those
 With whom I herded! (easily, indeed,
 We might have fed upon a fatter soil
 Of Arts and Letters, but be that forgiven)
 A race of real children, not too wise,
 Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,
 And bandied up and down by love and hate;
 Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;
 Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds; 440
 Though doing wrong, and suffering, and full oft
 Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight
 Of pain and fear; yet still in happiness
 Not yielding to the happiest upon earth.
 Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,
 Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds!

May books and nature be their early joy!
 And knowledge, rightly honored with that name,
 Knowledge not purchased with the loss of power!

Well do I call to mind the very week 450
 When I was first entrusted to the care
 Of that sweet Valley; when its paths, its shores,
 And brooks, were like a dream of novelty
 To my half-infant thoughts; that very week
 While I was roving up and down alone,
 Seeking I knew not what, I chanced to cross
 One of those open fields, which, shaped like ears,
 Make green peninsulas on Esthwaite's Lake:
 Twilight was coming on; yet through the gloom,
 I saw distinctly on the opposite Shore 460
 A heap of garments, left, as I supposed,
 By one who there was bathing; long I watched,
 But no one owned them; meanwhile the calm Lake
 Grew dark, with all the shadows on its breast,
 And, now and then, a fish up-leaping, snapped
 The breathless stillness. The succeeding day,
 (Those unclaimed garments telling a plain Tale)
 Went there a Company, and, in their Boat
 Sounded with grappling irons, and long poles.
 At length, the dead Man, 'mid that beauteous scene^o 470
 Of trees, and hills and water, bolt upright
 Rose with his ghastly face; a spectre shape
 Of terror even! and yet no vulgar fear,
 Young as I was, a Child not nine years old,
 Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen
 Such sights before, among the shining streams
 Of Fairy Land, the Forests of Romance:
 Thence came a spirit hallowing what I saw
 With decoration and ideal grace;
 A dignity, a smoothness, like the works 480
 Of Grecian Art, and purest Poesy.

I had a precious treasure at that time
 A little, yellow canvass-covered Book,
 A slender abstract of the Arabian Tales;
 And when I learned, as now I first did learn,
 From my Companions in this new abode,

That this dear prize of mine was but a block
 Hewn from a mighty quarry—in a word,
 That there were four large Volumes, laden all
 With kindred matter—'twas, in truth, to me 490
 A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly
 I made a league, a covenant with a Friend
 Of my own age, that we should lay aside
 The monies we possessed, and hoard up more,
 Till our joint savings had amassed enough
 To make this Book our own. Through several months
 Religiously did we preserve that vow,
 And spite of all temptation hoarded up
 And hoarded up; but firmness failed at length
 Nor were we ever masters of our wish. 500

And afterwards, when to my Father's House
 Returning at the holidays, I found
 That golden store of books which I had left
 Open to my enjoyment once again
 What heart was mine! Full often through the course
 Of those glad respites in the summer-time
 When, armed with rod and line we went abroad
 For a whole day together, I have lain
 Down by thy side, O Derwent! murmuring Stream,
 On the hot stones and in the glaring sun, 510
 And there have read, devouring as I read,
 Defrauding the day's glory, desperate!
 Till, with a sudden bound of smart reproach,
 Such as an Idler deals with in his shame,
 I to my sport betook myself again.

A gracious Spirit o'er this earth presides,
 And o'er the heart of man: invisibly
 It comes, directing those to works of love
 Who care not, know not, think not what they do.
 The Tales that charm away the wakeful night 520
 In Araby, Romances, Legends, penned
 For solace, by the light of monkish Lamps;
 Fictions for Ladies, of their Love, devised
 By youthful Squires; adventures endless, spun
 By the dismantled Warrior in old age,
 Out of the bowels of those very thoughts

In which his youth did first extravagate,
 These spread like day, and something in the shape
 Of these, will live till man shall be no more.
 Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites are ours, 530
 And they must have their food: our childhood sits,
 Our simple childhood sits upon a throne
 That hath more power than all the elements.
 I guess not what this tells of Being past,
 Nor what it augurs of the life to come;
 But so it is; and in that dubious hour,
 That twilight when we first begin to see
 This dawning earth, to recognise, expect;
 And in the long probation that ensues,
 The time of trial, ere we learn to live 540
 In reconciliation with our stinted powers,
 To endure this state of meagre vassalage;
 Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,
 Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows
 To custom, mettlesome, and not yet tamed
 And humbled down, oh! then we feel, we feel,
 We know when we have Friends. Ye dreamers, then,
 Forgers of lawless tales! we bless you then,
 Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
 Philosophy will call you: then we feel 550
 With what, and how great might ye are in league,
 Who make our wish our power, our thought a deed,
 An empire, a possession; Ye whom Time
 And Seasons serve; all Faculties; to whom
 Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,
 Space like a Heaven filled up with Northern lights;
 Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.

It might demand a more impassioned strain
 To tell of later pleasures, linked to these,
 A tract of the same isthmus which we cross 560
 In progress from our native continent
 To earth and human life; I mean to speak
 Of that delightful time of growing youth
 When cravings for the marvellous relent,
 And we begin to love what we have seen;
 And sober truth, experience, sympathy,

Take stronger hold of us; and words themselves
Move us with conscious pleasure.

I am sad

At thought of raptures now for ever flown,
Even unto tears I sometimes could be sad 570
To think of, to read over, many a page,
Poems withal of name, which at that time
Did never fail to entrance me, and are now
Dead in my eyes as is a theatre
Fresh emptied of spectators. Thirteen years
Or haply less, I might have seen, when first
My ears began to open to the charm
Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet
For their own sakes, a passion and a power;
And phrases pleased me, chosen for delight, 580
For pomp, or love. Oft in the public roads,
Yet unfrequented, while the morning light
Was yellowing the hill-tops, with that dear Friend,
The same whom I have mentioned heretofore,^o
I went abroad, and for the better part
Of two delightful hours we strolled along
By the still borders of the misty Lake,
Repeating favorite verses with one voice,
Or conning more, as happy as the birds
That round us chaunted. Well might we be glad, 590
Lifted above the ground by airy fancies
More bright than madness or the dreams of wine,
And, though full oft the objects of our love
Were false, and in their splendour overwrought,
Yet, surely, at such time no vulgar power
Was working in us, nothing less, in truth,
Than that most noble attribute of man,
Though yet untutored and inordinate,^o
That wish for something loftier, more adorned,
Than is the common aspect, daily garb 600
Of human life. What wonder then if sounds
Of exultation echoed through the groves!
For images, and sentiments, and words,
And everything with which we had to do
In that delicious world of poesy,

Kept holiday; a never-ending show,
 With music, incense, festival, and flowers!

Here must I pause: this only will I add,
 From heart-experience, and in the humblest sense
 Of modesty, that he, who, in his youth
 A wanderer among the woods and fields,
 With living Nature hath been intimate,
 Not only in that raw unpractised time
 Is stirred to ecstasy, as others are,
 By glittering verse; but, he doth furthermore,
 In measure only dealt out to himself,
 Receive enduring touches of deep joy
 From the great Nature that exists in works
 Of mighty Poets. Visionary Power
 Attends upon the motions of the winds
 Embodied in the mystery of words;
 There darkness makes abode, and all the host
 Of shadowy things do work their changes there,
 As in a mansion like their proper home;
 Even forms and substances are circumfused
 By that transparent veil with light divine;
 And through the turnings intricate of Verse,
 Present themselves as objects recognised,
 In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own.

610

620

Thus far a scanty record is deduced
 Of what I owed to Books in early life;
 Their later influence yet remains untold;
 But as this work was taking in my thoughts
 Proportions that seemed larger than had first
 Been meditated, I was indisposed
 To any further progress at a time
 When these acknowledgements were left unpaid.

630

BOOK SIX

Cambridge and the Alps

The leaves were yellow when to Furness Fells,^o
 The haunt of Shepherds, and to cottage life
 I bade adieu, and, one among the Flock
 Who by that season are convened, like birds

Trooping together at the Fowler's lure,
 Went back to Granta's cloisters; not so fond,^o
 Or eager, though as gay and undepressed
 In spirit, as when I thence had taken flight
 A few short months before. I turned my face
 Without repining from the mountain pomp 10
 Of Autumn, and its beauty entered in
 With calmer Lakes, and louder Streams; and You,
 Frank-hearted Maids of rocky Cumberland,
 You and your not unwelcome days of mirth
 I quitted, and your nights of revelry,
 And in my own unlovely Cell sate down
 In lightsome mood; such privilege has Youth,
 That cannot take long leave of pleasant thoughts.

We need not linger o'er the ensuing time,
 But let me add at once that now, the bonds 20
 Of indolent and vague society
 Relaxing in their hold, I lived henceforth
 More to myself, read more, reflected more,
 Felt more, and settled daily into habits
 More promising. Two winters may be passed^o
 Without a separate notice; many books
 Were read in process of this time, devoured,
 Tasted or skimmed, or studiously perused,
 Yet with no settled plan. I was detached
 Internally from academic cares, 30
 From every hope of prowess and reward,
 And wished to be a lodger in that house
 Of Letters, and no more: and should have been
 Even such, but for some personal concerns
 That hung about me in my own despite
 Perpetually, no heavy weight, but still
 A baffling and a hindrance, a controul
 Which made the thought of planning for myself
 A course of independent study seem
 An act of disobedience towards them 40
 Who loved me, proud rebellion and unkind.
 This bastard virtue, rather let it have
 A name it more deserves, this cowardice,
 Gave treacherous sanction to that overlove

Of freedom planted in me from the very first
 And indolence, by force of which I turned
 From regulations even of my own,
 As from restraints and bonds. And who can tell,
 Who knows what thus may have been gained, both then
 And at a later season, or preserved; 50
 What love of nature, what original strength
 Of contemplation, what intuitive truths
 The deepest and the best, and what research
 Unbiased, unbewildered, and unawed?

The Poet's soul was with me at that time,
 Sweet meditations, the still overflow
 Of happiness and truth. A thousand hopes
 Were mine, a thousand tender dreams, of which
 No few have since been realized, and some
 Do yet remain, hopes for my future life.° 60
 Four years and thirty, told this very week,
 Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
 And yet the morning gladness is not gone
 Which then was in my mind. Those were the days
 Which also first encouraged me to trust
 With firmness, hitherto but lightly touched
 With such a daring thought, that I might leave
 Some monument behind me which pure hearts
 Should reverence. The instinctive humbleness,
 Upheld even by the very name and thought 70
 Of printed books and authorship, began
 To melt away, and further, the dread awe
 Of mighty names was softened down, and seemed
 Approachable, admitting fellowship
 Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,
 Though not familiarly, my mind put on;
 I loved, and I enjoyed, that was my chief
 And ruling business, happy in the strength
 And loveliness of imagery and thought.
 All winter long, whenever free to take 80
 My choice, did I at night frequent our Groves
 And tributary walks, the last, and oft
 The only one, who had been lingering there
 Through hours of silence, till the Porter's Bell,

A punctual follower on the stroke of nine,
 Rang with its blunt unceremonious voice,
 Inexorable summons. Lofty Elms,
 Inviting shades of opportune recess,
 Did give composure to a neighbourhood
 Unpeaceful in itself. A single Tree 90
 There was, no doubt yet standing there, an Ash,
 With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreathed;
 Up from the ground and almost to the top
 The trunk and master branches everywhere
 Were green with ivy; and the lightsome twigs
 And outer spray profusely tipped with seeds
 That hung in yellow tassels and festoons,
 Moving or still, a Favorite trimmed out
 By Winter for himself, as if in pride,
 And with outlandish grace. Oft have I stood 100
 Foot-bound, uplooking at this lovely Tree
 Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere
 Of magic fiction, verse of mine perhaps
 May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's self
 Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,
 More bright appearances could scarcely see
 Of human Forms and superhuman Powers,
 Than I beheld, standing on winter nights
 Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth.
 'Twould be a waste of labour to detail 110
 The rambling studies of a truant Youth,
 Which further may be easily divined,
 What, and what kind they were. My inner knowledge,
 (This barely will I note) was oft in depth
 And delicacy like another mind
 Sequestered from my outward taste in books,
 And yet the books which then I loved the most
 Are dearest to me now; for, being versed
 In living Nature, I had there a guide
 Which opened frequently my eyes, else shut, 120
 A standard which was usefully applied,
 Even when unconsciously, to other things
 Which less I understood. In general terms,
 I was a better judge of thoughts than words,
 Misled as to these latter, not alone

By common inexperience of youth,
 But by the trade in classic niceties,
 Delusion to young Scholars incident
 And old ones also, by that overprized
 And dangerous craft of picking phrases out^o 130
 From languages that want the living voice
 To make of them a nature to the heart,
 To tell us what is passion, what is truth,
 What reason, what simplicity and sense.

Yet must I not entirely overlook
 The pleasure gathered from the elements
 Of geometric science. I had stepped
 In these inquiries but a little way,
 No farther than the threshold; with regret
 Sincere I mention this; but there I found 140
 Enough to exalt, to cheer me and compose.
 With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance
 Which even was cherished, did I meditate
 Upon the alliance of those simple, pure
 Proportions and relations with the frame
 And laws of Nature, how they could become
 Herein a leader to the human mind,
 And made endeavours frequent to detect
 The process by dark guesses of my own.
 Yet from this source more frequently I drew 150
 A pleasure calm and deeper, a still sense
 Of permanent and universal sway
 And paramount endowment in the mind,
 An image not unworthy of the one
 Surpassing Life, which out of space and time,
 Nor touched by welterings of passion, is
 And hath the name of God. Transcendent peace
 And silence did await upon these thoughts
 That were a frequent comfort to my youth.

And as I have read of one by shipwreck thrown^o 160
 With fellow Sufferers whom the waves had spared
 Upon a region uninhabited,
 An island of the Deep, who having brought
 To land a single Volume and no more,
 A treatise of Geometry, was used,

Although of food and clothing destitute,
 And beyond common wretchedness depressed,
 To part from company and take this book,
 Then first a self-taught pupil in those truths,
 To spots remote and corners of the Isle 170
 By the sea side, and draw his diagrams
 With a long stick upon the sand, and thus
 Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost
 Forget his feeling; even so, if things
 Producing like effect, from outward cause
 So different, may rightly be compared,
 So was it with me then, and so will be
 With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm
 Of those abstractions to a mind beset
 With images, and haunted by itself; 180
 And specially delightful unto me
 Was that clear Synthesis built up aloft
 So gracefully, even then when it appeared
 No more than as a plaything, or a toy
 Embodied to the sense, not what it is
 In verity, an independent world
 Created out of pure Intelligence.

Such dispositions then were mine, almost
 Through grace of Heaven and inborn tenderness.
 And not to leave the picture of that time 190
 Imperfect, with these habits I must rank
 A melancholy, from humours of the blood
 In part, and partly taken up, that loved
 A pensive sky, sad days, and piping winds,
 The twilight more than dawn, Autumn than Spring;
 A treasured and luxurious gloom, of choice
 And inclination mainly, and the mere
 Redundancy of youth's contentedness.
 Add unto this a multitude of hours
 Pilfered away by what the Bard who sang^o 200
 Of the Enchanter Indolence hath called
 'Good-natured lounging,' and behold a map
 Of my Collegiate life, far less intense
 Than Duty called for, or without regard
 To Duty, might have sprung up of itself

By change of accidents, or even, to speak
Without unkindness, in another place.

In summer among distant nooks I roved,
Dovedale, or Yorkshire Dales, or through bye-tracts
Of my own native region, and was blest 210
Between these sundry wanderings with a joy
Above all joys, that seemed another morn
Risen on mid noon, the presence, Friend, I mean
Of that sole Sister, she who hath been long
Thy Treasure also, thy true friend and mine,
Now, after separation desolate^o
Restored to me, such absence that she seemed
A gift then first bestowed. The gentle Banks
Of Emont, hitherto unnamed in Song,
And that monastic Castle, on a Flat^o 220
Low-standing by the margin of the Stream,
A Mansion not unvisited of old
By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,
Some snatches he might pen, for aught we know,
Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love
Inspired; that River and that mouldering Dome
Have seen us sit in many a summer hour,
My sister and myself, when having climbed
In danger through some window's open space,
We looked abroad, or on the Turret's head 230
Lay listening to the wild flowers and the grass,
As they gave out their whispers to the wind.
Another Maid there was, who also breathed^o
A gladness o'er that season, then to me
By her exulting outside look of youth
And placid under-countenance, first endeared,
That other Spirit, Coleridge, who is now
So near to us, that meek confiding heart,
So revered by us both. O'er paths and fields
In all that neighbourhood, through narrow lanes 240
Of eglantine, and through the shady woods,
And o'er the Border Beacon and the Waste^o
Of naked Pools and common Craggs that lay
Exposed on the bare Fell, was scattered love,
A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam.

O Friend! we had not seen thee at that time;
 And yet a power is on me and a strong
 Confusion, and I seem to plant thee there.
 Far art Thou wandered now in search of health,^o
 And milder breezes, melancholy lot! 250
 But Thou art with us, with us in the past,
 The present, with us in the times to come:
 There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,
 No languor, no dejection, no dismay,
 No absence scarcely can there be for those
 Who love as we do. Speed thee well! divide
 Thy pleasure with us, thy returning strength
 Receive it daily as a joy of ours;
 Share with us thy fresh spirits, whether gift
 Of gales Etesian, or of loving thoughts.^o 260

I, too, have been a Wanderer; but, alas!
 How different is the fate of different men
 Though Twins almost in genius and in mind!
 Unknown unto each other, yea, and breathing
 As if in different elements, we were framed
 To bend at last to the same discipline,
 Predestined, if two Beings ever were,
 To seek the same delights, and have one health,
 One happiness. Throughout this narrative,
 Else sooner ended, I have known full well 270
 For whom I thus record the birth and growth
 Of gentleness, simplicity, and truth,
 And joyous loves that hallow innocent days
 Of peace and self-command. Of Rivers, Fields,
 And Groves, I speak to thee, my Friend; to thee,
 Who, yet a liveried School-Boy, in the depths^o
 Of the huge City, on the leaded Roof
 Of that wide Edifice, thy home and School,
 Wast used to lie and gaze upon the clouds
 Moving in Heaven; or haply, tired of this, 280
 To shut thine eyes, and by internal light
 See trees, and meadows, and thy native Stream^o
 Far distant, thus beheld from year to year
 Of thy long exile. Nor could I forget
 In this late portion of my argument

That scarcely had I finally resigned
 My rights among those academic Bowers
 When Thou wert thither guided. From the heart
 Of London, and from Cloisters there, Thou camest,
 And didst sit down in temperance and peace, 290
 A rigorous Student. What a stormy course
 Then followed. Oh! it is a pang that calls^o
 For utterance, to think how small a change
 Of circumstances might to Thee have spared
 A world of pain, ripened ten thousand hopes
 For ever withered. Through this retrospect
 Of my own College life I still have had
 Thy after sojourn in the self-same place
 Present before my eyes; have played with times,
 (I speak of private business of the thought) 300
 And accidents as children do with cards,
 Or as a man, who, when his house is built,
 A frame locked up in wood and stone, doth still,
 In impotence of mind, by his fireside
 Rebuild it to his liking. I have thought
 Of Thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,
 And all the strength and plumage of thy Youth,
 Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse
 Among the Schoolmen, and platonic forms^o
 Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out 310
 From things well-matched, or ill, and words for things,
 The self-created sustenance of a mind
 Debarred from Nature's living images,
 Compelled to be a life unto itself,
 And unrelentingly possessed by thirst
 Of greatness, love, and beauty. Not alone,
 Ah! surely not in a singleness of heart
 Should I have seen the light of evening fade
 Upon the silent Cam, if we had met,
 Even at that early time; I needs must hope, 320
 Must feel, must trust, that my maturer age,
 And temperature less willing to be moved,
 My calmer habits and more steady voice,
 Would with an influence benign have soothed
 Or chased away the airy wretchedness
 That battened on thy youth. But thou hast trod,

In watchful meditation thou hast trod
 A march of glory, which doth put to shame
 These vain regrets; health suffers in thee; else
 Such grief for thee would be the weakest thought 330
 That ever harboured in the breast of man.

A passing word erewhile did lightly touch
 On wanderings of my own; and now to these
 My Poem leads me with an easier mind.
 The employments of three winters when I wore
 A student's gown have been already told,
 Or shadowed forth, as far as there is need.
 When the third Summer brought its liberty
 A Fellow Student and myself, he too^o
 A Mountaineer, together sallied forth 340

And, Staff in hand, on foot pursued our way
 Towards the distant Alps. An open slight
 Of College cares and study was the scheme,
 Nor entertained without concern for those
 To whom my worldly interests were dear:
 But Nature then was sovereign in my heart,
 And mighty forms seizing a youthful Fancy
 Had given a charter to irregular hopes.

In any age, without an impulse sent
 From work of Nations, and their goings-on, 350
 I should have been possessed by like desire:
 But 'twas a time when Europe was rejoiced,
 France standing on the top of golden hours,
 And human nature seeming born again.

Bound, as I said, to the Alps, it was our lot
 To land at Calais on the very eve
 Of that great federal Day; and there we saw,^o
 In a mean City, and among a few,
 How bright a face is worn when joy of one
 Is joy of tens of millions. Southward thence 360
 We took our way direct through Hamlets, Towns,
 Gaudy with reliques of that Festival,
 Flowers left to wither on triumphal Arcs,
 And window-Garlands. On the public roads,
 And once three days successively through paths
 By which our toilsome journey was abridged,

Among sequestered villages we walked,
 And found benevolence and blessedness
 Spread like a fragrance everywhere, like Spring
 That leaves no corner of the Land untouched. 370
 Where Elms, for many and many a league, in files,
 With their thin umbrage, on the stately roads
 Of that great Kingdom, rustled o'er our heads,
 For ever near us as we paced along,
 'Twas sweet at such a time, with such delights
 On every side, in prime of youthful strength,
 To feed a Poet's tender melancholy
 And fond conceit of sadness, to the noise
 And gentle undulations which they made.
 Unhoused, beneath the Evening Star we saw 380
 Dances of Liberty, and, in late hours
 Of darkness, dances in the open air.
 Among the vine-clad Hills of Burgundy,
 Upon the bosom of the gentle Soane
 We glided forward with the flowing stream:
 Swift Rhone, thou wert the wings on which we cut
 Between thy lofty rocks! Enchanting show
 Those woods, and farms, and orchards did present,
 And single Cottages, and lurking Towns,
 Reach after reach, procession without end 390
 Of deep and stately Vales. A lonely Pair
 Of Englishmen we were, and sailed along
 Clustered together with a merry crowd
 Of those emancipated, with a host
 Of Travellers, chiefly Delegates, returning
 From the great Spousals newly solemnized
 At their chief City, in the sight of Heaven.
 Like bees they swarmed, gaudy and gay as bees;
 Some vapoured in the unruliness of joy
 And flourished with their swords, as if to fight 400
 The saucy air. In this blithe Company
 We landed, took with them our evening Meal,
 Guests welcome almost as the Angels were
 To Abraham of old. The Supper done,^o
 With flowing cups elate and happy thoughts,
 We rose at signal given, and formed a ring,
 And hand in hand danced round and round the Board;

All hearts were open, every tongue was loud
 With amity and glee. We bore a name
 Honoured in France, the name of Englishmen, 410
 And hospitably did they give us Hail
 As their forerunners in a glorious course,^o
 And round and round the board they danced again.
 With this same Throng our voyage we pursued
 At early dawn; the Monastery Bells
 Made a sweet jingling in our youthful ears;
 The rapid River flowing without noise,
 And every Spire we saw among the rocks
 Spake with a sense of peace, at intervals
 Touching the heart amid the boisterous Crew 420
 With which we were environed. Having parted
 From this glad Rout, the Convent of Chartreuse
 Received us two days afterwards, and there
 We rested in an awful Solitude;
 Thence onward to the Country of the Swiss.

'Tis not my present purpose to retrace
 That variegated journey step by step:
 A march it was of military speed,
 And earth did change her images and forms
 Before us, fast as clouds are changed in Heaven. 430
 Day after day, up early and down late,
 From vale to vale, from hill to hill we went,
 From Province on to Province did we pass,
 Keen Hunters in a chace of fourteen weeks,
 Eager as birds of prey, or as a Ship
 Upon the stretch when winds are blowing fair.
 Sweet coverts did we cross of pastoral life,
 Enticing Vallies, greeted them, and left
 Too soon, while yet the very flash and gleam
 Of salutation were not passed away. 440
 Oh! sorrow for the Youth who could have seen
 Unchastened, unsubdued, unawed, unraised
 To patriarchal dignity of mind
 And pure simplicity of wish and will,
 Those sanctified abodes of peaceful Man.
 My heart leaped up when first I did look down
 On that which was first seen of these deep haunts,

A green recess, an aboriginal vale
 Quiet, and lorded over and possessed
 By naked huts, wood-built, and sown like tents 450
 Or Indian cabins over the fresh lawns,
 And by the river side. That day we first
 Beheld the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved^o
 To have a soulless image on the eye
 Which had usurped upon a living thought
 That never more could be: the wondrous Vale
 Of Chamouny did, on the following dawn,
 With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice,
 A motionless array of mighty waves,
 Five rivers broad and vast, make rich amends, 460
 And reconciled us to realities.
 There small birds warble from the leafy trees,
 The Eagle soareth in the element;
 There doth the Reaper bind the yellow sheaf,
 The Maiden spread the haycock in the sun,
 While Winter like a tamed Lion walks
 Descending from the mountain to make sport
 Among the cottages by beds of flowers.

Whate'er in this wide circuit we beheld,
 Or heard, was fitted to our unripe state 470
 Of intellect and heart. By simple strains
 Of feeling, the pure breath of real life,
 We were not left untouched. With such a book
 Before our eyes, we could not chuse but read
 A frequent lesson of sound tenderness,
 The universal reason of mankind,
 The truth of Young and Old. Nor, side by side
 Pacing, two brother Pilgrims, or alone
 Each with his humour, could we fail to abound
 (Craft this which hath been hinted at before) 480
 In dreams and fictions pensively composed,
 Dejection taken up for pleasure's sake,
 And gilded sympathies; the willow wreath,
 Even among those solitudes sublime,
 And sober posies of funereal flowers,
 Culled from the gardens of the Lady Sorrow,
 Did sweeten many a meditative hour.

Yet still in me, mingling with these delights
 Was something of stern mood, an under-thirst
 Of vigour, never utterly asleep. 490
 Far different dejection once was mine,
 A deep and genuine sadness then I felt;
 The circumstances I will here relate
 Even as they were. Upturning with a Band
 Of Travellers, from the Valais we had clomb
 Along the road that leads to Italy;
 A length of hours, making of these our Guides,
 Did we advance, and having reached an Inn
 Among the mountains, we together ate
 Our noon's repast, from which the Travellers rose, 500
 Leaving us at the Board. Ere long we followed,
 Descending by the beaten road that led
 Right to a rivulet's edge, and there broke off.
 The only track now visible was one
 Upon the further side, right opposite,
 And up a lofty Mountain. This we took
 After a little scruple, and short pause,
 And climbed with eagerness, though not, at length,
 Without surprise and some anxiety
 On finding that we did not overtake 510
 Our Comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,
 While every moment now increased our doubts,
 A Peasant met us, and from him we learned
 That to the place which had perplexed us first
 We must descend, and there should find the road
 Which in the stony channel of the Stream
 Lay a few steps, and then along its Banks;
 And further, that thenceforward all our course
 Was downwards, with the current of that Stream.
 Hard of belief, we questioned him again, 520
 And all the answers which the Man returned
 To our inquiries, in their sense and substance,
 Translated by the feelings which we had,
 Ended in this; that we had crossed the Alps.

Imagination! lifting up itself
 Before the eye and progress of my Song
 Like an unfathered vapour; here that Power,

In all the might of its endowments, came
 Athwart me; I was lost as in a cloud,
 Halted, without a struggle to break through. 530
 And now recovering, to my Soul I say
 'I recognise thy glory'. In such strength
 Of usurpation, in such visitings
 Of awful promise, when the light of sense
 Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
 The invisible world, doth Greatness make abode,
 There harbours whether we be young or old.
 Our destiny, our nature, and our home,
 Is with infinitude, and only there;
 With hope it is, hope that can never die, 540
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something evermore about to be.
 The mind beneath such banners militant
 Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught
 That may attest its prowess, blest in thoughts
 That are their own perfection and reward,
 Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
 Which hides it like the overflowing Nile.

The dull and heavy slackening that ensued
 Upon those tidings by the Peasant given 550
 Was soon dislodged; downwards we hurried fast,
 And entered with the road which we had missed
 Into a narrow chasm. The brook and road
 Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,
 And with them did we journey several hours
 At a slow step. The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
 The stationary blasts of water-falls,
 And every where along the hollow rent
 Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn, 560
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
 The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
 The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light

Were all like workings of one mind, the features
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
 Characters of the great Apocalypse, 570
 The types and symbols of Eternity,
 Of first and last, and midst, and without end.°

That night our lodging was an Alpine House,
 An Inn, or Hospital, as they are named,
 Standing in that same valley by itself,
 And close upon the confluence of two Streams;
 A dreary Mansion, large beyond all need,
 With high and spacious rooms, deafened and stunned
 By noise of waters, making innocent Sleep
 Lie melancholy among weary bones. 580

Uprisen betimes, our journey we renewed,
 Led by the Stream, ere noon-day magnified
 Into a lordly River, broad and deep,
 Dimpling along in silent majesty,
 With mountains for its neighbours, and in view
 Of distant mountains and their snowy tops,
 And thus proceeding to Locarno's Lake;
 Fit resting-place for such a Visitant.
 —Locarno, spreading out in width like Heaven,
 And Como, thou, a treasure by the earth 590
 Kept to itself, a darling bosomed up
 In Abyssinian privacy, I spake
 Of thee, thy chestnut woods, and garden plots
 Of Indian corn tended by dark-eyed Maids,
 Thy lofty steeps, and pathways roofed with vines
 Winding from house to house, from town to town,
 Sole link that binds them to each other, walks
 League after league, and cloistral avenues
 Where silence is, if music be not there:
 While yet a Youth, undisciplined in Verse, 600
 Through fond ambition of my heart, I told°
 Your praises; nor can I approach you now
 Ungreeted by a more melodious Song,
 Where tones of learned Art and Nature mixed
 May frame enduring language. Like a breeze
 Or sunbeam over your domain I passed

In motion without pause; but Ye have left
 Your beauty with me, an impassioned sight
 Of colours and of forms, whose power is sweet
 And gracious, almost might I dare to say, 610
 As virtue is, or goodness, sweet as love,
 Or the remembrance of a noble deed,
 Or gentlest visitations of pure thought
 When God, the Giver of all joy, is thanked
 Religiously, in silent blessedness,
 Sweet as this last herself, for such it is.

Through those delightful pathways we advanced
 Two days, and still in presence of the Lake,
 Which, winding up among the Alps, now changed
 Slowly its lovely countenance, and put on 620
 A sterner character. The second night
 (In eagerness, and by report misled
 Of those Italian Clocks that speak the time
 In fashion different from ours) we rose
 By moonshine, doubting not that day was near,
 And that, meanwhile, coasting the Water's edge
 As hitherto, and with as plain a track
 To be our guide, we might behold the scene
 In its most deep repose.—We left the Town
 Of Gravedona with this hope, but soon 630
 Were lost, bewildered among woods immense,
 Where, having wandered for a while, we stopped
 And on a rock sate down, to wait for day.
 An open place it was, and overlooked
 From high, the sullen water underneath,
 On which a dull red image of the moon
 Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form
 Like an uneasy snake: long time we sate,
 For scarcely more than one hour of the night,
 Such was our error, had been gone, when we 640
 Renewed our journey. On the rock we lay
 And wished to sleep but could not, for the stings
 Of insects, which with noise like that of noon
 Filled all the woods. The cry of unknown birds,
 The mountains, more by darkness visible
 And their own size, than any outward light,

The breathless wilderness of clouds, the clock
 That told with unintelligible voice
 The widely-parted hours, the noise of streams
 And sometimes rustling motions nigh at hand 650
 Which did not leave us free from personal fear,
 And lastly the withdrawing Moon, that set
 Before us while she still was high in heaven,
 These were our food, and such a summer's night
 Did to that pair of golden days succeed,
 With now and then a doze and snatch of sleep,
 On Como's Banks, the same delicious Lake.

But here I must break off, and quit at once,
 Though loth, the record of these wanderings,
 A theme which may seduce me else beyond 660
 All reasonable bounds. Let this alone
 Be mentioned as a parting word, that not
 In hollow exultation, dealing forth
 Hyperboles of praise comparative,
 Not rich one moment to be poor for ever,
 Not prostrate, overborn, as if the mind
 Itself were nothing, a mean pensioner
 On outward forms, did we in presence stand
 Of that magnificent region. On the front
 Of this whole Song is written that my heart 670
 Must in such temple needs have offered up
 A different worship. Finally, whate'er
 I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream
 That flowed into a kindred stream, a gale
 That helped me forwards, did administer
 To grandeur and to tenderness, to the one
 Directly, but to tender thoughts by means
 Less often instantaneous in effect;
 Conducted me to these along a path
 Which in the main was more circuitous. 680

Oh! most beloved Friend, a glorious time,
 A happy time that was. Triumphant looks
 Were then the common language of all eyes:
 As if awaked from sleep, the Nations hailed
 Their great expectancy: the fife of War

Was then a spirit-stirring sound indeed,
 A blackbird's whistle in a vernal grove.
 We left the Swiss exulting in the fate
 Of their near Neighbours, and when shortening fast
 Our pilgrimage, nor distant far from home, 690
 We crossed the Brabant Armies on the fret^o
 For battle in the cause of Liberty.
 A Stripling, scarcely of the household then
 Of social life, I looked upon these things
 As from a distance, heard, and saw, and felt,
 Was touched, but with no intimate concern;
 I seemed to move among them as a bird
 Moves through the air, or as a fish pursues
 Its business, in its proper element.
 I needed not that joy, I did not need 700
 Such help; the ever-living Universe,
 And independent spirit of pure youth
 Were with me at that season, and delight
 Was in all places spread around my steps
 As constant as the grass upon the fields.

BOOK SEVEN

Residence in London

Five years are vanished since I first poured out,
 Saluted by that animating breeze
 Which met me issuing from the City's Walls,
 A glad preamble to this Verse: I sang^o
 Aloud, in Dythyrambic fervour, deep
 But short-lived uproar, like a torrent sent
 Out of the bowels of a bursting cloud
 Down Scawfell or Blencathara's rugged sides,^o
 A water-spout from Heaven. But 'twas not long
 Ere the interrupted stream broke forth once more, 10
 And flowed awhile in strength, then stopped for years;
 Not heard again until a little space
 Before last primrose-time. Beloved Friend,^o
 The assurances then given unto myself,
 Which did beguile me of some heavy thoughts
 At thy departure to a foreign Land,

Have failed; for slowly doth this work advance.
 Through the whole summer have I been at rest,
 Partly from voluntary holiday
 And part through outward hindrance. But I heard, 20
 After the hour of sunset yester even,
 Sitting within doors betwixt light and dark,
 A voice that stirred me. 'Twas a little Band,
 A Quire of Redbreasts gathered somewhere near
 My threshold, Minstrels from the distant woods
 And dells, sent in by Winter to bespeak
 For the Old Man a welcome, to announce,
 With preparation artful and benign,
 Yea the most gentle music of the year,
 That their rough Lord had left the surly North 30
 And hath begun his journey. A delight
 At this unthought of greeting unawares
 Smote me, a sweetness of the coming time,
 And listening, I half whispered, 'We will be
 Ye heartsome Choristers, ye and I will be
 Brethren, and in the hearing of bleak winds
 Will chaunt together.' And, thereafter, walking
 By later twilight on the hills, I saw
 A Glow-worm from beneath a dusky shade
 Or canopy of the yet unwithered fern 40
 Clear-shining, like a Hermit's taper seen
 Through a thick forest. Silence touched me here
 No less than sound had done before; the Child
 Of Summer, lingering, shining by itself,
 The voiceless Worm on the unfrequented hills,
 Seemed sent on the same errand with the Quire
 Of Winter that had warbled at my door,
 And the whole year seemed tenderness and love.

The last Night's genial feeling overflowed
 Upon this morning, and my favorite Grove,^o 50
 Now tossing its dark boughs in sun and wind,
 Spreads through me a commotion like its own,
 Something that fits me for the Poet's task,
 Which we will now resume with chearful hope,
 Nor checked by aught of tamer argument
 That lies before us, needful to be told.

Returned from that excursion, soon I bade
 Farewell for ever to the private Bowers^o
 Of gownèd Students, quitted these, no more
 To enter them, and pitched my vagrant tent, 60
 A casual dweller and at large, among
 The unfenced regions of society.

Yet undetermined to what plan of life
 I should adhere, and seeming thence to have
 A little space of intermediate time
 Loose and at full command, to London first
 I turned, if not in calmness, nevertheless
 In no disturbance of excessive hope,
 At ease from all ambition personal, 70
 Frugal as there was need, and though self-willed,
 Yet temperate and reserved, and wholly free
 From dangerous passions. 'Twas at least two years
 Before this season when I first beheld
 That mighty place, a transient visitant;
 And now it pleased me my abode to fix
 Single in the wide waste, to have a house
 It was enough (what matter for a home?)
 That owned me, living chearfully abroad,
 With fancy on the stir from day to day,
 And all my young affections out of doors. 80

There was a time when whatsoe'er is feigned
 Of airy Palaces, and Gardens built
 By Genii of Romance, or hath in grave
 Authentic History been set forth of Rome,
 Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis,
 Or given upon report by Pilgrim-Friars
 Of golden Cities ten months' journey deep
 Among Tartarean Wilds, fell short, far short,
 Of that which I in simpleness believed
 And thought of London; held me by a chain 90
 Less strong of wonder and obscure delight.
 I know not that herein I shot beyond
 The common mark of childhood; but I well
 Remember that among our flock of Boys
 Was one, a Cripple from the birth, whom chance^o
 Summoned from School to London, fortunate

And envied Traveller! and when he returned,
 After short absence, and I first set eyes
 Upon his person, verily, though strange
 The thing may seem, I was not wholly free 100
 From disappointment to behold the same
 Appearance, the same body, not to find
 Some change, some beams of glory brought away
 From that new region. Much I questioned him,
 And every word he uttered, on my ears
 Fell flatter than a caged Parrot's note,
 That answers unexpectedly awry,
 And mocks the Prompter's listening. Marvellous things
 My fancy had shaped forth, of sights and shows,
 Processions, Equipages, Lords and Dukes, 110
 The King, and the King's Palace, and not last
 Or least, heaven bless him! the renowned Lord Mayor:
 Dreams hardly less intense than those which wrought
 A change of purpose in young Whittington,
 When he in friendlessness, a drooping Boy,
 Sate on a Stone, and heard the Bells speak out
 Articulate music. Above all, one thought^o
 Baffled my understanding, how men lived
 Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still
 Strangers, and knowing not each other's names. 120

Oh wondrous power of words, how sweet they are
 According to the meaning which they bring!
 Vauxhall and Ranelagh, I then had heard^o
 Of your green groves, and wilderness of lamps,
 Your gorgeous Ladies, fairy cataracts,
 And pageant fireworks; nor must we forget
 Those other wonders different in kind,
 Though scarcely less illustrious in degree,
 The River proudly bridged, the giddy Top
 And whispering Gallery of St. Paul's, the Tombs 130
 Of Westminster, the Giants of Guildhall,^o
 Bedlam, and the two figures at its Gates,^o
 Streets without end, and Churches numberless,
 Statues, with flowery gardens in vast Squares,
 The Monument, and Armoury of the Tower.^o
 These fond imaginations of themselves

Had long before given way in season due,
 Leaving a throng of others in their stead;
 And now I looked upon the real scene,
 Familiarly perused it day by day 140
 With keen and lively pleasure even there
 Where disappointment was the strongest, pleased
 Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
 Paid to the object by prescriptive right,
 A thing that ought to be. Shall I give way,
 Copying the impression of the memory,
 Though things remembered idly do half seem
 The work of Fancy, shall I, as the mood
 Inclines me, here describe, for pastime's sake,
 Some portion of that motley imagery, 150
 A vivid pleasure of my youth, and now
 Among the lonely places that I love
 A frequent day-dream for my riper mind?
 —And first the look and aspect of the place,
 The broad high-way appearance, as it strikes
 On Strangers of all ages, the quick dance
 Of colours, lights and forms, the Babel din
 The endless stream of men, and moving things,
 From hour to hour the illimitable walk
 Still among streets with clouds and sky above, 160
 The wealth, the bustle and the eagerness,
 The glittering Chariots with their pampered Steeds,
 Stalls, Barrows, Porters; midway in the Street
 The Scavenger, who begs with hat in hand,
 The labouring Hackney Coaches, the rash speed
 Of Coaches travelling far, whirled on with horn
 Loud blowing, and the sturdy Drayman's Team,
 Ascending from some Alley of the Thames
 And striking right across the crowded Strand
 Till the fore Horse veer round with punctual skill: 170
 Here, there, and everywhere, a weary throng,
 The Comers and the Goers face to face,
 Face after face; the string of dazzling Wares,
 Shop after shop, with Symbols, blazoned Names,
 And all the Tradesman's honours overhead;
 Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page
 With letters huge inscribed from top to toe;

Stationed above the door, like guardian Saints,
 There, allegoric shapes, female or male,
 Or physiognomies of real men, 180
 Land-Warriors, Kings, or Admirals of the Sea,
 Boyle, Shakspear, Newton, or the attractive head
 Of some Scotch doctor, famous in his day.°

Meanwhile the roar continues, till at length,
 Escaped as from an enemy, we turn
 Abruptly into some sequestered nook
 Still as a sheltered place when winds blow loud.
 At leisure thence, through tracts of thin resort,
 And sights and sounds that come at intervals,
 We take our way: a raree-show is here° 190
 With Children gathered round, another Street
 Presents a company of dancing Dogs,
 Or Dromedary, with an antic pair
 Of Monkies on his back, a minstrel Band
 Of Savoyards, or, single and alone,
 An English Ballad-singer. Private Courts,
 Gloomy as Coffins, and unsightly Lanes
 Thrilled by some female Vendor's scream, belike
 The very shrillest of all London Cries,
 May then entangle us awhile, 200
 Conducted through those labyrinths unawares
 To privileged Regions and inviolate,
 Where from their airy lodges studious Lawyers
 Look out on waters, walks, and gardens green.

Thence back into the throng, until we reach,
 Following the tide that slackens by degrees,
 Some half-frequented scene where wider Streets
 Bring straggling breezes of suburban air.
 Here files of ballads dangle from dead walls,
 Advertisements of giant-size, from high 210
 Press forward in all colours on the sight;
 These, bold in conscious merit; lower down
 That, fronted with a most imposing word,
 Is, peradventure, one in masquerade.
 As on the broadening Causeway we advance,
 Behold a Face turned up toward us, strong
 In lineaments, and red with over-toil;

'Tis one perhaps, already met elsewhere,
 A travelling Cripple, by the trunk cut short,
 And stumping with his arms: in Sailor's garb^o 220
 Another lies at length beside a range
 Of written characters, with chalk inscribed
 Upon the smooth flat stones: the Nurse is here,
 The Bachelor that loves to sun himself,
 The military Idler, and the Dame,
 That field-ward takes her walk in decency.

Now homeward through the thickening hubbub, where
 See, among less distinguishable shapes,
 The Italian, with his Frame of Images
 Upon his head; with Basket at his waist 230
 The Jew; the stately and slow-moving Turk
 With freight of slippers piled beneath his arm.
 Briefly, we find, if tired of random sights
 And haply to that search our thoughts should turn,
 Among the crowd, conspicuous less or more,
 As we proceed, all specimens of man
 Through all the colours which the sun bestows,
 And every character of form and face;
 The Swede, the Russian; from the genial South,
 The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from remote 240
 America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,
 Malays, Lascars, the Tartar and Chinese,
 And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns.

At leisure let us view, from day to day,
 As they present themselves, the Spectacles
 Within doors: troops of wild Beasts, birds and beasts
 Of every nature, from all climes convened;
 And, next to these, those mimic sights that ape
 The absolute presence of reality,
 Expressing, as in mirror, sea and land, 250
 And what earth is, and what she has to shew;
 I do not here allude to subtlest craft,
 By means refined attaining purest ends,
 But imitations fondly made in plain
 Confession of man's weakness and his loves.^o
 Whether the Painter fashioning a work
 To Nature's circumambient scenery,

And with his greedy pencil taking in
 A whole horizon on all sides, with power,
 Like that of Angels or commissioned Spirits, 260
 Plant us upon some lofty Pinnacle,
 Or in a Ship on Waters, with a world
 Of life, and life-like mockery, to East,
 To West, beneath, behind us, and before:
 Or more mechanic Artist represent
 By scale exact, in Model, wood or clay,
 From shading colours also borrowing help,
 Some miniature of famous spots and things
 Domestic, or the boast of foreign Realms;
 The Firth of Forth, and Edinburgh throned 270
 On crags, fit empress of that mountain Land;
 St. Peter's Church; or, more aspiring aim,
 In microscopic vision, Rome itself;
 Or, else perhaps, some rural haunt, the Falls
 Of Tivoli, and dim Frescati's bowers,
 And high upon the steep, that mouldering Fane
 The Temple of the Sibyl, every tree
 Through all the landscape, tuft, stone, scratch minute,
 And every Cottage, lurking in the rocks,
 All that the Traveller sees when he is there. 280

Add to these exhibitions mute and still
 Others of wider scope, where living men,
 Music, and shifting pantomimic scenes,
 Together joined their multifarious aid
 To heighten the allurements. Need I fear
 To mention by its name, as in degree
 Lowest of these, and humblest in attempt,
 Though richly graced with honours of its own,
 Half-rural Sadler's Wells? Though at that time^o
 Intolerant, as is the way of Youth 290
 Unless itself be pleased, I more than once
 Here took my seat, and, maugre frequent fits
 Of irksomeness, with ample recompense
 Saw Singers, Rope-dancers, Giants and Dwarfs,
 Clowns, Conjurers, Posture-masters, Harlequins,
 Amid the uproar of the rabblement,
 Perform their feats. Nor was it mean delight

To watch crude nature work in untaught minds,
 To note the laws and progress of belief;
 Though obstinate on this way, yet on that 300
 How willingly we travel, and how far!
 To have, for instance, brought upon the scene
 The Champion Jack the Giant-killer, Lo!
 He dons his Coat of Darkness; on the Stage
 Walks, and atchieves his wonders from the eye
 Of living mortal safe as is the moon
 'Hid in her vacant interlunar cave'.
 Delusion bold! and faith must needs be coy;
 How is it wrought? His garb is black, the word
 INVISIBLE flames forth upon his chest. 310

Nor was it unamusing here to view
 Those samplers as of ancient Comedy
 And Thespian times, dramas of living Men,^o
 And recent things, yet warm with life; a Sea-fight,
 Shipwreck, or some domestic incident
 The fame of which is scattered through the Land,
 Such as this daring brotherhood of late
 Set forth, too holy theme for such a place,
 And doubtless treated with irreverence
 Albeit with their very best of skill, 320
 I mean, O distant Friend! a Story drawn
 From our own ground, the Maid of Buttermere,^o
 And how the Spoiler came, 'a bold bad Man'
 To God unfaithful, Children, Wife, and Home,
 And wooed the artless Daughter of the hills,
 And wedded her, in cruel mockery
 Of love and marriage bonds. O Friend! I speak
 With tender recollection of that time
 When first we saw the Maiden, then a name
 By us unheard of; in her cottage Inn 330
 Were welcomed, and attended on by her,
 Both stricken with one feeling of delight,
 An admiration of her modest mien,
 And carriage, marked by unexampled grace.
 Not unfamiliarly we since that time
 Have seen her; her discretion have observed,
 Her just opinions, female modesty,

Her patience, and retiredness of mind
 Unsoiled by commendation, and the excess
 Of public notice. This memorial Verse 340
 Comes from the Poet's heart, and is her due.
 For we were nursed, as almost might be said,
 On the same mountains; Children at one time,
 Must haply often on the self-same day
 Have from our several dwellings gone abroad
 To gather daffodils on Coker's Stream.°

These last words uttered, to my argument
 I was returning, when, with sundry Forms
 Mingled, that in the way which I must tread
 Before me stand, thy image rose again, 350
 Mary of Buttermere! She lives in peace
 Upon the spot where she was born and reared;
 Without contamination does she live
 In quietness, without anxiety:
 Beside the mountain-Chapel sleeps in earth
 Her new-born Infant, fearless as a lamb
 That thither comes, from some unsheltered place,
 To rest beneath the little rock-like Pile
 When storms are blowing. Happy are they both
 Mother and Child! These feelings, in themselves 360
 Trite, do yet scarcely seem so when I think
 Of those ingenuous moments of our youth,
 Ere yet by use we have learned to slight the crimes
 And sorrows of the world. Those days are now
 My theme; and, 'mid the numerous scenes which they
 Have left behind them, foremost I am crossed
 Here by remembrance of two figures: One
 A rosy Babe, who, for a twelvemonth's space
 Perhaps, had been of age to deal about
 Articulate prattle, Child as beautiful 370
 As ever sate upon a Mother's knee;
 The other was the Parent of that Babe;
 But on the Mother's cheek the tints were false,
 A painted bloom. 'Twas at a Theatre
 That I beheld this Pair; the Boy had been
 The pride and pleasure of all lookers-on
 In whatsoever place, but seemed in this

A sort of Alien scattered from the clouds.
 Of lusty vigour, more than infantine,
 He was in limbs, in face a Cottage rose 380
 Just three parts blown; a Cottage Child, but ne'er
 Saw I, by Cottage or elsewhere, a Babe
 By Nature's gifts so honored. Upon a Board
 Whence an attendant of the Theatre
 Served out refreshments, had this Child been placed,
 And there he sate, environed with a Ring
 Of chance Spectators, chiefly dissolute men
 And shameless women; treated and caressed,
 Ate, drank, and with the fruit and glasses played,
 While oaths, indecent speech, and ribaldry 390
 Were rife about him as are songs of birds
 In spring-time after showers. The Mother, too,
 Was present! but of her I know no more
 Than hath been said, and scarcely at this time
 Do I remember her. But I behold
 The lovely Boy as I beheld him then,
 Among the wretched and the falsely gay,
 Like one of those who walked with hair unsinged
 Amid the fiery furnace. He hath since^o
 Appeared to me oft times as if embalmed 400
 By Nature; through some special privilege,
 Stopped at the growth he had; destined to live,
 To be, to have been, come and go, a Child
 And nothing more, no partner in the years
 That bear us forward to distress and guilt,
 Pain and abasement, beauty in such excess
 Adorned him in that miserable place.
 So have I thought of him a thousand times,
 And seldom otherwise. But he perhaps
 Mary! may now have lived till he could look 410
 With envy on thy nameless Babe that sleeps
 Beside the mountain Chapel, undisturbed!

It was but little more than three short years
 Before the season which I speak of now
 When first, a Traveller from our pastoral hills,
 Southward two hundred miles I had advanced,^o
 And for the first time in my life did hear

The voice of Woman utter blasphemy;
 Saw Woman as she is to open shame
 Abandoned, and the pride of public vice. 420
 Full surely from the bottom of my heart
 I shuddered; but the pain was almost lost,
 Absorbed and buried in the immensity
 Of the effect: a barrier seemed at once
 Thrown in, that from humanity divorced
 The human Form, splitting the race of Man
 In twain, yet leaving the same outward shape.
 Distress of mind ensued upon this sight
 And ardent meditation; afterwards
 A milder sadness of such spectacles 430
 Attended; thought, commiseration, grief
 For the individual, and the overthrow
 Of her soul's beauty; farther at that time
 Than this I was but seldom led; in truth
 The sorrow of the passion stopped me here.

I quit this painful theme; enough is said
 To shew what thoughts must often have been mine
 At theatres, which then were my delight,
 A yearning made more strong by obstacles
 Which slender funds imposed. Life then was new, 440
 The senses easily pleased; the lustres, lights,^o
 The carving and the gilding, paint and glare,
 And all the mean upholstery of the place,
 Wanted not animation in my sight:
 Far less the living Figures on the Stage,
 Solemn or gay: whether some beauteous Dame
 Advanced in radiance through a deep recess
 Of thick-entangled forest, like the Moon
 Opening the clouds; or sovereign King, announced
 With flourishing Trumpets, came in full-blown State 450
 Of the world's greatness, winding round with Train
 Of Courtiers, Banners, and a length of Guards;
 Or Captive led in abject weeds, and jingling
 His slender manacles; or romping Girl
 Bounced, leapt, and pawed the air; or mumbling Sire,
 A scare-crow pattern of old Age, patched up
 Of all the tatters of infirmity,

All loosely put together, hobbled in,
 Stumping upon a Cane, with which he smites,
 From time to time, the solid boards, and makes them 460
 Prate somewhat loudly of the whereabouts
 Of one so overloaded with his years.
 But what of this! the laugh, the grin, grimace,
 And all the antics and buffoonery,
 The least of them not lost, were all received
 With charitable pleasure. Through the night,
 Between the show, and many-headed mass
 Of the Spectators, and each little nook
 That had its fray or brawl, how eagerly,
 And with what flashes, as it were, the mind 470
 Turned this way, that way! sportive and alert
 And watchful, as a kitten when at play,
 While winds are blowing round her, among grass
 And rustling leaves. Enchanting age and sweet!
 Romantic almost, looked at through a space,
 How small of intervening years! For then,
 Though surely no mean progress had been made
 In meditations holy and sublime,
 Yet something of a girlish child-like gloss
 Of novelty survived for scenes like these; 480
 Pleasure that had been handed down from times
 When, at a Country-Playhouse, having caught,
 In summer, through the fractured wall, a glimpse
 Of daylight, at the thought of where I was
 I gladdened more than if I had beheld
 Before me some bright cavern of Romance,
 Or than we do, when on our beds we lie
 At night, in warmth, when rains are beating hard.

The matter that detains me now will seem 490
 To many neither dignified enough
 Nor arduous; and is, doubtless, in itself
 Humble and low; yet not to be despised
 By those who have observed the curious props
 By which the perishable hours of life
 Rest on each other, and the world of thought
 Exists and is sustained. More lofty Themes,
 Such as, at least, do wear a prouder face,

Might here be spoken of; but when I think
 Of these, I feel the imaginative Power
 Languish within me. Even then it slept 500
 When, wrought upon by tragic sufferings,
 The heart was full; amid my sobs and tears
 It slept, even in the season of my youth:
 For though I was most passionately moved
 And yielded to the changes of the scene
 With most obsequious feeling, yet all this
 Passed not beyond the suburbs of the mind:
 If aught there were of real grandeur here
 'Twas only then when gross realities,
 The incarnation of the Spirits that moved 510
 Amid the Poet's beauteous world, called forth,
 With that distinctness which a contrast gives
 Or opposition, made me recognize
 As by a glimpse, the things which I had shaped
 And yet not shaped, had seen, and scarcely seen,
 Had felt, and thought of in my solitude.

Pass we from entertainments that are such
 Professedly, to others titled higher,
 Yet in the estimate of Youth at least,
 More near akin to those than names imply, 520
 I mean the brawls of Lawyers in their Courts
 Before the ermined Judge, or that great Stage
 Where Senators, tongue-favored Men, perform,
 Admired and envied. Oh! the beating heart!
 When one among the prime of these rose up,
 One, of whose name from Childhood we had heard^o
 Familiarly, a household term, like those,
 The Bedfords, Glocesters, Salisburys of old,^o
 Which the fifth Harry talks of. Silence! hush!
 This is no trifler, no short-flighted Wit, 530
 No stammerer of a minute, painfully
 Delivered. No! the Orator hath yoked
 The hours, like young Aurora, to his Car;^o
 O Presence of delight, can patience e'er
 Grow weary of attending on a track
 That kindles with such glory? Marvellous!
 The enchantment spreads and rises; all are rapt

Astonished; like a Hero in Romance
 He winds away his never-ending horn;
 Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense; 540
 What memory and what logic! till the Strain
 Transcendent, superhuman as it is,
 Grows tedious even in a young man's ear.

These are grave follies: other public Shows
 The capital City teems with, of a kind
 More light, and where but in the holy Church?
 There have I seen a comely Bachelor,
 Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend
 The Pulpit, with seraphic glance look up,
 And, in a tone elaborately low 550
 Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze
 A minuet course, and winding up his mouth,
 From time to time into an orifice
 Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small
 And only not invisible, again
 Open it out, diffusing thence a smile
 Of rapt irradiation exquisite.
 Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,
 Moses, and he who penned the other day
 The Death of Abel, Shakespear, Doctor Young, ° 560
 And Ossian, (doubt not, 'tis the naked truth)
 Summoned from streamy Morven, each and all
 Must in their turn lend ornament and flowers
 To entwine the Crook of eloquence with which
 This pretty Shepherd, pride of all the Plains,
 Leads up and down his captivated Flock.

I glance but at a few conspicuous marks,
 Leaving ten thousand others, that do each,
 In Hall or Court, Conventicle, or Shop,
 In public Room or private, Park or Street, 570
 With fondness reared on his own Pedestal,
 Look out for admiration. Folly, vice,
 Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,
 And all the strife of singularity,
 Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense,
 Of these, and of the living shapes they wear,
 There is no end. Such Candidates for regard,

Although well pleased to be where they were found,
 I did not hunt after, or greatly prize,
 Nor made unto myself a secret boast 580
 Of reading them with quick and curious eye;
 But as a common produce, things that are
 To-day, to-morrow will be, took of them
 Such willing note as, on some errand bound
 Of pleasure or of Love, some Traveller might,
 Among a thousand other images,
 Of sea-shells that bestud the sandy beach,
 Or daisies swarming through the fields in June.

But foolishness, and madness in parade,
 Though most at home in this their dear domain, 590
 Are scattered everywhere, no rarities,
 Even to the rudest novice of the Schools.
 O Friend! one feeling was there which belonged
 To this great City, by exclusive right;
 How often in the overflowing Streets,
 Have I gone forward with the Crowd, and said
 Unto myself, the face of every one
 That passes by me is a mystery.
 Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed
 By thoughts of what, and whither, when and how, 600
 Until the shapes before my eyes became
 A second-sight procession, such as glides
 Over still mountains, or appears in dreams;°
 And all the ballast of familiar life,
 The present, and the past; hope, fear; all stays,
 All laws of acting, thinking, speaking man
 Went from me, neither knowing me, nor known.
 And once, far-travelled in such mood, beyond
 The reach of common indications, lost
 Amid the moving pageant, 'twas my chance 610
 Abruptly to be smitten with the view
 Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,
 Stood propped against a Wall, upon his Chest
 Wearing a written paper, to explain
 The story of the Man, and who he was.
 My mind did at this spectacle turn round
 As with the might of waters, and it seemed

To me that in this Label was a type,
 Or emblem, of the utmost that we know,
 Both of ourselves and of the universe; 620
 And, on the shape of the unmoving man,
 His fixed face and sightless eyes, I looked
 As if admonished from another world.

Though reared upon the base of outward things,
 These, chiefly, are such structures as the mind
 Builds for itself. Scenes different there are,
 Full-formed, which take, with small internal help,
 Possession of the faculties; the peace
 Of night, for instance, the solemnity
 Of nature's intermediate hours of rest, 630
 When the great tide of human life stands still,
 The business of the day to come unborn,
 Of that gone by, locked up as in the grave;
 The calmness, beauty, of the spectacle,
 Sky, stillness, moonshine, empty streets, and sounds
 Unfrequent as in deserts; at late hours
 Of winter evenings when unwholesome rains
 Are falling hard, with people yet astir,
 The feeble salutation from the voice
 Of some unhappy Woman, now and then 640
 Heard as we pass; when no one looks about,
 Nothing is listened to. But these, I fear,
 Are falsely catalogued, things that are, are not,
 Even as we give them welcome, or assist,
 Are prompt, or are remiss. What say you then,
 To times, when half the City shall break out
 Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear,
 To executions, to a Street on fire,
 Mobs, riots, or rejoicings? From these sights
 Take one, an annual Festival, the Fair 650
 Holden where Martyrs suffered in past time,^o
 And named of Saint Bartholomew; there see
 A work that's finished to our hands, that lays,
 If any spectacle on earth can do,
 The whole creative powers of man asleep!
 For once the Muse's help will we implore,
 And she shall lodge us, wafted on her wings,

Above the press and danger of the Crowd,
 Upon some Showman's platform: what a hell
 For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din 660
 Barbarian and infernal! 'tis a dream,
 Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound.
 Below, the open space, through every nook
 Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive
 With heads; the midway region and above
 Is thronged with staring pictures, and huge scrolls,
 Dumb proclamations of the prodigies;
 And chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,
 And children whirling in their roundabouts;
 With those that stretch the neck, and strain the eyes, 670
 And crack the voice in rivalry, the crowd
 Inviting; with buffoons against buffoons
 Grimacing, writhing, screaming; him who grinds
 The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves;
 Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,^o
 And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks,
 The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,
 Equestrians, Tumblers, Women, Girls, and Boys,
 Blue-breeched, pink-vested, and with towering plumes.
 —All moveables of wonder from all parts, 680
 Are here, Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,
 The Horse of Knowledge, and the learned Pig,
 The Stone-eater, the Man that swallows fire,
 Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,
 The Bust that speaks, and moves its goggling eyes,
 The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft^o
 Of modern Merlins, wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,
 All out-o'-th'-way, far-fetched, perverted things,
 All freaks of Nature, all Promethean thoughts^o
 Of man; his dullness, madness, and their feats, 690
 All jumbled up together to make up
 This Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths
 Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast Mill,
 Are vomiting, receiving, on all sides,
 Men, Women, three-years Children, Babes in arms.

O blank confusion! and a type not false
 Of what the mighty City is itself
 To all except a Straggler here and there,

To the whole swarm of its inhabitants;
 An undistinguishable world to men, 700
 The slaves unrespited of low pursuits,
 Living amid the same perpetual flow
 Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
 To one identity, by differences
 That have no law, no meaning, and no end;
 Oppression under which even highest minds
 Must labour, whence the strongest are not free.
 But though the picture weary out the eye,
 By nature an unmanageable sight,
 It is not wholly so to him who looks 710
 In steadiness, who hath among least things
 An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts
 As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.
 This, of all acquisitions first, awaits
 On sundry and most widely different modes
 Of education; nor with least delight
 On that through which I passed. Attention comes,
 And comprehensiveness and memory,
 From early converse with the works of God
 Among all regions; chiefly where appear 720
 Most obviously simplicity and power.
 By influence habitual to the mind
 The mountain's outline and its steady form
 Gives a pure grandeur, and its presence shapes
 The measure and the prospect of the soul
 To majesty; such virtue have the forms
 Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less
 The changeful language of their countenances
 Gives movement to the thoughts, and multitude,
 With order and relation. This, if still, 730
 As hitherto, with freedom I may speak,
 And the same perfect openness of mind,
 Not violating any just restraint,
 As I would hope, of real modesty,
 This did I feel in that vast receptacle.
 The Spirit of Nature was upon me here;
 The Soul of Beauty and enduring life
 Was present as a habit, and diffused,
 Through meagre lines and colours, and the press

Of self-destroying, transitory things,
Composure and ennobling harmony.

740

BOOK EIGHT

Retrospect.—Love of Nature Leading to Love of Mankind

What sounds are those, Helvellyn, which are heard^o
Up to thy summit? Through the depth of air
Ascending, as if distance had the power
To make the sounds more audible: what Crowd
Is yon, assembled in the gay green Field?
Crowd seems it, solitary Hill! to thee,
Though but a little Family of Men,
Twice twenty, with their Children and their Wives,
And here and there a Stranger interspersed.
It is a summer festival, a Fair, 10
Such as, on this side now, and now on that,
Repeated through his tributary Vales,
Helvellyn, in the silence of his rest,
Sees annually, if storms be not abroad,
And mists have left him an unshrouded head.
Delightful day it is for all who dwell
In this secluded Glen, and eagerly
They give it welcome. Long ere heat of noon
Behold the cattle are driven down; the sheep
That have for traffic been culled out are penned 20
In cotes that stand together on the Plain
Ranged side by side; the chaffering is begun.
The Heifer lows uneasy at the voice
Of a new Master, bleat the Flocks aloud;
Booths are there none; a Stall or two is here,
A lame Man, or a blind, the one to beg,
The other to make music; hither, too,
From far, with Basket, slung upon her arm,
Of Hawker's Wares, books, pictures, combs, and pins,
Some aged Woman finds her way again, 30
Year after year a punctual visitant!
The Showman with his Freight upon his Back,
And once, perchance, in lapse of many years
Prouder Itinerant, Mountebank, or He
Whose Wonders in a covered Wain lie hid.

But One is here, the loveliest of them all,
 Some sweet Lass of the Valley, looking out
 For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?
 Fruits of her Father's Orchard, apples, pears,
 (On that day only to such office stooping) 40
 She carries in her Basket, and walks round
 Among the crowd, half pleased with, half ashamed
 Of her new calling, blushing restlessly.
 The Children now are rich, the Old Man now
 Is generous; so gaiety prevails
 Which all partake of, Young and Old. Immense
 Is the Recess, the circumambient World
 Magnificent, by which they are embraced.
 They move about upon the soft green field:
 How little They, they and their doings seem, 50
 Their herds and flocks about them, they themselves,
 And all that they can further or obstruct!
 Through utter weakness pitiablely dear
 As tender Infants are: and yet how great!
 For all things serve them; them the Morning light
 Loves as it glistens on the silent rocks,
 And them the silent Rocks, which now from high
 Look down upon them; the reposing Clouds,
 The lurking Brooks from their invisible haunts,
 And Old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir, 60
 And the blue Sky that roofs their calm abode.

With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel
 In that great City what I owed to thee,
 High thoughts of God and Man, and love of Man,
 Triumphant over all those loathsome sights
 Of wretchedness and vice; a watchful eye,
 Which with the outside of our human life
 Not satisfied, must read the inner mind.
 For I already had been taught to love
 My Fellow-beings, to such habits trained 70
 Among the woods and mountains, where I found
 In thee a gracious Guide, to lead me forth
 Beyond the bosom of my Family,
 My Friends and youthful Playmates. 'Twas thy power
 That raised the first complacency in me,°

And noticeable kindness of heart,
 Love human to the Creature in himself
 As he appeared, a Stranger in my path,
 Before my eyes a Brother of this world;
 Thou first didst with those motions of delight 80
 Inspire me.—I remember, far from home
 Once having strayed, while yet a very Child,
 I saw a sight, and with what joy and love!
 It was a day of exhalations, spread
 Upon the mountains, mists and steam-like fogs
 Redounding everywhere, not vehement,^o
 But calm and mild, gentle and beautiful,
 With gleams of sunshine on the eyelet spots
 And loop-holes of the hills, wherever seen,
 Hidden by quiet process, and as soon 90
 Unfolded, to be huddled up again:
 Along a narrow Valley and profound
 I journeyed, when, aloft above my head,
 Emerging from the silvery vapours, lo!
 A Shepherd and his Dog! in open day:
 Girt round with mists they stood and looked about
 From that enclosure small, inhabitants
 Of an aerial Island floating on,
 As seemed, with that Abode in which they were,
 A little pendant area of grey rocks, 100
 By the soft wind breathed forward. With delight
 As bland almost, one Evening I beheld,
 And at as early age (the spectacle
 Is common, but by me was then first seen)
 A Shepherd in the bottom of a Vale
 Towards the centre standing, who with voice,
 And hand waved to and fro as need required
 Gave signal to his Dog, thus teaching him
 To chace along the mazes of steep crags
 The Flock he could not see: and so the Brute 110
 Dear Creature! with a Man's intelligence
 Advancing, or retreating on his steps,
 Through every pervious strait, to right or left,
 Thridded a way unbaffled; while the Flock
 Fled upwards from the terror of his Bark
 Through rocks and seams of turf with liquid gold

Irradiate, that deep farewell light by which
 The setting sun proclaims the love he bears
 To mountain regions.

Beauteous the domain

Where to the sense of beauty first my heart 120
 Was opened, tract more exquisitely fair
 Than is that Paradise of ten thousand Trees,
 Or Gehol's famous Gardens, in a Clime^o
 Chosen from widest Empire, for delight
 Of the Tartarian Dynasty composed;
 (Beyond that mighty Wall, not fabulous,
 China's stupendous mound!) by patient skill
 Of myriads, and boon Nature's lavish help;
 Scene linked to scene, an evergrowing change,
 Soft, grand, or gay! with Palaces and Domes 130
 Of Pleasure spangled over, shady Dells
 For Eastern Monasteries, sunny Mounds
 With Temples crested, Bridges, Gondolas,
 Rocks, Dens, and Groves of foliage taught to melt
 Into each other their obsequious hues,
 Going and gone again, in subtile chace,
 Too fine to be pursued; or standing forth
 In no discordant opposition, strong
 And gorgeous as the colours side by side
 Bedded among the plumes of Tropic Birds: 140
 And mountains over all embracing all;
 And all the landscape endlessly enriched
 With waters running, falling, or asleep.

But lovelier far than this the Paradise

Where I was reared; in Nature's primitive gifts
 Favored no less, and more to every sense
 Delicious, seeing that the sun and sky,
 The elements and seasons in their change
 Do find their dearest Fellow-labourer there,
 The heart of Man; a district on all sides 150
 The fragrance breathing of humanity,
 Man free, man working for himself, with choice
 Of time, and place, and object; by his wants,
 His comforts, native occupations, cares,
 Conducted on to individual ends

Or social, and still followed by a train
 Unwooded, unthought-of even, simplicity,
 And beauty, and inevitable grace.

Yea, doubtless, at an age when but a glimpse
 Of those resplendent Gardens, with their frame 160
 Imperial, and elaborate ornaments,
 Would to a Child be transport over-great,
 When but a half-hour's roam through such a place
 Would leave behind a dance of images
 That shall break in upon his sleep for weeks,
 Even then the common haunts of the green earth,
 With the ordinary human interests
 Which they embosom, all without regard
 As both may seem, are fastening on the heart
 Insensibly, each with the other's help, 170
 So that we love, not knowing that we love,
 And feel, not knowing whence our feeling comes.

Such league have these two principles of joy
 In our affections. I have singled out
 Some moments, the earliest that I could, in which
 Their several currents blended into one,
 Weak yet, and gathering imperceptibly,
 Flowed in by gushes. My first human love,
 As hath been mentioned, did incline to those
 Whose occupations and concerns were most 180
 Illustrated by Nature and adorned,
 And Shepherds were the men who pleased me first.
 Not such as in Arcadian Fastnesses^o
 Sequestered, handed down among themselves,
 So ancient Poets sing, the golden Age;
 Nor such, a second Race, allied to these,
 As Shakespeare in the Wood of Arden placed
 Where Phoebe sighed for the false Ganymede,
 Or there where Florizel and Perdita
 Together danced, Queen of the Feast and King; 190
 Nor such as Spenser fabled. True it is,
 That I had heard, what he perhaps had seen,
 Of maids at sunrise bringing in from far
 Their Maybush, and along the Streets, in flocks,
 Parading with a Song of taunting Rhymes,

Aimed at the Laggards slumbering within doors;
 Had also heard, from those who yet remembered,
 Tales of the May-pole Dance, and flowers that decked
 The Posts and the Kirk-pillars, and of Youths,
 That each one with his Maid, at break of day, 200
 By annual custom issued forth in troops,
 To drink the waters of some favorite Well,
 And hang it round with Garlands. This, alas,
 Was but a dream; the times had scattered all
 These lighter graces, and the rural custom
 And manners which it was my chance to see
 In childhood were severe and unadorned,
 The unluxuriant produce of a life
 Intent on little but substantial needs,
 Yet beautiful, and beauty that was felt. 210
 But images of danger, and distress,
 And suffering, these took deepest hold of me,
 Man suffering among awful Powers, and Forms;
 Of this I heard and saw enough to make
 The imagination restless; nor was free
 Myself from frequent perils; nor were tales
 Wanting, the tragedies of former times,
 Or hazards and escapes, which in my walks
 I carried with me among crags and woods
 And mountains; and of these may here be told 220
 One, as recorded by my Household Dame.°

At the first falling of autumnal snow
 A Shepherd and his Son one day went forth
 (Thus did the Matron's Tale begin) to seek
 A Straggler of their Flock. They both had ranged
 Upon this service the preceding day
 All over their own pastures and beyond,
 And now, at sun-rise sallying out again,
 Renewed their search begun, where from Dove Crag,°
 Ill home for bird so gentle, they looked down 230
 On Deep-dale Head, and Brothers-water, named
 From those two Brothers that were drowned therein.
 Thence, northward, having passed by Arthur's Seat,
 To Fairfield's highest summit; on the right
 Leaving St. Sunday's Pike, to Grisedale Tarn

They shot, and over that cloud-loving Hill,
 Seat Sandal, a fond lover of the clouds;
 Thence up Helvellyn, a superior Mount
 With prospect underneath of Striding-Edge, 240
 And Grisedale's houseless Vale, along the brink
 Of Russet Cove, and those two other Coves,
 Huge skeletons of crags, which from the trunk
 Of old Helvellyn spread their arms abroad,
 And make a stormy harbour for the winds.
 Far went those Shepherds in their devious quest,
 From mountain ridges peeping as they passed
 Down into every Glen: at length the Boy
 Said, 'Father, with your leave I will go back,
 And range the ground which we have searched before.'
 So speaking, southward down the hill the Lad 250
 Sprang like a gust of wind, crying aloud
 'I know where I shall find him.' 'For take note,'
 Said here my grey-haired Dame, 'that tho' the storm
 Drive one of these poor Creatures miles and miles,
 If he can crawl he will return again
 To his own hills, the spots where, when a Lamb,
 He learned to pasture at his Mother's side.'
 After so long a labour, suddenly
 Bethinking him of this, the Boy
 Pursued his way towards a brook whose course 260
 Was through that unfenced tract of mountain-ground
 Which to his Father's little Farm belonged,
 The home and ancient Birth-right of their Flock.
 Down the deep channel of the Stream he went,
 Prying through every nook. Meanwhile the rain
 Began to fall upon the mountain tops,
 Thick storm and heavy which for three hours' space
 Abated not; and all that time the Boy
 Was busy in his search, until at length
 He spied the Sheep upon a plot of grass, 270
 An Island in the Brook. It was a place
 Remote and deep, piled round with rocks where foot
 Of man or beast was seldom used to tread;
 But now, when everywhere the summer grass
 Had failed, this one Adventurer, hunger-pressed,
 Had left his Fellows, and made his way alone

To the green plot of pasture in the Brook.
 Before the Boy knew well what he had seen
 He leapt upon the Island with proud heart
 And with a Prophet's joy. Immediately 280
 The Sheep sprang forward to the further Shore
 And was borne headlong by the roaring flood.
 At this the Boy looked round him, and his heart
 Fainted with fear; thrice did he turn his face
 To either brink; nor could he summon up
 The courage that was needful to leap back
 Cross the tempestuous torrent; so he stood,
 A prisoner on the Island, not without
 More than one thought of death and his last hour:
 Meanwhile the Father had returned alone 290
 To his own house; and now at the approach
 Of evening he went forth to meet his Son,
 Conjecturing vainly for what cause the Boy
 Had stayer so long. The Shepherd took his way
 Up his own mountain grounds, where, as he walked
 Along the Steep that overhung the Brook,
 He seemed to hear a voice, which was again
 Repeated, like the whistling of a kite.
 At this, not knowing why, as oftentimes
 Long afterwards he has been heard to say, 300
 Down to the Brook he went, and tracked its course
 Upwards among the o'erhanging rocks; nor thus
 Had he gone far, ere he espied the Boy
 Where on that little plot of ground he stood
 Right in the middle of the roaring Stream,
 Now stronger every moment and more fierce.
 The sight was such as no one could have seen
 Without distress and fear. The Shepherd heard
 The outcry of his Son, he stretched his Staff
 Towards him, bade him leap, which word scarce said 310
 The Boy was safe within his Father's arms.

Smooth life had Flock and Shepherd in old time,
 Long Springs and tepid Winters on the Banks
 Of delicate Galesus; and no less^o
 Those scattered along Adria's myrtle Shores:
 Smooth life the Herdsman and his snow-white Herd

To Triumphs and to sacrificial Rites
 Devoted, on the inviolable Stream
 Of rich Clitumnus; and the Goatherd lived
 As sweetly, underneath the pleasant brows 320
 Of cool Lucretilis, where the Pipe was heard
 Of Pan, the invisible God, thrilling the rocks
 With tutelary music, from all harm
 The Fold protecting. I myself, mature
 In manhood then, have seen a pastoral Tract
 Like one of these, where Fancy might run wild,
 Though under skies less generous and serene;
 Yet there, as for herself, had Nature framed
 A Pleasure-ground, diffused a fair expanse
 Of level Pasture, islanded with Groves 330
 And banked with woody Risings; but the Plain
 Endless, here opening widely out, and there
 Shut up in lesser lakes or beds of lawn
 And intricate recesses, creek or bay
 Sheltered within a shelter, where at large
 The Shepherd strays, a rolling hut his home:
 Thither he comes with spring-time, there abides
 All summer, and at sunrise ye may hear
 His flute or flagelet resounding far.°
 There's not a Nook or Hold of that vast space, 340
 Nor Strait where passage is, but it shall have
 In turn its Visitant, telling there his hours
 In unlaborious pleasure, with no task
 More toilsome than to carve a beechen bowl
 For Spring or Fountain, which the Traveller finds
 When through the region he pursues at will
 His devious course. A glimpse of such sweet life
 I saw when, from the melancholy Walls
 Of Goslar, once Imperial! I renewed°
 My daily walk along that cheerful Plain, 350
 Which, reaching to her Gates, spreads East and West
 And Northwards, from beneath the mountainous verge
 Of the Hercynian forest. Yet hail to You,
 Your rocks and precipices, Ye that seize
 The heart with firmer grasp! your snows and streams
 Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,
 That howled so dismally when I have been

Companionless, among your solitudes.
 There 'tis the Shepherd's task the winter long
 To wait upon the storms: of their approach 360
 Sagacious, from the height he drives his Flock
 Down into sheltering coves, and feeds them there
 Through the hard time, long as the storm is locked,
 (So do they phrase it) bearing from the stalls
 A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,
 To strew it on the snow. And when the Spring^o
 Looks out, and all the mountains dance with lambs,
 He through the enclosures won from the steep Waste,
 And through the lower Heights hath gone his rounds;
 And when the Flock with warmer weather climbs 370
 Higher and higher, him his office leads
 To range among them, through the hills dispersed,
 And watch their goings, whatsoever track
 Each Wanderer chuses for itself; a work
 That lasts the summer through. He quits his home
 At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun
 Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat
 Than he lies down upon some shining place
 And breakfasts with his Dog; when he hath stayed,
 As for the most he doth, beyond his time, 380
 He springs up with a bound, and then away!
 Ascending fast with his long Pole in hand,
 Or winding in and out among the crags.
 What need to follow him through what he does
 Or sees in his day's march? He feels himself
 In those vast regions where his service is
 A Freeman; wedded to his life of hope
 And hazard, and hard labour interchanged
 With that majestic indolence so dear
 To native Man. A rambling school-boy, thus 390
 Have I beheld him; without knowing why,
 Have felt his presence in his own domain
 As of a Lord and Master; or a Power
 Or Genius, under Nature, under God,
 Presiding; and severest solitude
 Seemed more commanding oft when he was there.
 Seeking the Raven's Nest, and suddenly

Surprized with vapours, or on rainy days
 When I have angled up the lonely brooks
 Mine eyes have glanced upon him, few steps off, 400
 In size a Giant, stalking through the fog,
 His Sheep like Greenland Bears. At other times
 When round some shady promontory turning,
 His Form hath flashed upon me, glorified
 By the deep radiance of the setting sun:
 Or him have I descried in distant sky,
 A solitary object and sublime,
 Above all height! like an aerial Cross,
 As it is stationed on some spiry Rock
 Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was Man 410
 Ennobled outwardly before mine eyes,
 And thus my heart at first was introduced
 To an unconscious love and reverence
 Of human nature; hence the human form
 To me was like an index of delight,
 Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.
 Meanwhile, this Creature, spiritual almost
 As those of Books; but more exalted far,
 Far more of an imaginative form,
 Was not a Corin of the groves, who lives^o 420
 For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour
 In coronal, with Phillis in the midst,
 But, for the purposes of kind, a Man
 With the most common; Husband, Father; learned,
 Could teach, admonish, suffered with the rest
 From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear;
 Of this I little saw, cared less for it,
 But something must have felt.

Call ye these appearances

Which I beheld of Shepherds in my youth,
 This sanctity of nature given to man 430
 A shadow, a delusion, ye who are fed
 By the dead letter, not the spirit of things,
 Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
 Instinct with vital functions, but a Block
 Or waxen Image which yourselves have made,
 And ye adore. But blessed be the God
 Of Nature and of Man that this was so,

That Men did at the first present themselves
 Before my untaught eyes thus purified,
 Removed, and at a distance that was fit. 440
 And so we all of us in some degree
 Are led to knowledge, whencesoever led,
 And howsoever; were it otherwise,
 And we found evil fast as we find good
 In our first years, or think that it is found,
 How could the innocent heart bear up and live!
 But doubly fortunate my lot; not here
 Alone, that something of a better life
 Perhaps was round me than it is the privilege
 Of most to move in, but that first I looked 450
 At Man through objects that were great and fair,
 First communed with him by their help. And thus
 Was founded a sure safeguard and defence
 Against the weight of meanness, selfish cares,
 Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in
 On all sides from the ordinary world
 In which we traffic. Starting from this point,
 I had my face towards the truth, began
 With an advantage; furnished with that kind
 Of prepossession without which the soul 460
 Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good,
 No genuine insight ever comes to her:
 Happy in this, that I with nature walked,
 Not having a too early intercourse
 With the deformities of crowded life,
 And those ensuing laughters and contempts
 Self-pleasing, which if we would wish to think
 With admiration and respect of man
 Will not permit us; but pursue the mind
 That to devotion willingly would be raised 470
 Into the Temple and the Temple's heart.

Yet do not deem, my Friend, though thus I speak
 Of Man as having taken in my mind
 A place thus early which might also seem
 Preeminent, that this was really so.
 Nature herself was at this unripe time,
 But secondary to my own pursuits

And animal activities, and all
 Their trivial pleasures; and long afterwards
 When these had died away, and Nature did 480
 For her own sake become my joy, even then
 And upwards through late youth, until not less
 Than three and twenty summers had been told
 Was man in my affections and regards
 Subordinate to her; her awful forms
 And viewless agencies: a passion, she!
 A rapture often, and immediate joy,
 Ever at hand; he distant, but a grace
 Occasional, an accidental thought,
 His hour being not yet come. Far less had then 490
 The inferior Creatures, beast or bird, attuned
 My spirit to that gentleness of love,
 Won from me those minute obeisances
 Of tenderness, which I may number now
 With my first blessings. Nevertheless, on these
 The light of beauty did not fall in vain,
 Or grandeur circumfuse them to no end.
 Why should I speak of Tillers of the soil?
 The Ploughman and his Team; or Men and Boys
 In festive summer busy with the rake, 500
 Old Men and ruddy Maids, and Little Ones
 All out together, and in sun and shade
 Dispersed among the hay-grounds alder-fringed,
 The Quarry-man, far heard! that blasts the rock,
 The Fishermen in pairs, the one to row,
 And one to drop the Net, plying their trade
 'Mid tossing lakes and tumbling boats' and winds^o
 Whistling; the Miner, melancholy Man!
 That works by taper light, while all the hills
 Are shining with the glory of the day. 510

But when that first poetic Faculty
 Of plain imagination and severe,
 No longer a mute Influence of the soul,
 An Element of the nature's inner self,
 Began to have some promptings to put on
 A visible shape, and to the works of art,
 The notions and the images of books,

Did knowingly conform itself, by these
 Enflamed, and proud of that her new delight,
 There came among those shapes of human life 520
 A wilfulness of fancy and conceit
 Which gave them new importance to the mind;
 And Nature and her objects beautified
 These fictions, as in some sort, in their turn,
 They burnished her. From touch of this new power
 Nothing was safe: the Elder-tree that grew
 Beside the well-known Charnel-house had then
 A dismal look; the Yew-tree had its Ghost,
 That took its station there for ornament.
 Then common death was none, common mishap, 530
 But matter for this humour everywhere,
 The tragic super-tragic, else left short.
 Then, if a Widow, staggering with the blow
 Of her distress, was known to have made her way
 To the cold grave in which her Husband slept,
 One night, or haply more than one, through pain
 Or half-insensate impotence of mind,
 The fact was caught at greedily, and there
 She was a Visitant the whole year through,
 Wetting the turf with never-ending tears, 540
 And all the storms of Heaven must beat on her.

Through wild obliquities could I pursue
 Among all objects of the fields and groves
 These cravings; when the Fox-glove, one by one,
 Upwards through every stage of its tall stem,
 Had shed its bells, and stood by the wayside
 Dismantled, with a single one, perhaps,
 Left at the ladder's top, with which the Plant
 Appeared to stoop, as slender blades of grass
 Tipped with a bead of rain or dew, behold! 550
 If such sight were seen, would Fancy bring
 Some Vagrant thither with her Babes, and seat her
 Upon the Turf beneath the stately Flower
 Drooping in sympathy, and making so
 A melancholy Crest above the head
 Of the lorn Creature, while her Little-Ones,
 All unconcerned with her unhappy plight,

Were sporting with the purple cups that lay
Scattered upon the ground.

There was a Copse
An upright bank of wood and woody rock 560
That opposite our rural Dwelling stood,
In which a sparkling patch of diamond light
Was in bright weather duly to be seen
On summer afternoons, within the wood
At the same place. 'Twas doubtless nothing more
Than a black rock, which, wet with constant springs,
Glistered far seen from out its lurking-place
As soon as ever the declining sun
Had smitten it. Beside our cottage hearth,
Sitting with open door, a hundred times 570
Upon this lustre have I gazed, that seemed
To have some meaning which I could not find:
And now it was a burnished shield, I fancied,
Suspended over a Knight's Tomb, who lay
Inglorious, buried in the dusky wood;
An entrance now into some magic cave
Or Palace for a Fairy of the rock;
Nor would I, though not certain whence the cause
Of the effulgence, thither have repaired
Without a precious bribe, and day by day 580
And month by month I saw the spectacle,
Nor ever once have visited the spot
Unto this hour. Thus sometimes were the shapes
Of wilful fancy grafted upon feelings
Of the imagination, and they rose
In worth accordingly.

My present Theme
Is to retrace the way that led me on
Through nature to the love of human Kind;
Nor could I with such object overlook
The Influence of this Power which turned itself 590
Instinctively to human passions, things
Least understood; of this adulterate Power,
For so it may be called, and without wrong,
When with that first compared. Yet in the midst
Of these vagaries, with an eye so rich
As mine was, through the chance, on me not wasted

Of having been brought up in such a grand
 And lovely region, I had forms distinct
 To steady me. These thoughts did oft revolve
 About some centre palpable, which at once 600
 Incited them to motion, and controlled,
 And whatsoever shape the fit might take,
 And whencesoever it might come, I still
 At all times had a real solid world
 Of images about me; did not pine
 As one in cities bred might do; as Thou,
 Beloved Friend! hast told me that thou didst,
 Great Spirit as thou art, in endless dreams
 Of sickliness, disjoining, joining things
 Without the light of knowledge. Where the harm, 610
 If, when the Woodman languished with disease
 From sleeping night by night among the woods
 Within his sod-built Cabin, Indian-wise,
 I called the pangs of disappointed love
 And all the long Etcetera of such thought
 To help him to his grave? Meanwhile the Man,
 If not already from the woods retired
 To die at home, was haply, as I knew,
 Pining alone among the gentle airs,
 Birds, running streams, and hills so beautiful 620
 On golden evenings, while the charcoal Pile
 Breathed up its smoke, an image of his ghost
 Or spirit that was soon to take its flight.

There came a time of greater dignity
 Which had been gradually prepared, and now
 Rushed in as if on wings, the time in which
 The pulse of Being everywhere was felt,
 When all the several frames of things, like stars
 Through every magnitude distinguishable,
 Were half confounded in each other's blaze, 630
 One galaxy of life and joy. Then rose
 Man, inwardly contemplated, and present
 In my own being, to a loftier height;
 As of all visible natures crown; and first
 In capability of feeling what
 Was to be felt; in being rapt away
 By the divine effect of power and love,

As, more than anything we know, instinct
 With Godhead, and by reason and by will
 Acknowledging dependency sublime. 640

Erelong transported hence as in a dream
 I found myself begirt with temporal shapes
 Of vice and folly thrust upon my view,
 Objects of sport, and ridicule, and scorn,
 Manners and characters discriminate,
 And little busy passions that eclipsed,
 As well they might, the impersonated thought,
 The idea of abstraction of the Kind.
 An Idler among academic Bowers,
 Such was my new condition, as at large 650
 Hath been set forth; yet here the vulgar light
 Of present actual superficial life,
 Gleaming through colouring of other times,
 Old usages and local privilege,
 Thereby was softened, almost solemnized,
 And rendered apt and pleasing to the view.
 This notwithstanding, being brought more near
 As I was now, to guilt and wretchedness,
 I trembled, thought of human life at times
 With an indefinite terror and dismay, 660
 Such as the storms and angry elements
 Had bred in me, but gloomier far, a dim
 Analogy to uproar and misrule,
 Disquiet, danger, and obscurity.

It might be told (but wherefore speak of things
 Common to all?) that seeing, I essayed
 To give relief, began to deem myself
 A moral agent, judging between good
 And evil, not as for the mind's delight
 But for her safety, one who was to *act*, 670
 As sometimes, to the best of my weak means,
 I did, by human sympathy impelled,
 And through dislike and most offensive pain
 Was to the truth conducted; of this faith
 Never forsaken, that by acting well
 And understanding, I should learn to love
 The end of life and every thing we know.

Preceptress stern, that didst instruct me next,
 London! to thee I willingly return.
 Erewhile my Verse played only with the flowers 680
 Enwrought upon thy mantle, satisfied^o
 With this amusement, and a simple look
 Of child-like inquisition, now and then
 Cast upwards on thine eye to puzzle out
 Some inner meanings, which might harbour there.
 Yet did I not give way to this light mood
 Wholly beguiled, as one incapable
 Of higher things, and ignorant that high things
 Were round me. Never shall I forget the hour
 The moment rather say when having thridded 690
 The labyrinth of suburban Villages,
 At length I did unto myself first seem
 To enter the great City. On the Roof
 Of an itinerant Vehicle I sate,
 With vulgar men about me, vulgar forms
 Of houses, pavement, streets, of men and things,
 Mean shapes on every side: but, at the time,
 When to myself it fairly might be said,
 The very moment that I seemed to know
 The threshold now is overpassed—Great God! 700
 That aught external to the living mind
 Should have such mighty sway! yet so it was—
 A weight of Ages did at once descend
 Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no
 Distinct remembrances; but weight and power,
 Power growing with the weight: alas! I feel
 That I am trifling: 'twas a moment's pause.
 All that took place within me, came and went
 As in a moment, and I only now
 Remember that it was a thing divine. 710

As when a traveller hath from open day
 With torches passed into some Vault of Earth,
 The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den^o
 Of Yordas among Craven's mountain tracts;
 He looks and sees the Cavern spread and grow,
 Widening itself on all sides, sees, or thinks

He sees, ere long, the roof above his head,
 Which instantly unsettles and recedes
 Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all
 Commingled, making up a Canopy 720
 Of Shapes and Forms and Tendencies to Shape,
 That shift and vanish, change and interchange
 Like Spectres, ferment quiet and sublime,
 Which, after a short space, works less and less,
 Till every effort, every motion gone,
 The scene before him lies in perfect view,
 Exposed and lifeless, as a written book.
 But let him pause awhile, and look again
 And a new quickening shall succeed, at first
 Beginning timidly, then creeping fast 730
 Through all which he beholds; the senseless mass,
 In its projections, wrinkles, cavities,
 Through all its surface, with all colours streaming,
 Like a magician's airy pageant, parts,
 Unites, embodying everywhere some pressure
 Or image, recognised or new, some type
 Or picture of the world; forests and lakes,
 Ships, rivers, towers, the Warrior clad in Mail,
 The prancing Steed, the Pilgrim with his Staff,
 The mitred Bishop and the throned King, 740
 A Spectacle to which there is no end.

No otherwise had I at first been moved
 With such a swell of feeling, followed soon
 By a blank sense of greatness passed away,
 And afterwards continued to be moved
 In presence of that vast Metropolis,
 The Fountain of my Country's destiny
 And of the destiny of Earth itself,
 That great Emporium, Chronicle at once
 And Burial-place of passions and their home 750
 Imperial, and chief living residence.

With strong Sensations, teeming as it did
 Of past and present, such a place must needs
 Have pleased me, in those times; I sought not then
 Knowledge; but craved for power, and power I found
 In all things; nothing had a circumscribed

And narrow influence; but all objects, being
 Themselves capacious, also found in me
 Capaciousness and amplitude of mind;
 Such is the strength and glory of our Youth. 760
 The Human nature unto which I felt
 That I belonged, and which I loved and revered,
 Was not a punctual Presence, but a Spirit^o
 Living in time and space, and far diffused.
 In this my joy, in this my dignity
 Consisted; the external universe,
 By striking upon what is found within,
 Had given me this conception, with the help
 Of Books, and what they picture and record.

'Tis true the History of my native Land, 770
 With those of Greece compared and popular Rome,^o
 Events not lovely nor magnanimous,
 But harsh and unaffecting in themselves,
 And in our high-wrought modern narratives
 Stript of their harmonising soul, the life
 Of manners and familiar incidents,
 Had never much delighted me. And less
 Than other minds I had been used to owe
 The pleasure which I found in place or thing
 To extrinsic transitory accidents, 780
 To records or traditions; but a sense
 Of what had been here done, and suffered here
 Through ages, and was doing, suffering, still,
 Weighed with me, could support the test of thought,
 Was like the enduring majesty and power
 Of independent nature; and not seldom
 Even individual remembrances,
 By working on the Shapes before my eyes,
 Became like vital functions of the soul;
 And out of what had been, what was, the place 790
 Was thronged with impregnations, like those wilds
 In which my early feelings had been nursed,
 And naked valleys, full of caverns, rocks,
 And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
 Echoes and Waterfalls, and pointed crags
 That into music touch the passing wind.

Thus here imagination also found
 An element that pleased her, tried her strength
 Among new objects simplified, arranged,
 Impregnated my knowledge, made it live, 800
 And the result was elevating thoughts
 Of human Nature. Neither guilt nor vice,
 Debasement of the body or the mind,
 Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,
 Which was not lightly passed, but often scanned
 Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust
 In what we may become, induce belief
 That I was ignorant, had been falsely taught,
 A Solitary, who with vain conceits
 Had been inspired, and walked about in dreams. 810
 When from that awful prospect, overcast
 And in eclipse, my meditations turned,
 Lo! everything that was indeed divine
 Retained its purity inviolate
 And unencroached upon, nay, seemed brighter far
 For this deep shade in counterview, that gloom
 Of opposition, such as shewed itself
 To the eyes of Adam, yet in Paradise,
 Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw^o
 Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light 820
 More orient in the western cloud, that drew
 'O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
 Descending slow with something heavenly fraught.'

Add also, that among the multitudes
 Of that great City, oftentimes was seen
 Affectingly set forth, more than elsewhere
 Is possible, the unity of man,
 One spirit over ignorance and vice
 Predominant, in good and evil hearts
 One sense for moral judgements, as one eye 830
 For the sun's light. When strongly breathed upon
 By this sensation, whencesoe'er it comes
 Of union or communion, doth the soul
 Rejoice as in her highest joy: for there,
 There chiefly, hath she feeling whence she is,
 And passing through all Nature rests with God.

And is not, too, that vast Abiding-place
 Of human Creatures, turn where'er we may,
 Profusely sown with individual sights
 Of courage, and integrity, and truth, 840
 And tenderness, which, here set off by foil,
 Appears more touching. In the tender scenes
 Chiefly was my delight, and one of these
 Never will be forgotten. 'Twas a Man,
 Whom I saw sitting in an open Square
 Close to an iron paling that fenced in
 The spacious Grass-plot; on the corner stone
 Of the low wall in which the pales were fixed
 Sate this one Man, and with a sickly Babe
 Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought 850
 For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air.
 Of those who passed, and me who looked at him,
 He took no note; but in his brawny Arms
 (The Artificer was to the elbow bare,
 And from his work this moment had been stolen)
 He held the Child, and, bending over it
 As if he were afraid both of the sun
 And of the air which he had come to seek,
 He eyed it with unutterable love.

Thus were my thoughts attracted more and more 860
 By slow gradations towards human Kind
 And to the good and ill of human life;
 Nature had led me on, and now I seemed
 To travel independent of her help,
 As if I had forgotten her; but no,
 My Fellow beings still were unto me
 Far less than she was; though the scale of love
 Were filling fast, 'twas light, as yet, compared
 With that in which her mighty objects lay.

BOOK NINE

Residence in France

As oftentimes a River, it might seem,
 Yielding in part to old remembrances,
 Part swayed by fear to tread an onward road

That leads direct to the devouring sea,
 Turns, and will measure back his course, far back,
 Towards the very regions which he crossed
 In his first outset; so have we long time
 Made motions retrograde, in like pursuit
 Detained. But now we start afresh; I feel
 An impulse to precipitate my Verse. 10
 Fair greetings to this shapeless eagerness,
 Whene'er it comes, needful in work so long,
 Thrice needful to the argument which now
 Awaits us; Oh! how much unlike the past!
 One which though bright the promise, will be found
 Ere far we shall advance, ungenial, hard
 To treat of, and forbidding in itself.

Free as a colt at pasture on the hills,
 I ranged at large, through the Metropolis
 Month after month. Obscurely did I live, 20
 Not courting the society of Men
 By literature, or elegance, or rank
 Distinguished; in the midst of things, it seemed,
 Looking as from a distance on the world
 That moved about me. Yet insensibly
 False preconceptions were corrected thus
 And errors of the fancy rectified,
 Alike with reference to men and things,
 And sometimes from each quarter were poured in
 Novel imaginations and profound. 30
 A year thus spent, this field (with small regret^o
 Save only for the Book-stalls in the streets,
 Wild produce, hedge-row fruit, on all sides hung
 To lure the sauntering traveller from his track)
 I quitted, and betook myself to France,
 Led thither chiefly by a personal wish
 To speak the language more familiarly,
 With which intent I chose for my abode
 A City on the Borders of the Loire.^o

Through Paris lay my readiest path, and there 40
 I sojourned a few days, and visited
 In haste each spot of old and recent fame,
 The latter chiefly, from the Field of Mars^o

Down to the Suburbs of St. Anthony,
 And from Mont Martyr southward, to the Dome
 Of Geneviève. In both her clamorous Halls,
 The National Synod and the Jacobins,
 I saw the revolutionary Power
 Toss like a Ship at anchor, rocked by storms;
 The Arcades I traversed in the Palace huge 50
 Of Orleans, coasted round and round the line
 Of Tavern, Brothel, Gaming-house, and Shop,
 Great rendezvous of worst and best, the walk
 Of all who had a purpose, or had not;
 I stared and listened with a stranger's ears
 To Hawkers and Haranguers, hubbub wild!
 And hissing Factionists with ardent eyes,
 In knots, or pairs, or single, ant-like swarms
 Of Builders and Subverters, every face
 That hope or apprehension could put on, 60
 Joy, anger, and vexation in the midst
 Of gaiety and dissolute idleness.

Where silent zephyrs sported with the dust
 Of the Bastille I sate in the open sun,
 And from the rubbish gathered up a stone
 And pocketed the relick in the guise
 Of an Enthusiast, yet, in honest truth
 Though not without some strong incumbences,
 And glad, (could living man be otherwise?)
 I looked for something that I could not find, 70
 Affecting more emotion than I felt,
 For 'tis most certain that the utmost force
 Of all these various objects which may shew
 The temper of my mind as then it was
 Seemed less to recompense the Traveller's pains,
 Less moved me, gave me less delight, than did
 A single picture merely, hunted out
 Among other sights, the Magdalene of le Brun,^o
 A Beauty exquisitely wrought, fair face
 And rueful, with its ever-flowing tears. 80

But hence to my more permanent residence
 I hasten; there, by novelties in speech,
 Domestic manners, customs, gestures, looks,

And all the attire of ordinary life,
 Attention was at first engrossed; and thus,
 Amused and satisfied, I scarcely felt
 The shock of these concussions, unconcerned,
 Tranquil almost, and careless as a flower
 Glassed in a Green-house, or a Parlour shrub,
 When every bush and tree, the country through, 90
 Is shaking to the roots; indifference this
 Which may seem strange, but I was unprepared
 With needful knowledge, had abruptly passed
 Into a theatre, of which the stage
 Was busy with an action far advanced.
 Like others I had read, and eagerly
 Sometimes, the master Pamphlets of the day;
 Nor wanted such half-insight as grew wild
 Upon that meagre soil, helped out by Talk
 And public News; but having never chanced 100
 To see a regular Chronicle which might shew,
 (If any such indeed existed then)
 Whence the main Organs of the public Power
 Had sprung, their transmigrations when and how
 Accomplished, giving thus unto events
 A form and body, all things were to me
 Loose and disjointed, and the affections left
 Without a vital interest. At that time,
 Moreover, the first storm was overblown,
 And the strong hand of outward violence 110
 Locked up in quiet. For myself—I fear
 Now in connection with so great a Theme
 To speak (as I must be compelled to do)
 Of one so unimportant—a short time
 I loitered, and frequented night by night
 Routs, card-tables, the formal haunts of Men,
 Whom in the City privilege of birth
 Sequestered from the rest, societies
 Where, through punctilios of elegance
 And deeper causes, all discourse, alike 120
 Of good and evil in the time, was shunned
 With studious care; but 'twas not long ere this
 Proved tedious, and I gradually withdrew
 Into a noisier world; and thus did soon

Become a Patriot, and my heart was all
Given to the People, and my love was theirs.

A knot of military Officers,
That to a Regiment appertained which then
Was stationed in the City, were the chief
Of my associates: some of these wore Swords 130
Which had been seasoned in the Wars, and all
Were men well-born, at least laid claim to such
Distinction, as the Chivalry of France.
In age and temper differing, they had yet
One spirit ruling in them all, alike
(Save only one, hereafter to be named)
Were bent upon undoing what was done:
This was their rest, and only hope, therewith
No fear had they of bad becoming worse, 140
For worst to them was come, nor would have stirred,
Or deemed it worth a moment's while to stir,
In anything, save only as the act
Looked thitherward. One, reckoning by years,
Was in the prime of manhood, and erewhile
He had sate Lord in many tender hearts,
Though heedless of such honours now, and changed:
His temper was quite mastered by the times,
And they had blighted him, had eat away
The beauty of his person, doing wrong
Alike to body and to mind: his port, 150
Which once had been erect and open, now
Was stooping and contracted, and a face,
By nature lovely in itself, expressed,
As much as any that was ever seen,
A ravage out of season, made by thoughts
Unhealthy and vexatious. At the hour,
The most important of each day, in which
The public News was read, the fever came,
A punctual visitant, to shake this Man,
Disarmed his voice, and fanned his yellow cheek 160
Into a thousand colours; while he read,
Or mused, his sword was haunted by his touch
Continually, like an uneasy place
In his own body. 'Twas in truth an hour

Of universal ferment; mildest men
 Were agitated; and commotions, strife
 Of passion and opinion filled the walls
 Of peaceful houses with unquiet sounds.
 The soil of common life was at that time
 Too hot to tread upon; oft said I then, 170
 And not then only, 'What a mockery this
 Of history, the past and that to come!
 Now do I feel how I have been deceived,
 Reading of Nations and their works, in faith,
 Faith given to vanity and emptiness;
 Oh! laughter for the Page that would reflect
 To future times the face of what now is!
 The land all swarmed with passion, like a Plain
 Devoured by locusts, Carra, Gorsas, add^o
 A hundred other names, forgotten now, 180
 Nor to be heard of more, yet were they Powers,
 Like earthquakes, shocks repeated day by day,
 And felt through every nook of town and field.

The Men already spoken of as chief
 Of my Associates were prepared for flight
 To augment the band of Emigrants in Arms
 Upon the borders of the Rhine, and leagued
 With foreign Foes mustered for instant war.
 This was their undisguised intent, and they
 Were waiting with the whole of their desires 190
 The moment to depart.

An Englishman,
 Born in a Land, the name of which appeared
 To license some unruliness of mind,
 A Stranger, with Youth's further privilege,
 And that indulgence which a half-learned speech
 Wins from the courteous, I, who had been else
 Shunned and not tolerated, freely lived
 With these Defenders of the Crown, and talked
 And heard their notions, nor did they disdain
 The wish to bring me over to their cause. 200
 But though untaught by thinking or by books
 To reason well of polity or law
 And nice distinctions, then on every tongue,

Of natural rights and civil, and to acts
 Of Nations, and their passing interests,
 (I speak comparing these with other things)
 Almost indifferent, even the Historian's Tale
 Prizing but little otherwise than I prized
 Tales of the Poets, as it made my heart
 Beat high and filled my fancy with fair forms, 210
 Old Heroes and their sufferings and their deeds;
 Yet in the regal Sceptre, and the pomp
 Of Orders and Degrees, I nothing found
 Then, or had ever, even in crudest youth,
 That dazzled me; but rather what my soul
 Mourned for, or loathed, beholding that the best
 Ruled not, and feeling that they ought to rule.

For, born in a poor District, and which yet
 Retaineth more of ancient homeliness,
 Manners erect, and frank simplicity, 220
 Than any other nook of English Land,
 It was my fortune scarcely to have seen
 Through the whole tenor of my School-day time
 The face of one, who, whether Boy or Man,
 Was vested with attention or respect
 Through claims of wealth or blood. Nor was it least
 Of many debts which afterwards I owed
 To Cambridge and an academic life,
 That something there was holden up to view
 Of a Republic, where all stood thus far 230
 Upon equal ground, that they were brothers all
 In honour, as in one community,
 Scholars and Gentlemen, where, furthermore,
 Distinction lay open to all that came,
 And wealth and titles were in less esteem
 Than talents and successful industry.
 Add unto this, subservience from the first
 To God and Nature's single sovereignty,
 Familiar presences of awful Power,
 And fellowship with venerable books 240
 To sanction the proud workings of the soul,
 And mountain liberty. It could not be
 But that one tutored thus, who had been formed

To thought and moral feelings in the way
 This story hath described, should look with awe
 Upon the faculties of Man, receive
 Gladly the highest promises, and hail
 As best the government of equal rights
 And individual worth. And hence, O Friend!
 If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced 250
 Less than might well befit my youth, the cause
 In part lay here, that unto me the events
 Seemed nothing out of nature's certain course,
 A gift that rather was come late than soon.
 No wonder, then, if advocates like these
 Whom I have mentioned, at this riper day
 Were impotent to make my hopes put on
 The shape of theirs, my understanding bend
 In honour to their honour. Zeal which yet
 Had slumbered, now in opposition burst 260
 Forth like a polar summer; every word
 They uttered was a dart, by counter-winds
 Blown back upon themselves, their reason seemed
 Confusion-stricken by a higher power
 Than human understanding, their discourse
 Maimed, spiritless, and in their weakness strong
 I triumphed.

Meantime, day by day, the roads
 (While I consorted with these Royalists)
 Were crowded with the bravest Youth of France,
 And all the promptest of her Spirits, linked 270
 In gallant Soldiership, and posting on
 To meet the War upon her Frontier Bounds.
 Yet at this very moment do tears start
 Into mine eyes; I do not say I weep,
 I wept not then, but tears have dimmed my sight,
 In memory of the farewells of that time,
 Domestic severings, female fortitude
 At dearest separation, patriot love
 And self-devotion, and terrestrial hope
 Encouraged with a martyr's confidence. 280
 Even files of Strangers merely, seen but once,
 And for a moment, men from far, with sound
 Of music, martial tunes, and banners spread,

Entering the City, here and there a face
 Or person singled out among the rest,
 Yet still a stranger and beloved as such,
 Even by these passing spectacles my heart
 Was oftentimes uplifted, and they seemed
 Like arguments from Heaven, that 'twas a cause
 Good, and which no one could stand up against 290
 Who was not lost, abandoned, selfish, proud,
 Mean, miserable, wilfully depraved,
 Hater perverse of equity and truth.

Among that band of Officers was one,^o
 Already hinted at, of other mold,
 A Patriot, thence rejected by the rest
 And with an oriental loathing spurned,
 As of a different Cast. A meeker Man
 Than this lived never, or a more benign,
 Meek, though enthusiastic to the height 300
 Of highest expectation. Injuries
 Made him more gracious, and his nature then
 Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly
 As aromatic flowers on alpine turf
 When foot hath crushed them. He through events
 Of that great change wandered in perfect faith,
 As through a Book, an old Romance or Tale
 Of Fairy, or some dream of actions wrought
 Behind the summer clouds. By birth he ranked
 With the most noble, but unto the poor 310
 Among mankind he was in service bound
 As by some tie invisible, oaths professed
 To a religious Order. Man he loved
 As Man, and to the mean and the obscure,
 And all the homely in their homely works,
 Transferred a courtesy which had no air
 Of condescension, but did rather seem
 A passion and a gallantry, like that
 Which he, a Soldier, in his idler day
 Had payed to Woman. Somewhat vain he was, 320
 Or seemed so, yet it was not vanity
 But fondness, and a kind of radiant joy
 That covered him about when he was bent

On works of love or freedom, or revolved
 Complacently the progress of a cause
 Whereof he was a part; yet this was meek
 And placid, and took nothing from the Man
 That was delightful. Oft in solitude
 With him did I discourse about the end
 Of civil government, and its wisest forms, 330
 Of ancient prejudice, and chartered rights,
 Allegiance, faith, and laws by time matured,
 Custom and habit, novelty and change,
 Of self-respect, and virtue in the Few
 For patrimonial honour set apart,
 And ignorance in the labouring Multitude.
 For he, an upright Man and tolerant,
 Balanced these contemplations in his mind
 And I, who at that time was scarcely dipped
 Into the turmoil, had a sounder judgment 340
 Than afterwards, carried about me yet
 With less alloy to its integrity
 The experience of past ages, as through help
 Of Books and common life it finds its way
 To youthful minds, by objects over near
 Not pressed upon, nor dazzled or misled
 By struggling with the crowd for present ends.

But though not deaf and obstinate to find
 Error without apology on the side
 Of those who were against us, more delight 350
 We took, and let this freely be confessed,
 In painting to ourselves the miseries
 Of royal Courts, and that voluptuous life
 Unfeeling, where the Man who is of soul
 The meanest thrives the most, where dignity,
 True personal dignity, abideth not,
 A light and cruel world, cut off from all
 The natural inlets of just sentiment,
 From lowly sympathy, and chastening truth,
 Where good and evil never have that name, 360
 That which they ought to have, but wrong prevails,
 And vice at home. We added dearest themes,
 Man and his noble nature, as it is

The gift of God and lies in his own power,
 His blind desires and steady faculties
 Capable of clear truth, the one to break
 Bondage, the other to build liberty
 On firm foundations, making social life,^o
 Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,
 As just in regulation, and as pure 370
 As individual in the wise and good.
 We summoned up the honorable deeds
 Of ancient Story, thought of each bright spot
 That could be found in all recorded time
 Of truth preserved and error passed away,
 Of single Spirits that catch the flame from Heaven,
 And how the multitude of men will feed
 And fan each other, thought of Sects, how keen
 They are to put the appropriate nature on,
 Triumphant over every obstacle 380
 Of custom, language, Country, love and hate,
 And what they do and suffer for their creed,
 How far they travel, and how long endure,
 How quickly mighty Nations have been formed
 From least beginnings, how, together locked
 By new opinions, scattered tribes have made
 One body spreading wide as clouds in heaven.
 To aspirations then of our own minds
 Did we appeal; and, finally, beheld 390
 A living confirmation of the whole
 Before us in a People risen up
 Fresh as the morning Star. Elate we looked
 Upon their virtues, saw in rudest men
 Self-sacrifice the firmest, generous love
 And continence of mind, and sense of right
 Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.

Oh! sweet it is, in academic Groves,
 Or such retirement, Friend! as we have known
 Among the mountains, by our Rotha's Stream,^o
 Greta or Derwent, or some nameless Rill, 400
 To ruminate with interchange of talk
 On rational liberty, and hope in man,
 Justice and peace; but far more sweet such toil,

Toil say I, for it leads to thoughts abstruse,
 If Nature then be standing on the brink
 Of some great trial, and we hear the voice
 Of One devoted, one whom circumstance
 Hath called upon to embody his deep sense
 In action, give it outwardly a shape,
 And that of benediction to the world. 410
 Then doubt is not, and truth is more than truth,
 A hope it is and a desire, a creed
 Of zeal by an authority divine
 Sanctioned, of danger, difficulty or death.
 Such conversation under Attic shades^o
 Did Dion hold with Plato, ripened thus
 For a Deliverer's glorious task, and such,
 He, on that ministry already bound,
 Held with Eudemus and Timonides,
 Surrounded by Adventurers in Arms, 420
 When those two Vessels with their daring Freight
 For the Sicilian Tyrant's overthrow
 Sailed from Zacynthus, philosophic war
 Led by Philosophers. With harder fate,
 Though like ambition, such was he, O Friend!
 Of whom I speak, so Beaupuis (let the Name
 Stand near the worthiest of Antiquity)
 Fashioned his life, and many a long discourse
 With like persuasion honored we maintained,
 He on his part accoutred for the worst. 430
 He perished fighting in supreme command
 Upon the Borders of the unhappy Loire
 For Liberty against deluded Men,
 His Fellow-countrymen, and yet most blessed
 In this, that he the fate of later times
 Lived not to see, nor what we now behold
 Who have as ardent hearts as he had then.

Along that very Loire, with Festivals
 Resounding at all hours, and innocent yet
 Of civil slaughter, was our frequent walk 440
 Or in wide Forests of the neighbourhood,
 High woods and over-arched, with open space
 On every side, and footing many a mile,

Inwoven roots and moss smooth as the sea,
 A solemn region. Often in such place
 From earnest dialogues I slipped in thought,
 And let remembrance steal to other times
 When Hermits, from their sheds and caves forth strayed,
 Walked by themselves, so met in shades like these,
 And if a devious Traveller was heard 450
 Approaching from a distance, as might chance,
 With speed and echoes loud of trampling hoofs
 From the hard floor reverberated, then
 It was Angelica thundering through the woods^o
 Upon her Palfrey, or that gentler Maid
 Erminia, fugitive as fair as She.
 Sometimes I saw, methought, a pair of Knights
 Joust underneath the trees, that, as in storm,
 Did rock above their heads; anon the din 460
 Of boisterous merriment and music's roar,
 With sudden Proclamation, burst from haunt
 Of Satyrs in some viewless glade, with dance
 Rejoicing o'er a Female in the midst,
 A mortal Beauty, their unhappy Thrall.
 The width of those huge Forests, unto me
 A novel scene, did often in this way
 Master my fancy, while I wandered on
 With that revered Companion. And sometimes
 When to a Convent in a meadow green
 By a brook-side we came, a roofless Pile, 470
 And not by reverential touch of Time
 Dismantled, but by violence abrupt,
 In spite of those heart-bracing colloquies,
 In spite of real fervour, and of that
 Less genuine and wrought up within myself,
 I could not but bewail a wrong so harsh,
 And for the matin Bell to sound no more
 Grieved, and the evening Taper, and the Cross
 High on the topmost Pinnacle, a sign
 Admonitory by the Traveller 480
 First seen above the woods.

And when my Friend
 Pointed upon occasion to the Site
 Of Romorentin, home of ancient Kings,^o

To the imperial Edifice of Blois,
 Or to that rural Castle, name now slipped
 From my remembrance, where a Lady lodged
 By the first Francis wooed, and bound to him
 In chains of mutual passion; from the Tower,
 As a tradition of the Country tells,
 Practised to commune with her Royal Knight 490
 By cressets and love-beacons, intercourse
 'Twixt her high-seated Residence and his
 Far off at Chambord on the Plain beneath:°
 Even here, though less than with the peaceful House
 Religious, 'mid these frequent monuments
 Of Kings, their vices and their better deeds,
 Imagination, potent to enflame
 At times with virtuous wrath and noble scorn,
 Did also often mitigate the force
 Of civic prejudice, the bigotry, 500
 So call it, of a youthful Patriot's mind,
 And on these spots with many gleams I looked
 Of chivalrous delight. Yet not the less,
 Hatred of absolute rule, where will of One
 Is law for all, and of that barren pride
 In them who, by immunities unjust,
 Betwixt the Sovereign and the People stand,
 His helper and not theirs, laid stronger hold
 Daily upon me, mixed with pity too
 And love; for where hope is there love will be 510
 For the abject multitude. And when we chanced
 One day to meet a hunger-bitten Girl,
 Who crept along, fitting her languid self
 Unto a Heifer's motion, by a cord
 Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
 Its sustenance, while the Girl with her two hands
 Was busy knitting, in a heartless mood
 Of solitude, and at the sight my Friend
 In agitation said, 'Tis against that
 Which we are fighting,' I with him believed 520
 Devoutly that a spirit was abroad
 Which could not be withstood, that poverty
 At least like this, would in a little time
 Be found no more, that we should see the earth

Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
 The industrious, and the lowly Child of Toil,
 All institutes for ever blotted out
 That legalised exclusion, empty pomp
 Abolished, sensual state and cruel power
 Whether by edict of the one or few, 530
 And finally, as sum and crown of all,
 Should see the People having a strong hand
 In making their own Laws, whence better days
 To all mankind. But, these things set apart,
 Was not the single confidence enough
 To animate the mind that ever turned
 A thought to human welfare, that henceforth
 Captivity by mandate without law
 Should cease, and open accusation lead
 To sentence in the hearing of the world, 540
 And open punishment, if not the air
 Be free to breathe in, and the heart of Man
 Dread nothing. Having touched this argument
 I shall not, as my purpose was, take note
 Of other matters which detained us oft
 In thought or conversation, public acts,
 And public persons, and the emotions wrought
 Within our minds by the ever-varying wind
 Of Record and Report which day by day
 Swept over us; but I will here instead 550
 Draw from obscurity a tragic Tale,
 Not in its spirit singular indeed,
 But haply worth memorial, as I heard
 The events related by my patriot Friend
 And others who had borne a part therein.°

Oh! happy time of youthful Lovers! thus
 My Story may begin, Oh! balmy time
 In which a Love-knot on a Lady's brow
 Is fairer than the fairest Star in heaven!
 To such inheritance of blessedness 560
 Young Vaudracour was brought by years that had
 A little overstepped his stripling prime.
 A Town of small repute in the heart of France
 Was the Youth's Birth-place; there he vowed his love

To Julia, a bright Maid, from Parents sprung
 Not mean in their condition, but with rights
 Unhonoured of Nobility, and hence
 The Father of the young Man, who had place
 Among that order, spurned the very thought
 Of such alliance. From their cradles up, 570
 With but a step between their several homes
 The Pair had thriven together year by year,
 Friends, Playmates, Twins in pleasure, after strife
 And petty quarrels had grown fond again,
 Each other's advocate, each other's help,
 Nor ever happy if they were apart.
 A basis this for deep and solid love,
 And endless constancy, and placid truth;
 But whatsoever of such treasures might,
 Beneath the outside of their youth, have lain^o 580
 Reserved for mellowed years, his present mind
 Was under fascination; he beheld
 A vision, and he loved the thing he saw.
 Arabian Fiction never filled the world
 With half the wonders that were wrought for him.
 Earth lived in one great presence of the spring,
 Life turned the meanest of her implements
 Before his eyes to price above all gold,
 The house she dwelt in was a sainted shrine,
 Her chamber-window did surpass in glory 590
 The portals of the East, all paradise
 Could by the simple opening of a door
 Let itself in upon him, pathways, walks,
 Swarmed with enchantment, till his spirit sank
 Beneath the burthen, over-blessed for life.
 This state was theirs, till whether through effect
 Of some delirious hour, or that the Youth,
 Seeing so many bars betwixt himself
 And the dear haven where he wished to be
 In honourable wedlock with his love, 600
 Without a certain knowledge of his own
 Was inwardly prepared to turn aside
 From law and custom, and entrust himself
 To Nature for a happy end of all,
 And thus abated of that pure reserve

Congenial to his loyal heart, with which
 It would have pleased him to attend the steps
 Of Maiden so divinely beautiful,
 I know not, but reluctantly must add
 That Julia, yet without the name of Wife
 Carried about her for a secret grief
 The promise of a Mother. 610

To conceal

The threatened shame the Parents of the Maid
 Found means to hurry her away by night
 And unforewarned, that in a distant Town
 She might remain shrouded in privacy,
 Until the Babe was born. When morning came
 The Lover thus bereft, stung with his loss
 And all uncertain whither he should turn,
 Chafed like a wild beast in the toils. At length,
 Following as his suspicions led, he found
 O joy! sure traces of the fugitives,
 Pursued them to the Town where they had stopped,
 And lastly to the very house itself
 Which had been chosen for the Maid's retreat.
 The sequel may be easily divined:
 Walks backwards, forwards, morning, noon and night,
 When decency and caution would allow,
 And Julia, who, whenever to herself
 She happened to be left a moment's space,
 Was busy at her casement, as a swallow
 About its nest, ere long did thus espy
 Her Lover, thence a stolen interview
 By night accomplished, with a ladder's help. 620

I pass the raptures of the Pair; such theme
 Hath by a hundred Poets been set forth
 In more delightful verse than skill of mine
 Could fashion, chiefly by that darling Bard^o
 Who told of Juliet and her Romeo,
 And of the lark's note heard before its time,
 And of the streaks that laced the severing clouds
 In the unrelenting East. 'Tis mine to tread
 The humbler province of plain history,
 And, without choice of circumstance, submissively 630

640

Relate what I have heard. The Lovers came
 To this resolve, with which they parted, pleased.
 And confident, that Vaudracour should hie
 Back to his Father's house, and there employ
 Means aptest to obtain a sum of gold,
 A final portion even, if that might be, 650
 Which done, together they could then take flight
 To some remote and solitary place
 Where they might live with no one to behold
 Their happiness, or to disturb their love.
 Immediately, and with this mission charged,
 Home to his Father's House did he return
 And there remained a time without hint given
 Of his design; but if a word were dropped
 Touching the matter of his passion, still
 In hearing of his Father, Vaudracour 660
 Persisted openly that nothing less
 Than death should make him yield up hope to be
 A blessed Husband of the Maid he loved.

Incensed at such obduracy and slight
 Of exhortations and remonstrances,
 The Father threw out threats that by a mandate
 Bearing the private signet of the State^o
 He should be baffled in his mad intent,
 And that should cure him. From this time the Youth
 Conceived a terror, and by night or day 670
 Stirred nowhere without Arms. Soon afterwards
 His Parents to their Country Seat withdrew
 Upon some feigned occasion, and the Son
 Was left with one Attendant in the house.
 Retiring to his Chamber for the night,
 While he was entering at the door, attempts
 Were made to seize him by three armed Men,
 The instruments of ruffian power. The Youth
 In the first impulse of his rage, laid one
 Dead at his feet, and to the second gave 680
 A perilous wound, which done, at sight
 Of the dead Man, he peacefully resigned
 His Person to the Law, was lodged in prison,
 And wore the fetters of a Criminal.

Through three weeks' space, by means which love devised,
 The Maid in her seclusion had received
 Tidings of Vaudracour, and how he sped
 Upon his enterprize. Thereafter came
 A silence, half a circle did the moon
 Complete, and then a whole, and still the same 690
 Silence; a thousand thousand fears and hopes
 Stirred in her mind; thoughts waking, thoughts of sleep,
 Entangled in each other, and at last
 Self-slaughter seemed her only resting-place.
 So did she fare in her uncertainty.

At length, by interference of a Friend,
 One who had sway at court, the Youth regained
 His liberty, on promise to sit down
 Quietly in his Father's House, nor take
 One step to reunite himself with her 700
 Of whom his Parents disapproved: hard law
 To which he gave consent only because
 His freedom else could nowise be procured.
 Back to his Father's house he went, remained
 Eight days, and then his resolution failed:
 He fled to Julia, and the words with which
 He greeted her were these. 'All right is gone,
 Gone from me. Thou no longer now art mine,
 I thine. A Murderer, Julia, cannot love
 An innocent Woman. I behold thy face, 710
 I see thee and my misery is complete.'
 She could not give him answer; afterwards
 She coupled with his Father's name some words
 Of vehement indignation, but the Youth
 Checked her, nor would he hear of this, for thought
 Unfilial, or unkind, had never once
 Found harbour in his breast. The Lovers thus
 United once again together lived
 For a few days, which were to Vaudracour
 Days of dejection, sorrow and remorse 720
 For that ill deed of violence which his hand
 Had hastily committed; for the Youth
 Was of a loyal spirit, a conscience nice
 And over tender for the trial which

His fate had called him to. The Father's mind,
 Meanwhile, remained unchanged, and Vaudracour
 Learned that a mandate had been newly issued
 To arrest him on the spot. Oh pain it was
 To part! he could not—and he lingered still
 To the last moment of his time, and then, 730
 At dead of night with snow upon the ground,
 He left the City, and in Villages
 The most sequestered of the neighbourhood
 Lay hidden for the space of several days,
 Until the horseman bringing back report
 That he was nowhere to be found, the search
 Was ended. Back returned the ill-fated Youth,
 And from the House where Julia lodged (to which
 He now found open ingress, having gained
 The affection of the family, who loved him 740
 Both for his own, and for the Maiden's sake)
 One night retiring, he was seized—But here
 A portion of the Tale may well be left
 In silence, though my memory could add
 Much how the Youth, and in short space of time,
 Was traversed from without, much, too, of thoughts
 By which he was employed in solitude
 Under privation and restraint, and what
 Through dark and shapeless fear of things to come,
 And what through strong compunction for the past, 750
 He suffered, breaking down in heart and mind.
 Such grace, if grace it were, had been vouchsafed,
 Or such effect had through the Father's want
 Of power, or through his negligence ensued,
 That Vaudracour was suffered to remain,
 Though under guard and without liberty,
 In the same City with the unhappy Maid
 From whom he was divided. So they fared
 Objects of general concern, till, moved
 With pity for their wrongs, the Magistrate, 760
 The same who had placed the Youth in custody,
 By application to the Minister
 Obtained his liberty upon condition
 That to his Father's House he should return.

He left his Prison almost on the eve
 Of Julia's travail. She had likewise been
 As from the time, indeed, when she had first
 Been brought for secrecy to this abode,
 Though treated with consoling tenderness,
 Herself a Prisoner, a dejected one, 770
 Filled with a lover's and a Woman's fears,
 And whensoever the Mistress of the House
 Entered the Room for the last time at night,
 And Julia with a low and plaintive voice
 Said 'You are coming then to lock me up'
 The Housewife when these words, always the same,
 Were by her Captive languidly pronounced,
 Could never hear them uttered without tears.

A day or two before her child-bed time
 Was Vaudracour restored to her, and soon 780
 As he might be permitted to return
 Into her Chamber after the Child's birth,
 The Master of the Family begged that all
 The household might be summoned, doubting not
 But that they might receive impressions then
 Friendly to human kindness. Vaudracour
 (This heard I from one present at the time)
 Held up the new-born Infant in his arms
 And kissed, and blessed, and covered it with tears,
 Uttering a prayer that he might never be 790
 As wretched as his Father. Then he gave
 The Child to her who bare it, and she too
 Repeated the same prayer, took it again
 And muttering something faintly afterwards,
 He gave the Infant to the Standers-by,
 And wept in silence upon Julia's neck.

Two months did he continue in the House,
 And often yielded up himself to plans
 Of future happiness. 'You shall return,
 Julia,' said he, 'and to your Father's House 800
 Go with your Child; you have been wretched, yet
 It is a town where both of us were born,
 None will reproach you, for our loves are known.
 With ornaments the prettiest you shall dress

Your Boy, as soon as he can run about,
 And when he thus is at his play my Father
 Will see him from the window, and the Child
 Will by his beauty move his Grandsire's heart,
 So that it will be softened, and our loves
 End happily, as they began.' These gleams 810
 Appeared but seldom, oftener he was seen
 Propping a pale and melancholy face
 Upon the Mother's bosom, resting thus
 His head upon one breast, while from the other
 The Babe was drawing in its quiet food.
 At other times, when he, in silence, long
 And fixedly had looked upon her face,
 He would exclaim, 'Julia, how much thine eyes
 Have cost me!' During day-time, when the child
 Lay in its cradle, by its side he sate, 820
 Not quitting it an instant. The whole Town
 In his unmerited misfortunes now
 Took part, and if he either at the door
 Or window for a moment with his Child
 Appeared, immediately the Street was thronged,
 While others frequently without reserve
 Passed and repassed before the house to steal
 A look at him. Oft at this time he wrote
 Requesting, since he knew that the consent
 Of Julia's Parents never could be gained 830
 To a clandestine marriage, that his Father
 Would from the birthright of an eldest Son
 Exclude him, giving but, when this was done,
 A sanction to his nuptials: vain request,
 To which no answer was returned. And now
 From her own home the Mother of his Love
 Arrived to apprise the Daughter of her fixed
 And last resolve, that, since all hope to move
 The old Man's heart proved vain, she must retire
 Into a Convent and be there immured. 840
 Julia was thunderstricken by these words,
 And she insisted on a Mother's rights
 To take her Child along with her, a grant
 Impossible, as she at last perceived.
 The Persons of the house no sooner heard

Of this decision upon Julia's fate
Than everyone was overwhelmed with grief,
Nor could they frame a manner soft enough
To impart the tidings to the Youth; but great
Was their astonishment when they beheld him 850
Receive the news in calm despondency,
Composed and silent, without outward sign
Of even the last emotion. Seeing this,
When Julia scattered some upbraiding words
Upon his slackness, he thereto returned
No answer, only took the Mother's hand
Who loved him scarcely less than her own Child,
And kissed it, without seeming to be pressed
By any pain that 'twas the hand of one
Whose errand was to part him from his Love 860
For ever. In the City he remained
A season after Julia had retired
And in the Convent taken up her home,
To the end that he might place his infant Babe
With a fit Nurse, which done, beneath the roof
Where now his little One was lodged, he passed
The day entire, and scarcely could at length
Tear himself from the cradle to return
Home to his Father's House, in which he dwelt
Awhile, and then came back that he might see 870
Whether the Babe had gained sufficient strength
To bear removal. He quitted this same Town
For the last time, attendant by the side
Of a close chair, a Litter or Sedan,
In which the Child was carried. To a hill,
Which rose at a League's distance from the Town,
The Family of the house where he had lodged
Attended him, and parted from him there,
Watching below till he had disappeared
On the hill top. His eyes he scarcely took 880
Through all that journey from the Chair in which
The Babe was carried, and at every Inn
Or place at which they halted or reposed
Laid him upon his knees, nor would permit
The hands of any but himself to dress
The Infant or undress. By one of those

Who bore the Chair these facts, at his return,
Were told, and in relating them he wept.

This was the manner in which Vaudracour
Departed with his Infant, and thus reached 890
His Father's House, where to the innocent Child
Admittance was denied. The young Man spake
No words of indignation or reproof,
But of his Father begged, a last request,
That a retreat might be assigned to him,
A house where in the Country he might dwell
With such allowance as his wants required,
And the more lonely that the Mansion was
'Twould be more welcome. To a lodge that stood
Deep in a Forest, with leave given, at the age 900
Of four and twenty summers he retired;
And thither took with him his Infant Babe,
And one Domestic for their common needs,
An aged woman. It consoled him here
To attend upon the Orphan and perform
The office of a Nurse to his young Child,
Which, after a short time, by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died.
The Tale I follow to its last recess
Of suffering or of peace, I know not which; 910
Theirs be the blame who caused the woe, not mine.

From that time forth he never uttered word
To any living. An Inhabitant
Of that same Town in which the Pair had left
So lively a remembrance of their griefs,
By chance of business coming within reach
Of his retirement, to the spot repaired
With the intent to visit him: he reached
The house and only found the Matron there,
Who told him that his pains were thrown away, 920
For that her Master never uttered word
To living soul—not even to her. Behold,
While they were speaking, Vaudracour approached;
But, seeing some one there, just as his hand
Was stretched towards the garden-gate, he shrunk,

And like a shadow glided out of view.
 Shocked at his savage outside, from the place
 The Visitor retired.

Thus lived the Youth
 Cut off from all intelligence with Man,
 And shunning even the light of common day; 930
 Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France
 Soon afterwards resounded, public hope,
 Or personal memory of his own deep wrongs,
 Rouze him; but in those solitary shades
 His days he wasted, an imbecile mind.

BOOK TEN

Residence in France and French Revolution

It was a beautiful and silent day
 That overspread the countenance of earth,
 Then fading, with unusual quietness,
 When from the Loire I parted, and through scenes^o
 Of vineyard, orchard, meadow-ground and tilth,
 Calm waters, gleams of sun, and breathless trees,
 Towards the fierce Metropolis turned my steps
 Their homeward way to England. From his Throne
 The King had fallen; the congregated Host,^o
 Dire cloud upon the front of which was written 10
 The tender mercies of the dismal wind
 That bore it, on the Plains of Liberty
 Had burst innocuously, say more, the swarm
 That came elate and jocund, like a Band
 Of Eastern Hunters, to enfold in ring
 Narrowing itself by moments and reduce
 To the last punctual spot of their despair
 A race of victims, so they seemed, themselves
 Had shrunk from sight of their own task, and fled
 In terror. Desolation and dismay 20
 Remained for them whose fancies had grown rank
 With evil expectations, confidence
 And perfect triumph to the better cause.
 The State, as if to stamp the final seal
 On her security, and to the world

Shew what she was, a high and fearless soul,
 Or rather in a spirit of thanks to those
 Who had stirred up her slackening faculties
 To a new transition, had assumed with joy
 The body and the venerable name 30
 Of a Republic. Lamentable crimes,^o
 'Tis true, had gone before this hour, the work
 Of massacre, in which the senseless sword
 Was prayed to as a judge; but these were past,
 Earth free from them for ever, as was thought,
 Ephemeral monsters, to be seen but once;
 Things that could only shew themselves and die.

This was the time in which enflamed with hope,
 To Paris I returned. Again I ranged,
 More eagerly than I had done before, 40
 Through the wide City, and in progress passed
 The Prison where the unhappy Monarch lay,
 Associate with his Children and his Wife
 In bondage, and the Palace lately stormed
 With roar of cannon, and a numerous Host.
 I crossed (a blank and empty area then)^o
 The Square of the Carousel, few weeks back
 Heaped up with dead and dying, upon these
 And other sights looking as doth a man
 Upon a volume whose contents he knows 50
 Are memorable, but from him locked up,
 Being written in a tongue he cannot read,
 So that he questions the mute leaves with pain
 And half upbraids their silence. But that night
 When on my bed I lay, I was most moved
 And felt most deeply in what world I was;
 My room was high and lonely, near the roof
 Of a large Mansion or Hotel, a spot
 That would have pleased me in more quiet times,
 Nor was it wholly without pleasure then. 60
 With unextinguished taper I kept watch,
 Reading at intervals. The fear gone by
 Pressed on me almost like a fear to come.
 I thought of those September Massacres,
 Divided from me by a little month,^o

And felt and touched them, a substantial dread;
 The rest was conjured up from tragic fictions,
 And mournful Calendars of true history,
 Remembrances and dim admonishments.
 'The horse is taught his manage, and the wind^o 70
 Of heaven wheels round and treads in his own steps,
 Year follows year, the tide returns again,
 Day follows day, all things have second birth;
 The earthquake is not satisfied at once.'
 And in such way I wrought upon myself,
 Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried,
 To the whole City, 'Sleep no more.' To this
 Add comments of a calmer mind, from which
 I could not gather full security,
 But at the best it seemed a place of fear, 80
 Unfit for the repose of night,
 Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam.

Betimes next morning to the Palace Walk
 Of Orleans I repaired and entering there
 Was greeted, among divers other notes,
 By voices of the Hawkers in the crowd
 Bawling, *Denunciation of the crimes*
Of Maximilian Robespierre. The speech
 Which in their hands they carried was the same
 Which had been recently pronounced, the day 90
 When Robespierre, well knowing for what mark
 Some words of indirect reproof had been
 Intended, rose in hardihood, and dared
 The Man who had an ill surmise of him
 To bring his charge in openness; whereat
 When a dead pause ensued, and no one stirred,
 In silence of all present, from his seat
 Louvet walked singly through the avenue
 And took his station in the Tribune, saying,
 'I, Robespierre, accuse thee!' 'Tis well known 100
 What was the issue of that charge, and how
 Louvet was left alone without support
 Of his irresolute Friends; but these are things^o
 Of which I speak, only as they were storm
 Or sunshine to my individual mind,

No further. Let me then relate that now,
 In some sort seeing with my proper eyes
 That Liberty, and Life, and Death, would soon
 To the remotest corners of the land
 Lie in the arbitrement of those who ruled 110
 The capital City, what was struggled for,
 And by what combatants victory must be won;
 The indecision on their part whose aim
 Seemed best, and the straightforward path of those
 Who in attack or in defence alike
 Were strong through their impiety, greatly I
 Was agitated; yea I could almost
 Have prayed that throughout earth upon all souls
 Worthy of liberty, upon every soul
 Matured to live in plainness and in truth, 120
 The gift of tongues might fall, and men arrive
 From the four quarters of the winds to do
 For France what without help she could not do,
 A work of honour; think not that to this
 I added, work of safety; from such thought,
 And the least fear about the end of things,
 I was as far as Angels are from guilt.

Yet did I grieve, nor only grieved, but thought
 Of opposition and of remedies:
 An insignificant Stranger, and obscure, 130
 Mean as I was, and little graced with power
 Of eloquence even in my native speech,
 And all unfit for tumult and intrigue,
 Yet would I willingly have taken up
 A service at this time for cause so great,
 However dangerous. Inly I revolved
 How much the destiny of man had still
 Hung upon single persons, that there was,
 Transcendent to all local patrimony,
 One Nature as there is one Sun in heaven; 140
 That objects, even as they are great, thereby
 Do come within the reach of humblest eyes;
 That Man was only weak through his mistrust
 And want of hope, where evidence divine
 Proclaimed to him that hope should be most sure;

That, with desires heroic and firm sense,
 A Spirit thoroughly faithful to itself,
 Unquenchable, unsleeping, undismayed,
 Was as an instinct among men, a stream
 That gathered up each petty straggling rill 150
 And vein of water, glad to be rolled on
 In safe obedience; that a mind whose rest
 Was where it ought to be, in self-restraint,
 In circumspection and simplicity,
 Fell rarely in entire discomfiture
 Below its aim, or met with from without
 A treachery that defeated it or foiled.

On the other side, I called to mind those truths
 Which are the common-places of the Schools,
 A theme for Boys, too trite even to be felt, 160
 Yet, with a revelation's liveliness,
 In all their comprehensive bearings known
 And visible to Philosophers of old,
 Men who, to business of the world untrained,
 Lived in the Shade; and to Harmodius known^o
 And his Compeer Aristogiton; known
 To Brutus; that tyrannic Power is weak,
 Hath neither gratitude, nor faith, nor love,
 Nor the support of good or evil men
 To trust in, that the Godhead which is ours 170
 Can never utterly be charmed or stilled,
 That nothing hath a natural right to last
 But equity and reason, that all else
 Meets foes irreconcilable, and at best
 Doth live but by variety of disease.

Well might my wishes be intense, my thoughts
 Strong and perturbed, not doubting at that time,
 Creed which ten shameful years have not annulled,
 But that the virtue of one paramount mind
 Would have abashed those impious crests, have quelled 180
 Outrage and bloody power, and in despite
 Of what the People were through ignorance
 And immaturity, and in the teeth
 Of desperate opposition from without,

Have cleared a passage for just government,
 And left a solid birthright to the State,
 Redeemed according to example given
 By ancient Lawgivers.

In this frame of mind,
 Reluctantly to England I returned,
 Compelled by nothing less than absolute want 190
 Of funds for my support; else, well assured
 That I both was and must be of small worth,
 No better than an alien in the Land,
 I doubtless should have made a common cause
 With some who perished, haply perished too,
 A poor mistaken and bewildered offering,
 Should to the breast of Nature have gone back
 With all my resolutions, all my hopes,
 A Poet only to myself, to Men
 Useless, and even, beloved Friend! a soul 200
 To thee unknown.

When to my native Land
 (After a whole year's absence) I returned
 I found the air yet busy with the stir
 Of a contention which had been raised up
 Against the Traffickers in Negro blood,^o
 An effort, which though baffled, nevertheless
 Had called back old forgotten principles
 Dismissed from service, had diffused some truths
 And more of virtuous feeling through the heart 210
 Of the English People. And no few of those
 So numerous (little less in verity
 Than a whole Nation crying with one voice)
 Who had been crossed in their just intent
 And righteous hope, thereby were well prepared
 To let that journey sleep awhile and join
 Whatever other Caravan appeared
 To travel forward towards Liberty
 With more success. For me that strife had ne'er
 Fastened on my affections, nor did now
 Its unsuccessful issue much excite 220
 My sorrow, having laid this faith to heart,
 That if France prospered good Men would not long

Pay fruitless worship to humanity,
 And this most rotten branch of human shame,
 Object, as seemed, of a superfluous pains,
 Would fall together with its parent tree.

Such was my then belief, that there was one,
 And only one solicitude for all.

And now the strength of Britain was put forth
 In league with the confederated Host;^o 230

Not in my single self alone I found,
 But in the minds of all ingenuous Youth,
 Change and subversion from this hour. No shock

Given to my moral nature had I known
 Down to that very moment; neither lapse
 Nor turn of sentiment that might be named

A revolution, save at this one time;
 All else was progress on the self-same path
 On which with a diversity of pace 240

I had been travelling; this a stride at once
 Into another region. True it is,

'Twas not concealed with what ungracious eyes
 Our native Rulers from the very first

Had looked upon regenerated France;
 Nor had I doubted that this day would come.

But in such contemplation I had thought
 Of general interests only, beyond this
 Had never once foretasted the event.

Now had I other business, for I felt
 The ravage of this most unnatural strife 250

In my own heart; there lay it like a weight
 At enmity with all the tenderest springs
 Of my enjoyments. I, who with the breeze
 Had played, a green leaf on the blessed tree

Of my beloved Country—nor had wished
 For happier fortune than to wither there—

Now from my pleasant station was cut off,
 And tossed about in whirlwinds. I rejoiced,

Yea, afterwards, truth painful to record!
 Exulted in the triumph of my soul 260

When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,
 Left without glory on the Field, or driven,

Brave hearts, to shameful flight. It was a grief,
 Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,
 A conflict of sensations without name,
 Of which he only who may love the sight
 Of a Village Steeple as I do can judge,
 When in the Congregation, bending all
 To their great Father, prayers were offered up
 Or praises for our Country's Victories, 270
 And 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance,
 I only, like an uninvited Guest
 Whom no one owned sate silent, shall I add,
 Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come!

Oh! much have they to account for, who would tear
 By violence at one decisive rent
 From the best Youth in England their dear pride,
 Their joy, in England; this, too, at a time
 In which worst losses easily might wear
 The best of names, when patriotic love 280
 Did of itself in modesty give away
 Like the Precursor when the Deity
 Is come, whose Harbinger he is, a time
 In which apostacy from ancient faith
 Seemed but conversion to a higher creed,
 Withal a season dangerous and wild,
 A time in which Experience would have plucked
 Flowers out of any hedge to make thereof
 A Chaplet, in contempt of his grey locks.

Ere yet the Fleet of Britain had gone forth 290
 On this unworthy service, whereunto
 The unhappy counsel of a few weak men
 Had doomed it, I beheld the Vessels lie,
 A brood of gallant creatures, on the Deep,
 I saw them in their rest, a sojourner
 Through a whole month of calm and glassy days
 In that delightful Island which protects^o
 Their place of convocation; there I heard
 Each evening, walking by the still sea-shore,
 A monitory sound that never failed, 300
 The sunset cannon. While the Orb went down

In the tranquillity of Nature, came
 That voice, ill requiem! seldom heard by me
 Without a spirit overcast, a deep
 Imagination, thought of woes to come,
 And sorrow for mankind, and pain of heart.

In France, the Men who for their desperate ends
 Had plucked up mercy by the roots were glad
 Of this new enemy. Tyrants, strong before
 In devilish pleas were ten times stronger now,° 310
 And thus beset with Foes on every side
 The goaded Land waxed mad; the crimes of few
 Spread into madness of the many; blasts
 From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven;
 The sternness of the Just, the faith of those
 Who doubted not that Providence had times
 Of anger and of vengeance, theirs who throned
 The human understanding paramount°
 And made of that their God, the hopes of those
 Who were content to barter short-lived pangs 320
 For a paradise of ages, the blind rage
 Of insolent tempers, the light vanity
 Of intermeddlers, steady purposes
 Of the suspicious, slips of the indiscreet,
 And all the accidents of life, were pressed
 Into one service, busy with one work.
 The Senate was heart-stricken, not a voice
 Uplifted, none to oppose or mitigate.
 Domestic carnage now filled all the year
 With Feast-days; the Old Man from the chimney-nook, 330
 The Maiden from the bosom of her Love,
 The Mother from the Cradle of her Babe,
 The Warrior from the Field, all perished, all,
 Friends, enemies, of all parties, ages, ranks,
 Head after head, and never heads enough
 For those who bade them fall. They found their joy,
 They made it, ever thirsty, as a Child,
 If light desires of innocent little Ones
 May with such heinous appetites be matched,
 Having a toy, a wind-mill, though the air 340
 Do of itself blow fresh, and makes the vane

Spin in his eyesight, he is not content,
 But with the play-thing at arm's length he sets
 His front against the blast, and runs amain,
 To make it whirl the faster.

In the depth

Of those enormities, even thinking minds
 Forgot at seasons whence they had their being,
 Forgot that such a sound was ever heard
 As Liberty upon earth: yet all beneath
 Her innocent authority was wrought, 350
 Nor could have been, without her blessed name.
 The illustrious Wife of Roland, in the hour^o
 Of her composure, felt that agony
 And gave it vent in her last words. O Friend,
 It was a lamentable time for man
 Whether a hope had e'er been his or not,
 A woeful time for them whose hopes did still
 Outlast the shock; most woeful for those few,
 They had the deepest feeling of the grief,
 Who still were flattered, and had trust in man. 360
 Meanwhile, the Invaders fared as they deserved;
 The Herculean Commonwealth had put forth her arms^o
 And throttled with an infant Godhead's might
 The snakes about her cradle; that was well
 And as it should be, yet no cure for those
 Whose souls were sick with pain of what would be
 Hereafter brought in charge against mankind.
 Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!
 Were my day-thoughts, my dreams were miserable;
 Through months, through years, long after the last beat 370
 Of those atrocities (I speak bare truth,
 As if to thee alone in private talk)
 I scarcely had one night of quiet sleep,
 Such ghastly visions had I of despair
 And tyranny, and implements of death,
 And long orations which in dreams I pleaded
 Before unjust Tribunals, with a voice
 Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
 Of treachery and desertion in the place
 The holiest that I knew of, my own soul. 380

When I began at first, in early youth,
 To yield myself to Nature, when that strong
 And holy passion overcame me first,
 Neither day nor night, evening or morn
 Were free from the oppression; but, Great God!
 Who send'st thyself into this breathing world
 Through Nature and through every kind of life,
 And mak'st Man what he is, Creature divine,
 In single or in social eminence,
 Above all these raised infinite ascents 390
 When reason, which enables him to be,
 Is not sequestered, what a change is here!
 How different ritual for this after worship,
 What countenance to promote this second love.
 That first was service but to things which lie
 At rest, within the bosom of thy will:
 Therefore to serve was high beatitude;
 The tumult was a gladness, and the fear
 Ennobling, venerable; sleep secure,
 And waking thoughts more rich than happiest dreams. 400

But as the ancient Prophets were enflamed
 Nor wanted consolations of their own
 And majesty of mind, when they denounced
 On Towns and Cities, wallowing in the abyss
 Of their offences, punishment to come;
 Or saw like other men with bodily eyes
 Before them in some desolated place
 The consummation of the wrath of Heaven;
 So did some portion of that spirit fall 410
 On me, to uphold me through those evil times,
 And in their rage and dog-day heat I found
 Something to glory in, as just and fit,
 And in the order of sublimest laws.
 And even if that were not, amid the awe
 Of unintelligible chastisement
 I felt a kind of sympathy with power,
 Motions raised up within me, nevertheless,
 Which had relationship to highest things.
 Wild blasts of music thus did find their way
 Into the midst of terrible events, 420

So that worst tempests might be listened to:
 Then was the truth received into my heart,
 That under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,
 Grievs bitterest of ourselves or of our Kind,
 If from the affliction somewhere do not grow
 Honour which could not else have been, a faith,
 An elevation, and a sanctity,
 If new strength be not given, or old restored,
 The blame is ours not Nature's. When a taunt
 Was taken up by scoffers in their pride, 430
 Saying, 'Behold the harvest which we reap
 From popular Government and Equality,'
 I saw that it was neither these, nor aught
 Of wild belief engrafted on their names
 By false philosophy, that caused the woe,
 But that it was a reservoir of guilt
 And ignorance, filled up from age to age,
 That could no longer hold its loathsome charge,
 But burst and spread in deluge through the Land.

And as the desert hath green spots, the sea 440
 Small islands in the midst of stormy waves,
 So that disastrous period did not want
 Such sprinklings of all human excellence,
 As were a joy to hear of. Yet (nor less
 For those bright spots, those fair examples given
 Of fortitude, and energy, and love,
 And human nature faithful to itself
 Under worst trials) was I impelled to think
 Of the glad time when first I traversed France,
 A youthful pilgrim, above all remembered 450
 That day when through an Arch that spanned the street,
 A rainbow made of garish ornaments,
 Triumphal pomp for Liberty confirmed,
 We walked, a pair of weary Travellers,
 Along the Town of Arras, place from which^o
 Issued that Robespierre, who afterwards
 Wielded the sceptre of the atheist crew.
 When the calamity spread far and wide,
 And this same City, which had even appeared
 To outrun the rest in exultation, groaned 460

Under the vengeance of her cruel Son,
 As Lear reproached the winds, I could almost
 Have quarreled with that blameless spectacle
 For being yet an image in my mind
 To mock me under such a strange reverse.

O Friend! few happier moments have been mine
 Through my whole life than that when first I heard
 That this foul Tribe of Moloch was o'erthrown,^o
 And their chief Regent levelled with the dust.
 The day was one which haply may deserve 470
 A separate chronicle. Having gone abroad^o
 From a small Village where I tarried then,
 To the same far-secluded privacy
 I was returning. Over the smooth Sands
 Of Leven's ample Æstuary lay
 My journey, and beneath a genial sun;
 With distant prospect among gleams of sky
 And clouds, and intermingled mountain tops,
 In one inseparable glory clad,
 Creatures of one ethereal substance, met 480
 In Consistory, like a diadem
 Or crown of burning Seraphs, as they sit
 In the Empyrean. Underneath this show
 Lay, as I knew, the nest of pastoral vales
 Among whose happy fields I had grown up
 From childhood. On the fulgent spectacle
 Which neither changed, nor stirred, nor passed away,
 I gazed, and with a fancy more alive
 On this account, that I had chanced to find
 That morning, ranging through the churchyard graves 490
 Of Cartmell's rural Town, the place in which
 An honored Teacher of my youth was laid.^o
 While we were Schoolboys he had died among us,
 And was born hither, as I knew, to rest
 With his own Family. A plain Stone, inscribed
 With name, date, office, pointed out the spot,
 To which a slip of verses was subjoined,
 (By his desire, as afterwards I learned)
 A fragment from the Elegy of Gray.
 A week, or little less, before his death 500

He had said to me, 'my head will soon lie low';
 And when I saw the turf that covered him,
 After the lapse of full eight years, those words,
 With sound of voice, and countenance of the Man,
 Came back upon me, so that some few tears
 Fell from me in my own despite. And now,
 Thus travelling smoothly o'er the level Sands,
 I thought with pleasure of the Verses graven
 Upon his Tombstone, saying to myself
 He loved the Poets, and if now alive, 510
 Would have loved me, as one not destitute
 Of promise, nor belying the kind hope
 Which he had formed, when I at his command,
 Began to spin, at first, my toilsome Songs.

Without me and within, as I advanced,
 All that I saw, or felt, or communed with
 Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small
 And rocky Island near, a fragment stood
 (Itself like a sea rock) of what had been 520
 A Romish Chapel, where in ancient times
 Masses were said at the hour which suited those
 Who crossed the Sands with ebb of morning tide.
 Not far from this still Ruin all the Plain
 Was spotted with a variegated crowd
 Of Coaches, Wains, and Travellers, horse and foot,
 Wading, beneath the conduct of their Guide
 In loose procession through the shallow Stream
 Of inland water; the great Sea meanwhile
 Was at safe distance, far retired. I paused,
 Unwilling to proceed, the scene appeared 530
 So gay and chearful; when a Traveller
 Chancing to pass, I carelessly inquired
 If any news were stirring; he replied
 In the familiar language of the day
 That, *Robespierre was dead*. Nor was a doubt,^o
 On further question, left within my mind
 But that the tidings were substantial truth;
 That he and his supporters all were fallen.

Great was my glee of spirit, great my joy
 In vengeance, and eternal justice, thus 540

Made manifest. 'Come now ye golden times,'
 Said I, forth-breathing on those open Sands
 A Hymn of triumph, 'as the morning comes
 Out of the bosom of the night, come Ye:
 Thus far our trust is verified; behold!
 They who with clumsy desperation brought
 Rivers of Blood, and preached that nothing else
 Could cleanse the Augean Stable, by the might^o
 Of their own helper have been swept away;^o
 Their madness is declared and visible, 550
 Elsewhere will safety now be sought, and Earth
 March firmly towards righteousness and peace.'
 Then schemes I framed more calmly, when and how
 The madding Factions might be tranquillised,
 And, though through hardships manifold and long,
 The mighty renovation would proceed;
 Thus, interrupted by uneasy bursts
 Of exultation, I pursued my way
 Along that very Shore which I had skimmed^o
 In former times, when, spurring from the Vale 560
 Of Nightshade, and St. Mary's mouldering Fane,
 And the Stone Abbot, after circuit made
 In wantonness of heart, a joyous Crew
 Of School-boys, hastening to their distant home,
 Along the margin of the moonlight Sea,
 We beat with thundering hoofs the level Sand.

From this time forth, in France, as is well known,
 Authority put on a milder face,
 Yet everything was wanting that might give
 Courage to those who looked for good by light 570
 Of rational experience, good I mean
 At hand, and in the spirit of past aims.
 The same belief I, nevertheless, retained;
 The language of the Senate and the acts
 And public measures of the Government,
 Though both of heartless omen, had not power
 To daunt me. In the People was my trust
 And in the virtues which mine eyes had seen,
 And to the ultimate repose of things
 I looked with unabated confidence. 580

I knew that wound external could not take
 Life from the young Republic, that new foes
 Would only follow in the path of shame
 Their brethren, and her triumphs be in the end
 Great, universal, irresistible.
 This faith, which was an object in my mind
 Of passionate intuition, had effect
 Not small in dazzling me; for thus, through zeal,
 Such victory I confounded in my thoughts
 With one far higher and more difficult, 590
 Triumphs of unambitious peace at home,
 And noiseless fortitude. Beholding still
 Resistance strong as heretofore, I thought
 That what was in degree the same was likewise
 The same in quality, that as the worse
 Of the two spirits then at strife remained
 Untired, the better surely would preserve
 The heart that first had roused him, never dreamt
 That transmigration could be undergone,
 A fall of being suffered, and of hope^o 600
 By creature that appeared to have received
 Entire conviction what a great ascent
 Had been accomplished, what high faculties
 It had been called to. Youth maintains, I knew,
 In all conditions of society,
 Communion more direct and intimate
 With Nature, and the inner strength she has,
 And hence, oft-times, no less, with Reason too,
 Than Age or Manhood, even. To Nature then,
 Power had reverted: habit, custom, law, 610
 Had left an interregnum's open space
 For her to stir about in, uncontrolled.
 The warmest judgments, and the most untaught,
 Found in events which every day brought forth
 Enough to sanction them, and far, far more
 To shake the authority of canons drawn
 From ordinary practice. I could see
 How Babel-like the employment was of those^o
 Who, by the recent Deluge stupefied,
 With their whole souls went culling from the day 620
 Its petty promises to build a tower

For their own safety; laughed at gravest heads,
 Who, watching in their hate of France for signs
 Of her disasters, if the stream of rumour
 Brought with it one green branch, conceited thence
 That not a single tree was left alive
 In all her forests. How could I believe
 That wisdom could in any shape come near
 Men clinging to delusions so insane?
 And thus, experience proving that no few
 Of my opinions had been just, I took
 Like credit to myself where less was due,
 And thought that other notions were as sound,
 Yea, could not but be right, because I saw
 That foolish men opposed them.

To a strain

More animated I might here give way,
 And tell, since juvenile errors are my theme,
 What in those days through Britain was performed
 To turn all judgments out of their right course;
 But this is passion over-near ourselves,
 Reality too close and too intense,
 And mingled up with something, in my mind,
 Of scorn and condemnation personal
 That would profane the sanctity of verse.
 Our Shepherds (this say merely) at that time
 Thirsted to make the guardian Crook of Law
 A tool of Murder. They who ruled the State,
 Though with such awful proof before their eyes
 That he who would sow death, reaps death, or worse,
 And can reap nothing better, child-like longed
 To imitate, not wise enough to avoid,
 Giants in their impiety alone,
 But, in their weapons and their warfare base
 As vermin working out of reach, they leagued
 Their strength perfidiously, to undermine
 Justice, and make an end of Liberty.

But from these bitter truths I must return
 To my own History. It hath been told
 That I was led to take an eager part
 In arguments of civil polity

Abruptly, and indeed before my time:
 I had approached, like other Youth, the Shield
 Of human nature from the golden side,
 And would have fought, even to the death, to attest
 The quality of the metal which I saw.
 What there is best in individual Man,
 Of wise in passion, and sublime in power,
 What there is strong and pure in household love,
 Benevolent in small societies,
 And great in large ones also, when called forth 670
 By great occasions, these were things of which
 I something knew, yet even these themselves,
 Felt deeply, were not thoroughly understood
 By Reason; nay, far from it, they were yet,
 As cause was given me afterwards to learn,
 Not proof against the injuries of the day,
 Lodged only at the Sanctuary's door,
 Not safe within its bosom. Thus prepared,
 And with such general insight into evil,
 And of the bounds which sever it from good, 680
 As books and common intercourse with life
 Must needs have given (to the novice mind,
 When the world travels in a beaten road,
 Guide faithful as is needed), I began
 To think with fervour upon management
 Of Nations, what it is and ought to be,
 And how their worth depended on their Laws
 And on the Constitution of the State.

O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
 For great were the auxiliars which then stood 690
 Upon our side, we who were strong in love.
 Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
 But to be young was very heaven! O times,
 In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
 Of custom, law, and statute took at once
 The attraction of a Country in Romance;
 When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights
 When most intent on making of herself
 A prime Enchanter to assist the work
 Which then was going forwards in her name. 700

Not favored spots alone, but the whole earth
 The beauty wore of promise, that which sets,
 To take an image which was felt, no doubt,
 Among the bowers of paradise itself,
 The budding rose above the rose full blown.
 What temper at the prospect did not wake
 To happiness unthought of? The inert
 Were roused, and lively natures rapt away:
 They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
 The Play-fellows of Fancy, who had made 710
 All powers of swiftness, subtlety, and strength
 Their ministers, used to stir in lordly wise
 Among the grandest objects of the sense,
 And deal with whatsoever they found there
 As if they had within some lurking right
 To wield it;—they too, who, of gentle mood
 Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
 Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,
 And in the region of their peaceful selves— 720
 Did now find helpers to their hearts' desire,
 And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,
 Were called upon to exercise their skill
 Not in Utopia, subterraneous Fields,
 Or some secreted Island, Heaven knows where,
 But in the very world which is the world
 Of all of us, the place on which, in the end,
 We find our happiness, or not at all.

Why should I not confess that earth was then
 To me what an inheritance new-fallen
 Seems, when the first time visited, to one 730
 Who thither comes to find in it his home?
 He walks about and looks upon the place
 With cordial transport, moulds it, and remoulds,
 And is half pleased with things that are amiss,
 'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

An active partisan, I thus convoked
 From every object pleasant circumstance
 To suit my ends. I moved among mankind
 With genial feelings still predominant;

When erring, erring on the better part, 740
 And in the kinder spirit; placable,
 Indulgent oft-times to the worst desires,
 As, on one side, not uninformed that men
 See as it hath been taught them, and that time
 Gives rights to error; on the other hand,
 That throwing off oppression must be work
 As well of license as of liberty;
 And above all, for this was more than all,
 Not caring if the wind did now and then
 Blow keen upon an eminence that gave 750
 Prospect so large into futurity;
 In brief, a child of Nature, as at first,
 Diffusing only those affections wider
 That from the cradle had grown up with me,
 And losing, in no other way than light
 Is lost in light, the weak in the more strong.

In the main outline, such, it might be said,
 Was my condition, till with open war
 Britain opposed the Liberties of France.
 This threw me first out of the pale of love, 760
 Soured and corrupted upwards to the source
 My sentiments, was not, as hitherto,
 A swallowing up of lesser things in great,
 But change of them into their opposites,
 And thus a way was opened for mistakes
 And false conclusions of the intellect,
 As gross in their degree and in their kind
 Far, far more dangerous. What had been a pride
 Was now a shame; my likings and my loves
 Ran in new channels, leaving old ones dry; 770
 And thus a blow which, in maturer age,
 Would but have touched the judgment, struck more deep
 Into sensations near the heart: meantime,
 As from the first, wild theories were afloat,
 Unto the subtleties of which, at least,
 I had but lent a careless ear, assured
 Of this, that time would soon set all things right,
 Prove that the multitude had been oppressed,
 And would be so no more.

But when events
 Brought less encouragement, and unto these 780
 The immediate proof of principles no more
 Could be entrusted, while the events themselves,
 Worn out in greatness, and in novelty,
 Less occupied the mind, and sentiments
 Could through my understanding's natural growth
 No longer justify themselves through faith
 Of inward consciousness, and hope that laid
 Its hand upon its object, evidence
 Safer, of universal application, such
 As could not be impeached, was sought elsewhere. 790

And now, become oppressors in their turn,
 Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
 For one of conquest, losing sight of all
 Which they had struggled for; and mounted up,
 Openly, in the view of earth and heaven,
 The scale of Liberty. I read her doom,
 Vexed inly somewhat, it is true, and sore,
 But not dismayed, nor taking to the shame
 Of a false Prophet; but, roused up I stuck 800
 More firmly to old tenets, and to prove
 Their temper, strained them more, and thus in heat
 Of contest did opinions every day
 Grow into consequence, till round my mind
 They clung, as if they were the life of it.

This was the time when, all things tending fast
 To depravation, the Philosophy
 That promised to abstract the hopes of man
 Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth
 For ever in a purer element
 Found ready welcome. Tempting region that^o 810
 For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,
 Where passions had the privilege to work,
 And never hear the sound of their own names;
 But, speaking more in charity, the dream
 Was flattering to the young ingenuous mind
 Pleased with extremes, and not the least with that
 Which makes the human Reason's naked self
 The object of its fervour. What delight!

How glorious! in self-knowledge and self-rule,
 To look through all the frailties of the world, 820
 And, with a resolute mastery shaking off
 The accidents of nature, time, and place,
 That make up the weak being of the past,
 Build social freedom on its only basis:
 The freedom of the individual mind,
 Which, to the blind restraint of general laws
 Superior, magisterially adopts
 One guide, the light of circumstances, flashed
 Upon an independent intellect.

For howsoe'er unsettled, never once 830
 Had I thought ill of human kind, or been
 Indifferent to its welfare, but, enflamed
 With thirst of a secure intelligence,
 And sick of other passion, I pursued
 A higher nature, wished that Man should start
 Out of the worm-like state in which he is,
 And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,
 Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight—
 A noble aspiration, yet I feel
 The aspiration, but with other thoughts 840
 And happier; for I was perplexed and sought
 To accomplish the transition by such means
 As did not lie in nature, sacrificed
 The exactness of a comprehensive mind
 To scrupulous and microscopic views
 That furnished out materials for a work
 Of false imagination, placed beyond
 The limits of experience and of truth.

Enough, no doubt, the advocates themselves 850
 Of ancient institutions had performed
 To bring disgrace upon their very names;
 Disgrace of which custom and written law,
 And sundry moral sentiments, as props
 And emanations of these institutes
 Too justly bore a part. A veil had been
 Uplifted; why deceive ourselves? 'Twas so,
 'Twas even so; and sorrow for the Man
 Who either had not eyes wherewith to see,

Or seeing hath forgotten. Let this pass,
 Suffice it that a shock had then been given 860
 To old opinions, and the minds of all men
 Had felt it; that my mind was both let loose,
 Let loose and goaded. After what hath been
 Already said of patriotic love,
 And hinted at in other sentiments,
 We need not linger long upon this theme.
 This only may be said, that from the first
 Having two natures in me, joy the one
 The other melancholy, and withal
 A happy man, and therefore bold to look 870
 On painful things, slow, somewhat, too, and stern
 In temperament, I took the knife in hand
 And, stopping not at parts less sensitive,
 Endeavoured with my best of skill to probe
 The living body of society
 Even to the heart. I pushed without remorse
 My speculations forward; yea, set foot
 On Nature's holiest places. Time may come
 When some dramatic Story may afford
 Shapes livelier to convey to thee, my Friend, 880
 What then I learned, or think I learned, of truth,
 And the errors into which I was betrayed
 By present objects, and by reasonings false
 From the beginning, inasmuch as drawn
 Out of a heart which had been turned aside
 From Nature by external accidents,
 And which was thus confounded more and more,
 Misguiding and misguided. Thus I fared,
 Dragging all passions, notions, shapes of faith,
 Like culprits to the bar, suspiciously 890
 Calling the mind to establish in plain day
 Her titles and her honours, now believing,
 Now disbelieving, endlessly perplexed
 With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground
 Of moral obligation, what the rule
 And what the sanction, till, demanding proof,
 And seeking it in everything, I lost
 All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
 Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,

Yielded up moral questions in despair, 900
 And for my future studies, as the sole
 Employment of the enquiring faculty,
 Turned towards mathematics, and their clear
 And solid evidence—Ah! then it was
 That Thou, most precious Friend! about this time^o
 First known to me, didst lend a living help
 To regulate my Soul, and then it was
 That the belovèd Woman in whose sight^o
 Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
 Of sudden admonition, like a brook 910
 That does but cross a lonely road, and now
 Seen, heard and felt, and caught at every turn,
 Companion never lost through many a league,
 Maintained for me a saving intercourse
 With my true self; for, though impaired and changed
 Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
 Than as a clouded, not a waning moon:
 She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
 A Poet, made me seek beneath that name
 My office upon earth, and nowhere else; 920
 And lastly, Nature's self, by human love
 Assisted, through the weary labyrinth
 Conducted me again to open day,
 Revived the feelings of my earlier life,
 Gave me that strength and knowledge full of peace,
 Enlarged, and never more to be disturbed,
 Which through the steps of our degeneracy,
 All degradation of this age, hath still
 Upheld me, and upholds me at this day
 In the catastrophe (for so they dream, 930
 And nothing less), when, finally, to close
 And rivet up the gains of France, a Pope
 Is summoned in to crown an Emperor;
 This last opprobrium, when we see the dog
 Returning to his vomit, when the sun
 That rose in splendour, was alive, and moved
 In exultation among living clouds,
 Hath put his function and his glory off,
 And, turned into gewgaw, a machine,
 Sets like an opera phantom. 940

Thus, O Friend!°

Through times of honour, and through times of shame,
 Have I descended, tracing faithfully
 The workings of a youthful mind, beneath
 The breath of great events, its hopes no less
 Than universal, and its boundless love;
 A Story destined for thy ear, who now,
 Among the basest and the lowest fallen
 Of all the race of men, dost make abode
 Where Etna looketh down on Syracuse,
 The city of Timoleon! Living God!° 950
 How are the Mighty prostrated! they first,
 They first of all that breathe should have awaked
 When the great voice was heard out of the tombs
 Of ancient Heroes. If for France I have grieved
 Who, in the judgment of no few, hath been
 A trifler only, in her proudest day,
 Have been distressed to think of what she once
 Promised, now is, a far more sober cause
 Thine eyes must see of sorrow in a Land
 Strewed with the wreck of loftiest years, a Land 960
 Glorious indeed, substantially renowned
 Of simple venue once, and manly praise,
 Now without one memorial hope, not even
 A hope to be deferred; for that would serve
 To cheer the heart in such entire decay.

But indignation works where hope is not,
 And thou, O Friend! wilt be refreshed. There is
 One great Society alone on earth
 The noble Living and the noble Dead:
 Thy consolation shall be there, and Time 970
 And Nature shall before thee spread in store
 Imperishable thoughts, the Place itself
 Be conscious of thy presence, and the dull
 Sirocco air of its degeneracy
 Turn as thou mov'st into a healthful breeze
 To cherish and invigorate thy frame.

Thine be those motions strong and sanative,
 A ladder for thy Spirit to reascend
 To health and joy and pure contentedness;

To me the grief confined that Thou art gone 980
 From this last spot of earth where Freedom now
 Stands single in her only sanctuary;°
 A lonely wanderer, art gone, by pain
 Compelled and sickness, at this latter day,
 This heavy time of change for all mankind;
 I feel for Thee, must utter what I feel:
 The sympathies, erewhile, in part discharged,
 Gather afresh, and will have vent again.
 My own delights do scarcely seem to me
 My own delights; the lordly Alps themselves, 990
 Those rosy Peaks, from which the Morning looks
 Abroad on many Nations, are not now
 Since thy migration and departure, Friend,
 The gladsome image in my memory
 Which they were used to be. To kindred scenes,
 On errand, at a time how different!
 Thou tak'st thy way, carrying a heart more ripe
 For all divine enjoyment, with the soul
 Which Nature gives to Poets, now by thought
 Matured, and in the summer of its strength. 1000
 Oh! wrap him in your Shades, ye Giant Woods,
 On Etna's side, and thou, O flowery Vale
 Of Enna! is there not some nook of thine°
 From the first play-time of the infant earth
 Kept sacred to restorative delight?

Child of the mountains, among Shepherds reared,
 Even from my earliest school-day time, I loved
 To dream of Sicily; and now a sweet
 And vital promise wafted from that Land
 Comes o'er my heart; there's not a single name 1010
 Of note belonging to that honored isle,
 Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles,°
 Or Archimedes, deep and tranquil Soul!
 That is not like a comfort to my grief.
 And, O Theocritus, so far have some°
 Prevailed among the Powers of heaven and earth,
 By force of graces which were theirs, that they
 Have had, as thou reportest, miracles

Wrought for them in old time: yea, not unmoved,
 When thinking of my own beloved Friend, 1020
 I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed
 Divine Comates, by his tyrant lord
 Within a chest imprisoned impiously,
 How with their honey from the fields they came
 And fed him there, alive, from month to month,
 Because the Goatherd, blessed Man! had lips
 Wet with the Muses' Nectar.

Thus I soothe
 The pensive moments by this calm fire side,
 And find a thousand fancied images
 That cheer the thoughts of those I love, and mine. 1030
 Our prayers have been accepted; Thou wilt stand
 Not as an Exile but a Visitant
 On Etna's top; by pastoral Arethuse^o
 (Or, if that fountain be indeed no more,
 Then near some other Spring, which by the name
 Thou gratest, willingly deceived)^o
 Shalt linger as a gladsome Votary,^o
 And not a Captive, pining for his home.

BOOK ELEVEN

Imagination, How Impaired and Restored

Long time hath Man's unhappiness and guilt
 Detained us; with what dismal sights beset
 For the outward view, and inwardly oppressed
 With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,
 Confusion of opinion, zeal decayed,
 And lastly, utter loss of hope itself,
 And things to hope for. Not with these began
 Our Song, and not with these our Song must end.
 Ye motions of delight, that through the fields
 Stir gently, breezes and soft airs that breathe 10
 The breath of paradise, and find your way
 To the recesses of the soul! Ye Brooks
 Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
 By day, a quiet one in silent night,
 And you, ye Groves, whose ministry it is

To interpose the covert of your shades,
 Even as a sleep, betwixt the heart of man
 And the uneasy world, 'twixt man himself
 Not seldom, and his own unquiet heart,
 Oh! that I had a music and a voice, 20
 Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
 What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
 Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring returns,
 I saw the Spring return, when I was dead
 To deeper hope, yet had I joy for her,
 And welcomed her benevolence, rejoiced
 In common with the Children of her Love,
 Plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds in bower.
 So neither were complacency, nor peace,
 Nor tender yearnings wanting for my good 30
 Through those distracted times; in Nature still^o
 Glorifying, I found a counterpoise in her,
 Which, when the spirit of evil was at height,
 Maintained for me a secret happiness.
 Her I resorted to, and loved so much
 I seemed to love as much as heretofore;
 And yet this passion, fervent as it was,
 Had suffered change; how could there fail to be
 Some change, if merely hence, that years of life
 Were going on, and with them loss or gain 40
 Inevitable, sure alternative.

This History, my Friend, hath chiefly told
 Of intellectual power, from stage to stage
 Advancing, hand in hand with love and joy,
 And of imagination teaching truth
 Until that natural graciousness of mind
 Gave way to over-pressure of the times
 And their disastrous issues. What availed,
 When Spells forbade the Voyager to land,
 The fragrance which did ever and anon 50
 Give notice of the Shore, from arbours breathed
 Of blessed sentiment and fearless love?
 What did such sweet remembrances avail,
 Perfidious then, as seemed, what served they then?
 My business was upon the barren seas,

My errand was to sail to other coasts.
 Shall I avow that I had hope to see,
 I mean that future times would surely see,
 The man to come parted as by a gulph
 From him who had been, that I could no more 60
 Trust the elevation which had made me one
 With the great Family that here and there
 Is scattered through the abyss of ages past,
 Sage, Patriot, Lover, Hero; for it seemed
 That their best virtues were not free from taint
 Of something false and weak, which could not stand
 The open eye of Reason. Then I said,
 Go to the Poets; they will speak to thee
 More perfectly of purer creatures, yet
 If Reason be nobility in man, 70
 Can aught be more ignoble than the man
 Whom they describe, would fasten if they may
 Upon our love by sympathies of truth.

Thus strangely did I war against myself;
 A Bigot to a new Idolatry,
 Did like a Monk who hath forsworn the world
 Zealously labour to cut off my heart
 From all the sources of her former strength;
 And, as by simple waving of a wand
 The wizard instantaneously dissolves 80
 Palace or grove, even so did I unsoul
 As readily by syllogistic words,
 Some Charm of Logic, ever within reach,
 Those mysteries of passion which have made,
 And shall continue evermore to make,
 (In spite of all that Reason hath performed
 And shall perform to exalt and to refine)
 One brotherhood of all the human race,
 Through all the habitations of past years,
 And those to come; and hence an emptiness 90
 Fell on the Historian's Page, and even on that
 Of Poets, pregnant with more absolute truth.
 The works of both withered in my esteem,
 Their sentence was, I thought, pronounced; their rights
 Seemed mortal, and their empire passed away.

What then remained in such eclipse? what light
 To guide or cheer? The laws of things which lie
 Beyond the reach of human will or power;
 The life of nature, by the God of love
 Inspired, celestial presence ever pure; 100
 These left, the soul of Youth must needs be rich,
 Whatever else be lost, and these were mine.
 Not a deaf echo, merely, of the thought,
 Bewildered recollections, solitary,
 But living sounds. Yet in despite of this—
 This feeling, which howe'er impaired or damped,
 Yet having been once born can never die—
 'Tis true that Earth with all her appanage^o
 Of elements and organs, storm and sunshine,
 With its pure forms and colours, pomp of clouds, 110
 Rivers and mountains, objects among which
 It might be thought that no dislike or blame,
 No sense of weakness or infirmity
 Or aught amiss could possibly have come,
 Yea, even the visible universe was scanned
 With something of a kindred spirit, fell
 Beneath the domination of a taste
 Less elevated, which did in my mind
 With its more noble influence interfere,
 Its animation and its deeper sway. 120

There comes (if need be now to speak of this
 After such long detail of our mistakes),
 There comes a time when Reason, not the grand
 And simple Reason, but that humbler power
 Which carries on its no inglorious work
 By logic and minute analysis
 Is of all Idols that which pleases most
 The growing mind. A Trifler would he be
 Who on the obvious benefits should dwell
 That rise out of this process; but to speak 130
 Of all the narrow estimates of things
 Which hence originate were a worthy theme
 For philosophic Verse. Suffice it here
 To hint that danger cannot but attend
 Upon a Function rather proud to be

The enemy of falsehood, than the friend
Of truth, to sit in judgment than to feel.

Oh! soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
Rejoiced, through early youth, before the winds 140
And powerful waters, and in lights and shades
That marched and countermarched about the hills
In glorious apparition, now all eye
And now all ear, but ever with the heart
Employed, and the majestic intellect,
Oh! Soul of Nature! that dost overflow
With passion and with life, what feeble men
Walk on this earth! how feeble have I been
When thou wert in thy strength! Nor this through stroke
Of human suffering, such as justifies 150
Remissness and inaptitude of mind,
But through presumption, even in pleasure pleased
Unworthily, disliking here, and there
Liking, by rules of mimic art transferred
To things above all art. But more, for this,^o
Although a strong infection of the age,
Was never much my habit, giving way
To a comparison of scene with scene,
Bent overmuch on superficial things,
Pampering myself with meagre novelties 160
Of colour and proportion, to the moods
Of time or season, to the moral power,
The affections, and the spirit of the place,
Less sensible. Nor only did the love
Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt
My deeper feelings, but another cause
More subtle and less easily explained
That almost seems inherent in the Creature,
Sensuous and intellectual as he is,
A twofold Frame of body and of mind; 170
The state to which I now allude was one
In which the eye was master of the heart;
When that which is in every state of life
The most despotic of our senses gained
Such strength in me as often held my mind

In absolute dominion. Gladly here,
 Entering upon abstruser argument,
 Would I endeavour to unfold the means
 Which Nature studiously employs to thwart
 This tyranny, summons all the senses each 180
 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.
 But this is matter for another Song;
 Here only let me add that my delights,
 Such as they were, were sought insatiably.°
 Though 'twas a transport of the outward sense,
 Not of the mind, vivid but not profound:
 Yet was I often greedy in the chace, 190
 And roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
 Still craving combinations of new forms,
 New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,
 Proud of its own endowments, and rejoiced
 To lay the inner faculties asleep.
 Amid the turns and counterturns, the strife
 And various trials of our complex being
 As we grow up, such thralldom of that sense
 Seems hard to shun; and yet I knew a Maid,°
 Who, young as I was then, conversed with things 200
 In higher style; from appetites like these
 She, gentle Visitant, as well she might
 Was wholly free; far less did critic rules
 Or barren intermeddling subtleties
 Perplex her mind; but, wise as Women are
 When genial circumstance hath favored them,
 She welcomed what was given, and craved no more.
 Whatever scene was present to her eyes,
 That was the best, to that she was attuned
 Through her humility and lowliness, 210
 And through a perfect happiness of soul,
 Whose variegated feelings were in this
 Sisters, that they were each some new delight:
 For she was Nature's inmate. Her the birds
 And every flower she met with, could they but

Have known her, would have loved. Methought such charm
 Of sweetness did her presence breathe around
 That all the trees, and all the silent hills,
 And every thing she looked on, should have had
 An intimation how she bore herself 220
 Towards them and to all creatures. God delights
 In such a being; for her common thoughts
 Are piety, her life is blessedness.

Even like this Maid, before I was called forth
 From the retirement of my native hills
 I loved whate'er I saw; nor lightly loved,
 But fervently, did never dream of aught
 More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed
 Than those few nooks to which my happy feet
 Were limited. I had not at that time 230
 Lived long enough, nor in the least survived
 The first diviner influence of this world
 As it appears to unaccustomed eyes;
 I worshipped then among the depths of things
 As my soul bade me; could I then take part
 In aught but admiration, or be pleased
 With any thing but humbleness and love?
 I felt, and nothing else; I did not judge,
 I never thought of judging, with the gift
 Of all this glory filled and satisfied. 240
 And afterwards, when through the gorgeous Alps
 Roaming, I carried with me the same heart.
 In truth, this degradation, howsoe'er
 Induced, effect in whatsoe'er degree
 Of custom, that prepares such wantonness
 As makes the greatest things give way to least,
 Or any other cause which hath been named,
 Or lastly, aggravated by the times,
 Which with their passionate sounds might often make
 The milder minstrelsies of rural scenes 250
 Inaudible, was transient. I had felt
 Too forcibly, too early in my life,
 Visitings of imaginative power
 For this to last: I shook the habit off
 Entirely and for ever, and again

In Nature's presence stood, as I stand now,
A sensitive, and a creative soul.

There are in our existence spots of time,^o
Which with distinct preeminence retain
A renovating Virtue, whence, depressed 260
By false opinion and contentious thought,
Or aught of heavier and more deadly weight
In trivial occupations, and the round
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
A virtue by which pleasure is enhanced,
That penetrates, enables us to mount
When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
Among those passages of life in which 270
We have had deepest feeling that the mind
Is lord and master, and that outward sense
Is but the obedient servant of her will.
Such moments worthy of all gratitude,
Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
From our first childhood: in our childhood even
Perhaps are most conspicuous. Life with me,
As far as memory can look back, is full
Of this beneficent influence.

At a time

When scarcely (I was then not six years old) 280
My hand could hold a bridle, with proud hopes
I mounted, and we rode towards the hills:
We were a pair of Horsemen; honest James
Was with me, my encourager and guide.
We had not travelled long ere some mischance
Disjoined me from my Comrade, and, through fear
Dismounting, down the rough and stony Moor
I led my Horse, and stumbling on, at length
Came to a bottom, where in former times
A Murderer had been hung in iron chains. 290
The Gibbet-mast was mouldered down, the bones
And iron case were gone, but on the turf,
Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,
Some unknown hand had carved the Murderer's name.

The monumental writing was engraven
 In times long past, and still from year to year
 By superstition of the neighbourhood
 The grass is cleared away; and to this hour
 The letters are all fresh and visible.
 Faltering, and ignorant where I was, at length 300
 I chanced to espy those characters inscribed
 On the green sod: forthwith I left the spot
 And, reascending the bare Common, saw
 A naked Pool that lay beneath the hills,
 The Beacon on the summit, and more near,^o
 A Girl who bore a Pitcher on her head
 And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
 Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
 An ordinary sight; but I should need
 Colours and words that are unknown to man 310
 To paint the visionary dreariness
 Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,
 Did at that time invest the naked Pool,
 The Beacon on the lonely Eminence,
 The Woman, and her garments vexed and tossed
 By the strong wind. When, in a blessed season
 With those two dear Ones, to my heart so dear;^o
 When in the blessed time of early love,
 Long afterwards, I roamed about
 In daily presence of this very scene, 320
 Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
 And on the melancholy Beacon, fell
 The spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam;
 And think ye not with radiance more divine
 From these remembrances, and from the power
 They left behind? So feeling comes in aid
 Of feeling, and diversity of strength
 Attends us, if but once we have been strong.
 Oh! mystery of Man, from what a depth
 Proceed thy honours! I am lost, but see 330
 In simple childhood something of the base
 On which thy greatness stands; but this I feel,
 That from thyself it is that thou must give,
 Else never canst receive. The days gone by
 Come back upon me from the dawn almost

Of life: the hiding-places of my power
 Seem open; I approach, and then 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, 340
 A substance and a life to what I feel:
 I would enshrine the spirit of the past
 For future restoration. Yet another
 Of these to me affecting incidents
 With which we will conclude.

One Christmas-time,
 The day before the Holidays began,
 Feverish, and tired, and restless, I went forth
 Into the fields, impatient for the sight
 Of those two Horses which should bear us home,
 My Brothers and myself. There was a crag, 350
 An Eminence, which from the meeting-point
 Of two highways ascending, overlooked
 At least a long half-mile of those two roads,
 By each of which the expected Steeds might come,
 The choice uncertain. Thither I repaired
 Up to the highest summit. 'Twas a day
 Stormy, and rough, and wild, and on the grass
 I sate, half-sheltered by a naked wall;
 Upon my right hand was a single sheep,
 A whistling hawthorn on my left, and there, 360
 With those companions at my side, I watched,
 Straining my eyes intensely, as the mist
 Gave intermitting prospect of the wood
 And plain beneath. Ere I to School returned
 That dreary time, ere I had been ten days
 A dweller in my Father's House, he died;^o
 And I and my two Brothers, Orphans then,^o
 Followed his Body to the Grave. The event
 With all the sorrow which it brought appeared 370
 A chastisement; and when I called to mind
 That day so lately passed, when from the crag
 I looked in such anxiety of hope,
 With trite reflections of morality,
 Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low
 To God, who thus corrected my desires;

And afterwards, the wind and sleety rain,
 And all the business of the elements,
 The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,
 And the bleak music of that old stone wall,
 The noise of wood and water, and the mist
 Which on the line of each of those two Roads
 Advanced in such indisputable shapes,
 All these were spectacles and sounds to which
 I often would repair and thence would drink
 As at a fountain; and I do not doubt
 That in this later time, when storm and rain
 Beat on my roof at midnight, or by day
 When I am in the woods, unknown to me
 The workings of my spirit thence are brought.

380

Thou wilt not languish here, O Friend, for whom
 I travel in these dim uncertain ways;
 Thou wilt assist me as a pilgrim gone
 In quest of highest truth. Behold me then
 Once more in Nature's presence, thus restored
 Or otherwise, and strengthened once again
 (With memory left of what had been escaped)
 To habits of devoutest sympathy.

390

BOOK TWELVE

Same Subject (continued)

From Nature doth emotion come, and moods
 Of calmness equally are Nature's gift,
 This is her glory; these two attributes
 Are sister horns that constitute her strength;
 This twofold influence is the sun and shower
 Of all her bounties, both in origin
 And end alike benignant. Hence it is,
 That Genius, which exists by interchange
 Of peace and excitation, finds in her
 His best and purest Friend, from her receives
 That energy by which he seeks the truth,
 Is roused, aspires, grasps, struggles, wishes, craves,
 From her that happy stillness of the mind
 Which fits him to receive it, when unsought.

10

Such benefit may souls of humblest frame
 Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine
 To speak of what myself have known and felt;
 Sweet task! for words find easy way, inspired
 By gratitude and confidence in truth.
 Long time in search of knowledge desperate, 20
 I was benighted heart and mind, but now
 On all sides day began to reappear,
 And it was proved indeed that not in vain
 I had been taught to reverence a Power
 That is the very quality and shape
 And image of right reason, that matures
 Her processes by steady laws, gives birth
 To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
 No heat of passion or excessive zeal,
 No vain conceits, provokes to no quick turns 30
 Of self-applauding intellect, but lifts
 The Being into magnanimity,
 Holds up before the mind, intoxicate
 With present objects and the busy dance
 Of things that pass away, a temperate shew
 Of objects that endure, and by this course
 Disposes her, when over-fondly set
 On leaving her incumbrances behind,
 To seek in Man, and in the frame of life,
 Social and individual, what there is 40
 Desireable, affecting, good or fair,
 Of kindred permanence, the gifts divine
 And universal, the pervading grace
 That hath been, is, and shall be. Above all
 Did Nature bring again that wiser mood,
 More deeply re-established in my soul,
 Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
 In what we blazon with the pompous names
 Of power and action, early tutored me
 To look with feelings of fraternal love 50
 Upon those unassuming things, that hold
 A silent station in this beauteous world.

Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
 Once more in Man an object of delight,

Of pure imagination, and of love;
 And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,
 Again I took the intellectual eye
 For my instructor, studious more to see
 Great Truths, than touch and handle little ones.
 Knowledge was given accordingly; my trust 60
 Was firmer in the feelings which had stood
 The test of such a trial; clearer far
 My sense of what was excellent and right;
 The promise of the present time retired
 Into its true proportion; sanguine schemes,
 Ambitious virtues pleased me less; I sought
 For good in the familiar face of life
 And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

With settling judgments now of what would last
 And what would disappear; prepared to find 70
 Ambition, folly, madness in the men
 Who thrust themselves upon this passive world
 As Rulers of the world, to see in these,
 Even when the public welfare is their aim,
 Plans without thought, or bottomed on false thought
 And false philosophy; having brought to test
 Of solid life and true result the Books
 Of modern Statists, and thereby perceived^o
 The utter hollowness of what we name
 The wealth of Nations, where alone that wealth 80
 Is lodged, and how encreased; and having gained
 A more judicious knowledge of what makes
 The dignity of individual Man,
 Of Man, no composition of the thought,
 Abstraction, shadow, image, but the man
 Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
 With our own eyes; I could not but inquire,
 Not with less interest than heretofore,
 But greater, though in spirit more subdued,
 Why is this glorious Creature to be found 90
 One only in ten thousand? What one is,
 Why may not many be? What bars are thrown
 By Nature in the way of such a hope?
 Our animal wants and the necessities

Which they impose, are these the obstacles?
 If not, then others vanish into air.
 Such meditations bred an anxious wish
 To ascertain how much of real worth
 And genuine knowledge, and true power of mind,
 Did at this day exist in those who lived 100
 By bodily labour, labour far exceeding
 Their due proportion, under all the weight
 Of that injustice which upon ourselves
 By composition of society
 Ourselves entail. To frame such estimate
 I chiefly looked (what need to look beyond?)
 Among the natural abodes of men,
 Fields with their rural works, recalled to mind
 My earliest notices, with these compared
 The observations of my later youth, 110
 Continued downwards to that very day.

For time had never been in which the throes
 And mighty hopes of Nations, and the stir
 And tumult of the world, to me could yield,
 How far soe'er transported and possessed,
 Full measure of content, but still I craved
 An intermixture of distinct regards
 And truths of individual sympathy
 Nearer ourselves. Such often might be gleaned
 From that great City, else it must have been 120
 A heart-depressing wilderness indeed,
 Full soon to me a wearisome abode;
 But much was wanting; therefore did I turn
 To you, ye Pathways and ye lonely Roads,
 Sought you enriched with everything I prized,
 With human kindness and with Nature's joy.

Oh! next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed
 Alas! to few in this untoward world,
 The bliss of walking daily in Life's prime
 Through field or forest with the Maid we love, 130
 While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
 Nothing but happiness, living in some place,
 Deep Vale, or anywhere, the home of both,
 From which it would be misery to stir;

Oh! next to such enjoyment of our youth,
 In my esteem, next to such dear delight,
 Was that of wandering on from day to day
 Where I could meditate in peace, and find
 The knowledge which I love, and teach the sound
 Of Poet's music to strange fields and groves, 140
 Converse with men, where if we meet a face
 We almost meet a friend, on naked Moors
 With long, long ways before, by Cottage Bench
 Or Well-spring where the weary Traveller rests.

I love a public road: few sights there are
 That please me more; such object hath had power
 O'er my imagination since the dawn
 Of childhood, when its disappearing line,
 Seen daily afar off, on one bare steep
 Beyond the limits which my feet had trod, 150
 Was like a guide into eternity,
 At least to things unknown and without bound.
 Even something of the grandeur which invests
 The Mariner who sails the roaring sea
 Through storm and darkness, early in my mind
 Surrounded, too, the Wanderers of the Earth,
 Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more.
 Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites;^o
 From many other uncouth Vagrants passed
 In fear, have walked with quicker step; but why 160
 Take note of this? When I began to inquire,
 To watch and question those I met, and held
 Familiar talk with them, the lonely roads
 Were schools to me in which I daily read
 With most delight the passions of mankind,
 There saw into the depth of human souls,
 Souls that appear to have no depth at all
 To vulgar eyes. And now convinced at heart^o
 How little that to which alone we give
 The name of education hath to do 170
 With real feeling and just sense, how vain
 A correspondence with the talking world
 Proves to the most, and called to make good search
 If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked

With toil, is therefore yoked with ignorance,
 If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
 And intellectual strength so rare a boon,
 I prized such walks still more; for there I found
 Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
 And steadiness; and healing and repose 180
 To every angry passion. There I heard,
 From mouths of lowly men, and of obscure,
 A tale of honour; sounds in unison
 With loftiest promises of good and fair.

There are who think that strong affections, love
 Known by whatever name, is falsely deemed
 A gift, to use a term which they would use,
 Of vulgar Nature, that its growth requires
 Retirement, leisure, language purified
 By manners thoughtful and elaborate, 190
 That whoso feels such passion in excess
 Must live within the very light and air
 Of elegances that are made by man.
 True is it, where oppression worse than death
 Salutes the Being at his birth, where grace
 Of culture hath been utterly unknown,
 And labour in excess and poverty
 From day to day pre-occupy the ground
 Of the affections, and to Nature's self
 Oppose a deeper nature, there indeed, 200
 Love cannot be; nor does it easily thrive
 In cities, where the human heart is sick,
 And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed:
 Thus far, no further, is that inference good.

Yes, in those wanderings deeply did I feel
 How we mislead each other, above all
 How Books mislead us, looking for their fame
 To judgments of the wealthy Few, who see
 By artificial lights; how they debase
 The Many for the pleasure of those few; 210
 Effeminately level down the truth
 To certain general notions for the sake
 Of being understood at once, or else
 Through want of better knowledge in the men

Who frame them, flattering thus our self-conceit
 With pictures that ambitiously set forth
 The differences, the outside marks by which
 Society has parted man from man,
 Neglectful of the universal heart.

Here calling up to mind what then I saw 220
 A youthful Traveller, and see daily now
 Before me in my rural neighbourhood,
 Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
 To Nature, and the power of human minds,
 To men as they are men within themselves.
 How oft high service is performed within
 When all the external man is rude in shew,
 Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
 But a mere mountain-Chapel such as shields
 Its simple worshippers from sun and shower. 230
 Of these, said I, shall be my Song; of these,
 If future years mature me for the task,
 Will I record the praises, making Verse
 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 240
 As found among the best of those who live
 Not unexalted by religious hope,
 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 human kind and what we are.
 Be mine to follow with no timid step
 Where knowledge leads me; it shall be my pride 250
 That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
 Speaking no dream but things oracular,
 Matter not lightly to be heard by those
 Who to the letter of the outward promise

Do read the invisible soul, by men adroit
 In speech and for communion with the world
 Accomplished, minds whose faculties are then
 Most active when they are most eloquent,
 And elevated most when most admired.
 Men may be found of other mold than these, 260
 Who are their own upholders, to themselves
 Encouragement, and energy and will,
 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
 As native passion dictates. Others, too,
 There are among the walks of homely life
 Still higher, men for contemplation framed,
 Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase,
 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
 Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse:
 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power, 270
 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, loveth us
 When we are unregarded by the world.

Also about this time did I receive
 Convictions still more strong than heretofore
 Not only that the inner frame is good, 280
 And graciously composed, but that no less
 Nature through all conditions hath a power
 To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
 The outside of her creatures, and to breathe
 Grandeur upon the very humblest face
 Of human life. I felt that the array
 Of outward circumstance and visible form
 Is to the pleasure of the human mind
 What passion makes it, that meanwhile the forms
 Of Nature have a passion in themselves 290
 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. Dearest Friend,
 Forgive me if I say that I, who long
 Had harboured reverentially a thought 300
 That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
 Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
 Have each for his peculiar dower, a sense
 By which he is enabled to perceive
 Something unseen before; forgive me, Friend,
 If I, the meanest of this Band, had hope
 That unto me had also been vouchsafed
 An influx, that in some sort I possessed
 A privilege, and that a work of mine,
 Proceeding from the depth of untaught things, 310
 Enduring and creative, might become
 A power like one of Nature's.

To such mood,

Once above all, a Traveller at that time
 Upon the Plain of Sarum, was I raised;°
 There on the pastoral Downs without a track
 To guide me, or along the bare white roads
 Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,
 While through those vestiges of ancient times
 I ranged, and by the solitude o'ercome,
 I had a reverie and saw the past, 320
 Saw multitudes of men, and here and there,
 A single Briton in his wolf-skin vest
 With shield and stone-axe, stride across the Wold;
 The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear
 Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength
 Long mouldered of barbaric majesty.
 I called upon the darkness; and it took,
 A midnight darkness seemed to come and take
 All objects from my sight; and lo! again
 The desert visible by dismal flames! 330
 It is the sacrificial Altar, fed
 With living men; how deep the groans; the voice
 Of those in the gigantic wicker thrills
 Throughout the region far and near, pervades

The monumental hillocks; and the pomp
 Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.
 At other moments, for through that wide waste
 Three summer days I roamed, when 'twas my chance
 To have before me on the downy Plain
 Lines, circles, mounts, a mystery of shapes 340
 Such as in many quarters yet survive,
 With intricate profusion figuring o'er
 The untilled ground, the work, as some divine,
 Of infant science, imitative forms
 By which the Druids covertly expressed
 Their knowledge of the heavens, and imaged forth
 The constellations, I was gently charmed,
 Albeit with an antiquarian's dream,
 And saw the bearded Teachers, with white wands
 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky 350
 Alternately, and Plain below, while breath
 Of music seemed to guide them, and the Waste
 Was cheared with stillness and a pleasant sound.

This for the past, and things that may be viewed
 Or fancied, in the obscurities of time.
 Nor is it, Friend, unknown to thee; at least
 Thyself delighted, Thou for my delight
 Hast said, perusing some imperfect verse
 Which in that lonesome journey was composed,
 That also then I must have exercised 360
 Upon the vulgar forms of present things
 And actual world of our familiar days,
 A higher power, have caught from them a tone,
 An image, and a character, by books
 Not hitherto reflected. Call we this^o
 But a persuasion taken up by thee
 In friendship: yet the mind is to herself
 Witness and judge, and I remember well
 That in life's every-day appearances
 I seemed about this period to have sight 370
 Of a new world, a world, too, that was fit
 To be transmitted and made visible
 To other eyes, as having for its base
 That whence our dignity originates,

That which both gives it being and maintains
 A balance, an ennobling interchange
 Of action from within and from without:
 The excellence, pure spirit, and best power
 Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

BOOK THIRTEEN

Conclusion

In one of these excursions, travelling then
 Through Wales on foot, and with a youthful Friend,
 I left Bethkelet's huts at couching-time,
 And westward took my way to see the sun
 Rise from the top of Snowdon. Having reached^o
 The Cottage at the Mountain's foot, we there
 Rouzed up the Shepherd, who by ancient right
 Of office is the Stranger's usual Guide,
 And after short refreshment sallied forth.

It was a Summer's night, a close warm night, 10
 Wan, dull and glaring, with a dripping mist^o
 Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky,
 Half threatening storm and rain: but on we went
 Unchecked, being full of heart and having faith
 In our tried Pilot. Little could we see,
 Hemmed round on every side with fog and damp,
 And, after ordinary travellers' chat
 With our Conductor, silently we sank
 Each into commerce with his private thoughts.
 Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself 20
 Was nothing either seen or heard the while
 Which took me from my musings, save that once
 The Shepherd's Cur did to his own great joy
 Unearth a hedgehog in the mountain crags
 Round which he made a barking turbulent.
 This small adventure, for even such it seemed
 In that wild place and at the dead of night,
 Being over and forgotten, on we wound
 In silence as before. With forehead bent
 Earthward, as if in opposition set 30
 Against an enemy, I panted up

With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
 Thus might we wear perhaps an hour away,
 Ascending at loose distance each from each,
 And I, as chanced, the foremost of the Band,
 When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
 And with a step or two seemed brighter still,
 Nor had I time to ask the cause of this,
 For instantly a Light upon the turf
 Fell like a flash: I looked about, and lo! 40
 The Moon stood naked in the Heavens, at height
 Immense above my head, and on the shore
 I found myself of a huge sea of mist,
 Which, meek and silent, rested at my feet.
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
 All over this still Ocean, and beyond,
 Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves,
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
 Into the Sea, the real Sea, that seemed
 To dwindle and give up its majesty, 50
 Usurped upon as far as sight could reach.
 Meanwhile, the Moon looked down upon this shew
 In single glory, and we stood, the mist
 Touching our very feet: and from the shore
 At distance not the third part of a mile
 Was a blue chasm, a fracture in the vapour,
 A deep and gloomy breathing-place, through which
 Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
 Innumerable, roaring with one voice.
 The universal spectacle throughout 60
 Was shaped for admiration and delight,
 Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
 Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
 That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged
 The Soul, the Imagination of the whole.

A meditation rose in me that night
 Upon the lonely Mountain when the scene
 Had passed away, and it appeared to me
 The perfect image of a mighty Mind,
 Of one that feeds upon infinity, 70
 That is exalted by an underpresence,

The sense of God, or whatso'er is dim
 Or vast in its own being; above all
 One function of such mind had Nature there
 Exhibited by putting forth, and that
 With circumstance most awful and sublime,
 That domination which she oftentimes
 Exerts upon the outward face of things,
 So moulds them, and endues, abstracts, combines,
 Or by abrupt and unhabitual influence
 Doth make one object so impress itself
 Upon all others, and pervade them so,
 That even the grossest minds must see and hear
 And cannot chuse but feel. The Power which these
 Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
 Thrusts forth upon the senses, is the express
 Resemblance, in the fulness of its strength
 Made visible, a genuine Counterpart
 And Brother of the glorious faculty
 Which higher minds bear with them as their own. 80
 This is the very spirit in which they deal
 With all the objects of the universe;
 They from their native selves can send abroad
 Like transformations, for themselves create
 A like existence, and, whene'er it is
 Created for them, catch it by an instinct;
 Them the enduring and the transient both
 Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things
 From least suggestions, ever on the watch,
 Willing to work and to be wrought upon. 90
 They need not extraordinary calls
 To rouze them, in a world of life they live,
 By sensible impressions not enthralled,
 But quickened, rouzed, and made thereby more fit
 To hold communion with the invisible world.
 Such minds are truly from the Deity,
 For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss
 That can be known is theirs, the consciousness
 Of whom they are habitually infused
 Through every image, and through every thought, 100
 And all impressions; hence religion, faith,
 And endless occupation for the soul 110

Whether discursive or intuitive;°
 Hence sovereignty within and peace at will,
 Emotion which best foresight need not fear,
 Most worthy then of trust when most intense:
 Hence cheerfulness in every act of life;
 Hence truth in moral judgements and delight
 That fails not in the external universe.

Oh! who is he that hath his whole life long 120
 Preserved, enlarged this freedom in himself!
 For this alone is genuine Liberty.
 Witness, ye Solitudes! where I received
 My earliest visitations, careless then
 Of what was given me, and where now I roam,
 A meditative, oft a suffering Man,
 And yet, I trust, with undiminished powers;
 Witness, whatever falls my better mind,
 Revolving with the accidents of life,
 May have sustained, that, howsoe'er misled, 130
 I never, in the quest of right and wrong,
 Did tamper with myself from private aims;
 Nor was in any of my hopes the dupe
 Of selfish passions; nor did wilfully
 Yield ever to mean cares and low pursuits;
 But rather did with jealousy shrink back°
 From every combination that might aid
 The tendency, too potent in itself,
 Of habit to enslave the mind, I mean
 Oppress it by the laws of vulgar sense, 140
 And substitute a universe of death,
 The falsest of all worlds, in place of that
 Which is divine and true. To fear and love,
 To love as first and chief, for there fear ends,
 Be this ascribed; to early intercourse,
 In presence of sublime and lovely forms,
 With the adverse principles of pain and joy,
 Evil as one is rashly named by those
 Who know not what they say. From love, for here
 Do we begin and end, all grandeur comes, 150
 All truth and beauty, from pervading love,
 That gone, we are as dust. Behold the fields

In balmy spring-time, full of rising flowers
 And happy creatures; see that Pair, the Lamb
 And the Lamb's Mother, and their tender ways
 Shall touch thee to the heart: in some green bower
 Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
 The One who is thy choice of all the world,
 There linger, lulled and lost, and rapt away,
 Be happy to thy fill: thou call'st this love 160
 And so it is; but there is higher love
 Than this, a love that comes into the heart
 With awe and a diffusive sentiment;
 Thy love is human merely; this proceeds
 More from the brooding Soul, and is divine.

This love more intellectual cannot be
 Without Imagination, which, in truth,
 Is but another name for absolute strength
 And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
 And reason in her most exalted mood. 170
 This faculty hath been the moving soul
 Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
 From darkness, and the very place of birth
 In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard
 The sound of waters; followed it to light
 And open day, accompanied its course
 Among the ways of Nature, afterwards
 Lost sight of it bewildered and engulfed,
 Then given it greeting, as it rose once more
 With strength, reflecting in its solemn breast 180
 The works of man and face of human life;
 And lastly, from its progress have we drawn
 The feeling of life endless, the one thought
 By which we live, Infinity and God.
 Imagination having been our theme,
 So also hath that intellectual love,
 For they are each in each, and cannot stand
 Dividually.—Here must thou be, O Man!
 Strength to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;
 Here keepest thou thy individual state: 190
 No other can divide with thee this work,
 No secondary hand can intervene

To fashion this ability. 'Tis thine,
 The prime and vital principle is thine
 In the recesses of thy nature, far
 From any reach of outward fellowship,
 Else 'tis not thine at all. But joy to him,
 Oh, joy to him who here hath sown, hath laid
 Here the foundations of his future years!
 For all that friendship, all that love can do, 200
 All that a darling countenance can look
 Or dear voice utter, to complete the man,
 Perfect him, made imperfect in himself,
 All shall be his: and he whose soul hath risen
 Up to the height of feeling intellect
 Shall want no humbler tenderness, his heart
 Be tender as a nursing Mother's heart;
 Of female softness shall his life be full,
 Of little loves and delicate desires,
 Mild interests and gentlest sympathies. 210

Child of my parents! Sister of my Soul!
 Elsewhere have strains of gratitude been breathed
 To thee for all the early tenderness
 Which I from thee imbibed. And true it is
 That later seasons owed to thee no less;
 For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch
 Of other kindred hands that opened out
 The springs of tender thought in infancy,
 And spite of all which singly I had watched 220
 Of elegance, and each minuter charm
 In Nature and in life, still to the last,
 Even to the very going out of youth,
 The period which our Story now hath reached,
 I too exclusively esteemed that love,
 And sought that beauty, which, as Milton sings,
 Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down
 This over-sternness; but for thee, sweet Friend,
 My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had been
 Far longer what by Nature it was framed,
 Longer retained its countenance severe, 230
 A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
 Familiar, and a favorite of the Stars;
 But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,

Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
 And teach the little birds to build their nests
 And warble in its chambers. At a time
 When Nature, destined to remain so long
 Foremost in my affections, had fallen back
 Into a second place, well pleased to be
 A handmaid to a nobler than herself, 240
 When every day brought with it some new sense
 Of exquisite regard for common things,
 And all the earth was budding with these gifts
 Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
 Dear Sister, was a kind of gentler spring
 That went before my steps.

With such a theme,
 Coleridge! with this my argument, of thee
 Shall I be silent? O most loving Soul!
 Placed on this earth to love and understand,
 And from thy presence shed the light of love, 250
 Shall I be mute ere thou be spoken of?
 Thy gentle Spirit to my heart of hearts
 Did also find its way; and thus the life
 Of all things and the mighty unity
 In all which we behold, and feel, and are,
 Admitted more habitually a mild
 Interposition, and closelier gathering thoughts
 Of man and his concerns, such as become
 A human Creature, be he who he may!
 Poet, or destined for a humbler name; 260
 And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
 The rapture of the Hallelujah sent
 From all that breathes and is, was chastened, stemmed,
 And balanced, by a Reason which indeed
 Is reason; duty and pathetic truth;
 And God and Man divided, as they ought,
 Between them the great system of the world,
 Where Man is sphered, and which God animates.

And now, O Friend! this History is brought
 To its appointed close: the discipline 270
 And consummation of the Poet's mind,
 In everything that stood most prominent,

Have faithfully been pictured; we have reached
 The time (which was our object from the first)
 When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,
 Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such
 My knowledge, as to make me capable
 Of building up a work that should endure.
 Yet much hath been omitted, as need was;
 Of Books how much! and even of the other wealth 280
 Which is collected among woods and fields,
 Far more: for Nature's secondary grace,
 That outward illustration which is hers,
 Hath hitherto been barely touched upon,
 The charm more superficial, and yet sweet,
 Which from her works finds way, contemplated
 As they hold forth a genuine counterpart
 And softening mirror of the moral world.

Yes, having tracked the main essential Power,
 Imagination, up her way sublime, 290
 In turn might Fancy also be pursued
 Through all her transmigrations, till she too
 Was purified, had learned to ply her craft
 By judgment steadied. Then might we return
 And in the Rivers and the Groves behold
 Another face, might hear them from all sides
 Calling upon the more instructed mind
 To link their images, with subtle skill
 Sometimes, and by elaborate research,
 With forms and definite appearances 300
 Of human life, presenting them sometimes
 To the involuntary sympathy
 Of our internal being, satisfied
 And soothed with a conception of delight
 Where meditation cannot come, which thought
 Could never heighten. Above all, how much
 Still nearer to ourselves is overlooked
 In human nature and that marvellous world
 As studied first in my own heart, and then
 In life, among the passions of mankind 310
 And qualities commixed and modified
 By the infinite varieties and shades

Of individual character. Herein
 It was for me (this justice bids me say)
 No useless preparation to have been
 The pupil of a public School, and forced
 In hardy independence to stand up
 Among conflicting passions and the shock
 Of various tempers, to endure and note
 What was not understood though known to be; 320
 Among the mysteries of love and hate,
 Honour and shame, looking to right and left,
 Unchecked by innocence too delicate
 And moral notions too intolerant,
 Sympathies too contracted. Hence, when called
 To take a station among Men, the step
 Was easier, the transition more secure,
 More profitable also; for the mind
 Learns from such timely exercise to keep
 In wholesome separation the two natures, 330
 The one that feels, the other that observes.

Let one word more of personal circumstance,
 Not needless, as it seems, be added here.
 Since I withdrew unwillingly from France,
 The Story hath demanded less regard
 To time and place; and where I lived, and how,
 Hath been no longer scrupulously marked.
 Three years, until a permanent abode
 Received me with that Sister of my heart
 Who ought by rights the dearest to have been 340
 Conspicuous through this biographic Verse,
 Star seldom utterly concealed from view,
 I led an undomestic Wanderer's life.
 In London chiefly was my home, and thence
 Excursively, as personal friendships, chance
 Or inclination led, or slender means
 Gave leave, I roamed about from place to place
 Tarrying in pleasant nooks, wherever found
 Through England or through Wales. A Youth (he bore
 The name of Calvert; it shall live, if words^o 350
 Of mine can give it life,) without respect
 To prejudice or custom, having hope

That I had some endowments by which good
 Might be promoted, in his last decay
 From his own Family withdrawing part
 Of no redundant Patrimony, did
 By a Bequest sufficient for my needs
 Enable me to pause for choice, and walk
 At large and unrestrained, nor damped too soon
 By mortal cares. Himself no Poet, yet 360
 Far less a common Spirit of the world,
 He deemed that my pursuits and labours lay
 Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
 Perhaps to necessary maintenance,
 Without some hazard to the finer sense;
 He cleared a passage for me, and the stream
 Flowed in the bent of Nature.

Having now
 Told what best merits mention, further pains
 Our present labour seems not to require,
 And I have other tasks. Call back to mind 370
 The mood in which this Poem was begun,
 O Friend! the termination of my course
 Is nearer now, much nearer; yet even then
 In that distraction and intense desire
 I said unto the life which I had lived,
 Where art thou? Hear I not a voice from thee
 Which 'tis reproach to hear? Anon I rose
 As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched
 Vast prospect of the world which I had been
 And was; and hence this Song, which like a lark 380
 I have protracted, in the unwearied Heavens
 Singing, and often with more plaintive voice
 Attempered to the sorrows of the earth;
 Yet centring all in love, and in the end
 All gratulant if rightly understood.

Whether to me shall be allotted life,^o
 And with life power to accomplish aught of worth
 Sufficient to excuse me in men's sight
 For having given this Record of myself,
 Is all uncertain: but, beloved Friend, 390
 When, looking back thou seest, in clearer view

Than any sweetest sight of yesterday,
 That summer when on Quantock's grassy Hills^o
 Far ranging, and among the sylvan Coombs,
 Thou in delicious words, with happy heart,
 Didst speak the Vision of that Ancient Man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
 Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;
 And I, associate in such labour, walked
 Murmuring of him who, joyous hap! was found, 400
 After the perils of his moonlight ride
 Near the loud Waterfall; or her who sate
 In misery near the miserable Thorn;
 When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,
 And hast before thee all which then we were,
 To thee, in memory of that happiness
 It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend,
 Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
 Is labour not unworthy of regard.
 To thee the work shall justify itself. 410

The last and later portions of this Gift
 Which I for Thee design, have been prepared
 In times which have from those wherein we first
 Together wantoned in wild Poesy,
 Differed thus far, that they have been, my Friend,
 Times of much sorrow, of a private grief^o
 Keen and enduring, which the frame of mind
 That in this meditative History
 Hath been described, more deeply makes me feel,
 Yet likewise hath enabled me to bear 420
 More firmly; and a comfort now, a hope,
 One of the dearest which this life can give,
 Is mine; that Thou art near, and wilt be soon
 Restored to us in renovated health
 When, after the first mingling of our tears,
 'Mong other consolations we may find
 Some pleasure from this Offering of my love.

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,
 And all will be complete, thy race be run,
 Thy monument of glory will be raised. 430
 Then, though, too weak to tread the ways of truth,

This Age fall back to old idolatry,
Though men return to servitude as fast
As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
By Nations sink together, we shall still
Find solace in the knowledge which we have,
Blessed with true happiness if we may be
United helpers forward of a day
Of firmer trust, joint-labourers in the work
(Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe) 440
Of their redemption, surely yet to come.
Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason and by truth; what we have loved
Others will love; and we may 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 revolutions in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged) 450
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of substance and of fabric more divine.

FROM *THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA* (1809)

(a)

The Convention, recently concluded by the Generals at the head of the British army in Portugal, is one of the most important events of our time. It would be deemed so in France, if the Ruler of that country could dare to make it public with those merely of its known bearings and dependences with which the English people are acquainted; it has been deemed so in Spain and Portugal as far as the people of those countries have been permitted to gain, or have gained, a knowledge of it; and what this nation has felt and still feels upon the subject is sufficiently manifest. Wherever the tidings were communicated, they carried agitation along with them—a conflict of sensations in which, though sorrow was predominant, yet, through force of scorn, impatience, hope, and indignation, and through the universal participation in passions so complex, and the sense of power which this necessarily included—the whole partook of the energy and activity of congratulation and joy. Not a street, not a public room, not a fire-side in the island which was not disturbed as by a local or private trouble; men of all estates, conditions, and tempers were affected apparently in equal degrees. Yet was the event by none received as an open and measurable affliction: it had indeed features bold and intelligible to every one; but there was an under-expression which was strange, dark, and mysterious—and, accordingly as different notions prevailed, or the object was looked at in different points of view, we were astonished like men who are overwhelmed without forewarning—fearful like men who feel themselves to be helpless, and indignant and angry like men who are betrayed. In a word, it would not be too much to say that the tidings of this event did not spread with the commotion of a storm which sweeps visibly over our heads, but like an earthquake which rocks the ground under our feet.

How was it possible that it could be otherwise? For that army had been sent upon a service which appealed so strongly to all that was human in the heart of this nation—that there was scarcely a gallant

father of a family who had not his moments of regret that he was not a soldier by profession, which might have made it his duty to accompany it; every high-minded youth grieved that his first impulses, which would have sent him upon the same errand, were not to be yielded to, and that after-thought did not sanction and confirm the instantaneous dictates or the reiterated persuasions of an heroic spirit. The army took its departure with prayers and blessings which were as widely spread as they were fervent and intense. For it was not doubted that, on this occasion, every person of which it was composed, from the General to the private soldier, would carry both into his conflicts with the enemy in the field, and into his relations of peaceful intercourse with the inhabitants, not only the virtues which might be expected from him as a soldier, but the antipathies and sympathies, the loves and hatreds of a citizen—of a human being—acting, in a manner hitherto unprecedented under the obligation of his human and social nature. If the conduct of the rapacious and merciless adversary rendered it neither easy nor wise—made it, I might say, impossible to give way to that unqualified admiration of courage and skill, made it impossible in relation to him to be exalted by those triumphs of the courteous affections, and to be purified by those refinements of civility which do, more than any thing, reconcile a man of thoughtful mind and humane dispositions to the horrors of ordinary war; it was felt that for such loss the benign and accomplished soldier would upon this mission be abundantly recompensed by the enthusiasm of fraternal love with which his Ally, the oppressed people whom he was going to aid in rescuing themselves, would receive him; and that this, and the virtues which he would witness in them, would furnish his heart with never-failing and far nobler objects of complacency and admiration. The discipline of the army was well known; and as a machine, or a vital organized body, the Nation was assured that it could not but be formidable; but thus to the standing excellence of mechanic or organic power seemed to be super-added, at this time, and for this service, the force of *inspiration*: could any thing therefore be looked for, but a glorious result? The army proved its prowess in the field; and what has been the result is attested, and long will be attested, by the downcast looks—the silence—the passionate exclamations—the sighs and shame of every man who is worthy to breathe the air or to look upon the green-fields of Liberty in this blessed and highly-favoured Island which we inhabit.

If I were speaking of things however weighty, that were long past and dwindled in the memory, I should scarcely venture to use this language; but the feelings are of yesterday—they are of to-day; the flower, a melancholy flower it is! is still in blow, nor will, I trust, its leaves be shed through months that are to come: for I repeat that the heart of the nation is in this struggle. This just and necessary war, as we have been accustomed to hear it styled from the beginning of the contest in the year 1793, had, some time before the Treaty of Amiens, viz. after the subjugation of Switzerland, and not till then, begun to be regarded by the body of the people, as indeed both just and necessary; and this justice and necessity were by none more clearly perceived, or more feelingly bewailed, than by those who had most eagerly opposed the war in its commencement, and who continued most bitterly to regret that this nation had ever borne a part in it. Their conduct was herein consistent: they proved that they kept their eyes steadily fixed upon principles; for, though there was a shifting or transfer of hostility in their minds as far as regarded persons, they only combated the same enemy opposed to them under a different shape; and that enemy was the spirit of selfish tyranny and lawless ambition. This spirit, the class of persons of whom I have been speaking, (and I would now be understood, as associating them with an immense majority of the people of Great Britain, whose affections, notwithstanding all the delusions which had been practised upon them, were, in the former part of the contest, for a long time on the side of their nominal enemies,) this spirit, when it became undeniably embodied in the French government, they wished, in spite of all dangers, should be opposed by war; because peace was not to be procured without submission, which could not but be followed by a communion, of which the word of greeting would be, on the one part, insult,—and, on the other, degradation. The people now wished for war, as their rulers had done before, because open war between nations is a defined and effectual partition and the sword, in the hands of the good and the virtuous, is the most intelligible symbol of abhorrence. It was in order to be preserved from spirit-breaking submissions—from the guilt of seeming to approve that which they had not the power to prevent, and out of a consciousness of the danger that such guilt would otherwise actually steal upon them, and that thus, by evil communications and participations, would be weakened and finally destroyed, those moral sensibilities and energies, by virtue of which alone, their liberties, and even their lives, could be preserved,—that the people of Great Britain

determined to encounter all perils which could follow in the train of open resistance.—There were some, and those deservedly of high character in the country, who exerted their utmost influence to counteract this resolution; nor did they give to it so gentle a name as want of prudence, but they boldly termed it blindness and obstinacy. Let them be judged with charity!

But there are promptings of wisdom from the penetralia of human nature, which a people can hear, though the wisest of their practical Statesmen be deaf towards them. This authentic voice, the people of England had heard and obeyed: and, in opposition to French tyranny growing daily more insatiate and implacable, they ranged themselves zealously under their Government; though they neither forgot nor forgave its transgressions, in having first involved them in a war with a people then struggling for its own liberties under a twofold affliction—confounded by inbred faction, and beleaguered by a cruel and imperious external foe. But these remembrances did not vent themselves in reproaches, nor hinder us from being reconciled to our Rulers, when a change or rather a revolution in circumstances had imposed new duties: and, in defiance of local and personal clamour, it may be safely said, that the nation united heart and hand with the Government in its resolve to meet the worst, rather than stoop its head to receive that which, it was felt, would not be the garland but the yoke of peace. Yet it was an afflicting alternative; and it is not to be denied, that the effort, if it had the determination, wanted the cheerfulness of duty. Our condition savoured too much of a grinding constraint—too much of the vassalage of necessity;—it had too much of fear, and therefore of selfishness, not to be contemplated in the main with rueful emotion. We desponded though we did not despair. In fact a deliberate and preparatory fortitude—a sedate and stern melancholy, which had no sunshine and was exhilarated only by the lightnings of indignation—this was the highest and best state of moral feeling to which the most noble-minded among us could attain.

But, from the moment of the rising of the people of the Pyrenean peninsula, there was a mighty change; we were instantaneously animated; and, from that moment, the contest assumed the dignity, which it is not in the power of any thing but hope to bestow: and, if I may dare to transfer language, prompted by a revelation of a state of being that admits not of decay or change, to the concerns and interests of our transitory planet, from that moment ‘this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.’ This sudden elevation was on no account more welcome—was by nothing more

endeared, than by the returning sense which accompanied it of inward liberty and choice, which gratified our moral yearnings, inasmuch as it would give henceforward to our actions as a people, an origination and direction unquestionably moral—as it was free—as it was manifestly in sympathy with the species—as it admitted therefore of fluctuations of generous feeling—of approbation and of complacency. We were intellectualized also in proportion; we looked backward upon the records of the human race with pride, and, instead of being afraid, we delighted to look forward into futurity. It was imagined that this new-born spirit of resistance, rising from the most sacred feelings of the human heart, would diffuse itself through many countries; and not merely for the distant future, but for the present, hopes were entertained as bold as they were disinterested and generous.

Never, indeed, was the fellowship of our sentient nature more intimately felt—never was the irresistible power of justice more gloriously displayed than when the British and Spanish Nations, with an impulse like that of two ancient heroes throwing down their weapons and reconciled in the field, cast off at once their aversions and enmities, and mutually embraced each other—to solemnize this conversion of love, not by the festivities of peace, but by combating side by side through danger and under affliction in the devotedness of perfect brotherhood. This was a conjunction which excited hope as fervent as it was rational. On the one side was a nation which brought with it sanction and authority, inasmuch as it had tried and approved the blessings for which the other had risen to contend: the one was a people which, by the help of the surrounding ocean and its own virtues, had preserved to itself through ages its liberty, pure and inviolated by a foreign invader; the other a high-minded nation, which a tyrant, presuming on its decrepitude, had, through the real decrepitude of its Government, perfidiously enslaved. What could be more delightful than to think of an intercourse beginning in this manner? On the part of the Spaniards their love towards us was enthusiasm and adoration; the faults of our national character were hidden from them by a veil of splendour; they saw nothing around us but glory and light; and, on our side, we estimated *their* character with partial and indulgent fondness;—thinking on their past greatness, not as the undermined foundation of a magnificent building, but as the root of a majestic tree recovered from a long disease, and beginning again to flourish with promise of wider branches and a deeper shade than it had boasted in the fulness of its strength. If in the sensations with which the Spaniards prostrated themselves before the religion of

their country we did not keep pace with them—if even their loyalty was such as, from our mixed constitution of government and from other causes, we could not thoroughly sympathize with,—and if, lastly, their devotion to the person of their Sovereign appeared to us to have too much of the alloy of delusion,—in all these things we judged them gently: and, taught by the reverses of the French revolution, we looked upon these dispositions as more human—more social—and therefore as wiser, and of better omen, than if they had stood forth the zealots of abstract principles, drawn out of the laboratory of unfeeling philosophists. Finally, in this reverence for the past and present, we found an earnest that they were prepared to contend to the death for as much liberty as their habits and their knowledge enabled them to receive. To assist them and their neighbours the Portuguese in the attainment of this end, we sent to them in love and in friendship a powerful army to aid—to invigorate—and to chastise:—they landed; and the first proof they afforded of their being worthy to be sent on such a service—the first pledge of amity given by them was the victory of Vimiera; the second pledge (and this was from the hand of their Generals,) was the Convention of Cintra.

(b)

The whole Spanish nation ought to be encouraged to deem themselves an army, embodied under the authority of their country and of human nature. A military spirit should be there, and a military action, not confined like an ordinary river in one channel, but spreading like the Nile over the whole face of the land. Is this possible? I believe it is: if there be minds among them worthy to lead, and if those leading minds cherish a *civic* spirit by all warrantable aids and appliances, and, above all other means, by combining a reverential memory of their elder ancestors with distinct hopes of solid advantage, from the privileges of freedom, for themselves and their posterity—to which the history and the past state of Spain furnish such enviable facilities; and if they provide for the sustenance of this spirit, by organizing it in its primary sources, not timidly jealous of a people, whose toils and sacrifices have approved them worthy of all love and confidence, and whose failing of excess, if such there exist, is assuredly on the side of loyalty to their Sovereign, and predilection for all established institutions. We affirm, then, that a universal military spirit may be produced; and not only this, but that a much more rare and more admirable phenomenon may

be realized—the civic and military spirit united in one people, and in enduring harmony with each other. The people of Spain, with arms in their hands, are already in an elevated mood, to which they have been raised by the indignant passions, and the keen sense of insupportable wrong and insult from the enemy, and its infamous instruments. But they must be taught, not to trust too exclusively to the violent passions, which have already done much of their peculiar task and service. They must seek additional aid from affections, which less imperiously exclude all individual interests, while at the same time they consecrate them to the public good.—But the enemy is in the heart of their land! We have not forgotten this. We would encourage their military zeal, and all qualities especially military, by all rewards of honourable ambition, and by rank and dignity conferred on the truly worthy, whatever may be their birth or condition, the elevating influence of which would extend from the individual possessor to the class from which he may have sprung. For the necessity of thus raising and upholding the military spirit, we plead: but yet the *professional* excellencies of the soldier must be contemplated according to their due place and relation. Nothing is done, or worse than nothing, unless something higher be taught, *as* higher, something more fundamental, *as* more fundamental. In the moral virtues and qualities of passion which belong to a people, must the ultimate salvation of a people be sought for. Moral qualities of a high order, and vehement passions, and virtuous as vehement, the Spaniards have already displayed; nor is it to be anticipated, that the conduct of their enemies will suffer the heat and glow to remit and languish. These may be trusted to themselves, and to the provocations of the merciless Invader. They must now be taught, that their strength *chiefly* lies in moral qualities, more silent in their operation, more permanent in their nature; in the virtues of perseverance, constancy, fortitude, and watchfulness, in a long memory and a quick feeling, to rise upon a favourable summons, a texture of life which, though cut through (as hath been feigned of the bodies of the Angels) unites again—these are the virtues and qualities on which the Spanish People must be taught *mainly* to depend. These it is not in the power of their Chiefs to create; but they may preserve and procure to them opportunities of unfolding themselves, by guarding the Nation against an intemperate reliance on other qualities and other modes of exertion, to which it could never have resorted in the degree in which it appears to have resorted to them without having been in contradiction to itself, paying at the same time an indirect homage to its enemy. Yet, in hazarding this conditional censure, we

are still inclined to believe, that, in spite of our deductions on the score of exaggeration, we have still given too easy credit to the accounts furnished by the enemy, of the rashness with which the Spaniards engaged in pitched battles, and of their dismay after defeat. For the Spaniards have repeatedly proclaimed, and they have inwardly felt, that their strength was from their cause—of course, that it was moral. Why then should they abandon this, and endeavour to prevail by means in which their opponents are confessedly so much superior? Moral strength is their's; but physical power for the purposes of immediate or rapid destruction is on the side of their enemies. This is to them no disgrace, but, as soon as they understand themselves, they will see that they are disgraced by mistrusting their appropriate stay, and throwing themselves upon a power which for them must be weak. Nor will it then appear to them a sufficient excuse, that they were seduced into this by the splendid qualities of courage and enthusiasm, which, being the frequent companions, and, in given circumstances, the necessary agents of virtue, are too often themselves hailed as virtues by their own title. But courage and enthusiasm have equally characterised the best and the worst beings, a Satan, equally with an ABDIEL—a BONAPARTE equally with a LEONIDAS. They are indeed indispensable to the Spanish soldiery, in order that, man to man, they may not be inferior to their enemies in the field of battle. But inferior they are and long must be in warlike skill and coolness; inferior in assembled numbers, and in blind mobility to the preconceived purposes of their leader. If therefore the Spaniards are not superior in some superior quality, their fall may be predicted with the certainty of a mathematical calculation. Nay, it is right to acknowledge, however depressing to false hope the thought may be, that from a people prone and disposed to war, as the French are, through the very absence of those excellencies which give a contra-distinguishing dignity to the Spanish character; that, from an army of men presumptuous by nature, to whose presumption the experience of constant success has given the confidence and stubborn strength of reason, and who balance against the devotion of patriotism the superstition so naturally attached by the sensual and disordinate to the strange fortunes and continual felicity of their Emperor; that, from the armies of such a people a more manageable enthusiasm, a courage less under the influence of accidents, may be expected in the confusion of immediate conflict, than from forces like the Spaniards, united indeed by devotion to a common cause, but not equally united by an equal confidence in each other, resulting from long fellowship and

brotherhood in all conceivable incidents of war and battle. Therefore, I do not hesitate to affirm, that even the occasional flight of the Spanish levies, from sudden panic under untried circumstances, would not be so injurious to the Spanish cause; no, nor so dishonourable to the Spanish character, nor so ominous of ultimate failure, as a paramount reliance on superior valour, instead of a principled repose on superior constancy and immutable resolve. Rather let them have fled once and again, than direct their prime admiration to the blaze and explosion of animal courage, in slight of the vital and sustaining warmth of fortitude; in slight of that moral contempt of death and privation, which does not need the stir and shout of battle to call it forth or support it, which can smile in patience over the stiff and cold wound, as well as rush forward regardless, because half senseless of the fresh and bleeding one. Why did we give our hearts to the present cause of Spain with a fervour and elevation unknown to us in the commencement of the late Austrian or Prussian resistance to France? Because we attributed to the former an heroic temperament which would render their transfer to such domination an evil to human nature itself, and an affrightening perplexity in the dispensations of Providence. But if in oblivion of the prophetic wisdom of their own first leaders in the cause, they are surprised beyond the power of rallying, utterly cast down and manacled by fearful thoughts from the first thunder-storm of defeat in the field, wherein do they differ from the Prussians and Austrians? Wherein are they a PEOPLE, and not a mere army or set of armies? If this be indeed so, what have we to mourn over but our own honourable impetuosity, in hoping where no just ground of hope existed? A nation, without the virtues necessary for the attainment of independence, have failed to attain it. This is all. For little has that man understood the majesty of true national freedom, who believes that a population, like that of Spain, in a country like that of Spain, may want the qualities needful to fight out their independence, and yet possess the excellencies which render men susceptible of true liberty. The Dutch, the Americans, did possess the former; but it is, I fear, more than doubtful whether the one ever did, or the other ever will, evince the nobler morality indispensable to the latter.

It was not my intention that the subject should at present have been pursued so far. But I have been carried forward by a strong wish to be of use in raising and steadying the minds of my countrymen, an end to which every thing that I shall say hereafter (provided it be true) will contribute. For all knowledge of human nature leads ultimately to repose; and I shall write to little purpose if I do not assist some portion

of my readers to form an estimate of the grounds of hope and fear in the present effort of liberty against oppression, in the present or any future struggle which justice will have to maintain against might. In fact, this is my main object, 'the sea-mark of my utmost sail:' in order that, understanding the sources of strength and seats of weakness, both in the tyrant and in those who would save or rescue themselves from his grasp, we may act as becomes men who would guard their own liberties, and would draw a good use from the desire which they feel, and the efforts which they are making, to benefit the less favoured part of the family of mankind.

(c)

For, when the people speaks loudly, it is from being strongly possessed either by the Godhead or the Demon; and he, who cannot discover the true spirit from the false, hath no ear for profitable communion. But in all that regarded the destinies of Spain, and her own as connected with them, the voice of Britain had the unquestionable sound of inspiration. If the gentle passions of pity, love, and gratitude, be porches of the temple; if the sentiments of admiration and rivalry be pillars upon which the structure is sustained; if, lastly, hatred, and anger, and vengeance, be steps which, by a mystery of nature, lead to the House of Sanctity;—then was it manifest to what power the edifice was consecrated; and that the voice within was of Holiness and Truth.

Spain had risen not merely to be delivered and saved;—deliverance and safety were but intermediate objects;—regeneration and liberty were the end, and the means by which this end was to be attained; had their own high value; were determined and precious; and could no more admit of being departed from, than the end of being forgotten—She had risen—not merely to be free; but, in the act and process of acquiring that freedom, to recompense herself, as it were in a moment, for all which she had suffered through ages; to levy, upon the false fame of a cruel Tyrant, large contributions of true glory; to lift herself, by the conflict, as high in honour—as the disgrace was deep to which her own weakness and vices, and the violence and perfidy of her enemies, had subjected her.

Let us suppose that our own land had been so outraged; could we have been content that the enemy should be wafted from our shores as lightly as he came,—much less that he should depart illustrated in his

own eyes and glorified, singing songs of savage triumph and wicked gaiety?—No.—Should we not have felt that a high trespass—a grievous offence had been committed; and that to demand satisfaction was our first and indispensable duty? Would we not have rendered their bodies back upon our guardian ocean which had borne them hither; or have insisted that their haughty weapons should submissively kiss the soil which they had polluted? We should have been resolute in a defence that would strike awe and terror: this for our dignity:—moreover, if safety and deliverance are to be so fondly prized for their own sakes, what security otherwise could they have? Would it not be certain that the work, which had been so ill done to-day, we should be called upon to execute still more imperfectly and ingloriously to-morrow; that we should be summoned to an attempt that would be vain?

In like manner were the wise and heroic Spaniards moved. If an Angel from heaven had come with power to take the enemy from their grasp (I do not fear to say this, in spite of the dominion which is now re-extended over so large a portion of their land), they would have been sad; they would have looked round them; their souls would have turned inward; and they would have stood like men defrauded and betrayed.

For not presumptuously had they taken upon themselves the work of chastisement. They did not wander madly about the world—like the Tamerlanes, or the Chengiz Khans, or the present barbarian Ravager of Europe—under a mock title of Delegates of the Almighty, acting upon self-assumed authority. Their commission had been thrust upon them. They had been trampled upon, tormented, wronged—bitterly, wantonly wronged—if ever a people on the earth was wronged. And this it was which legitimately incorporated their law with the supreme conscience, and gave to them the deep faith which they have expressed—that their power was favoured and assisted by the Almighty.—These words are not uttered without a due sense of their awful import: but the Spirit of evil is strong: and the subject requires the highest mode of thinking and feeling of which human nature is capable.—Nor in this can they be deceived; for, whatever be the immediate issue for themselves, the final issue for their Country and Mankind must be good;—they are instruments of benefit and glory for the human race; and the Deity therefore is with them.

From these impulses, then, our brethren of the Peninsula had risen; they could have risen from no other. By these energies, and by such others as (under judicious encouragement) would naturally grow out

of and unite with these, the multitudes, who have risen, stand; and, if they desert them, must fall.—Riddance, mere riddance—safety, mere safety—are objects far too defined, too inert and passive in their own nature, to have ability either to rouse or to sustain. They win not the mind by any attraction of grandeur or sublime delight, either in effort or in endurance: for the mind gains consciousness of its strength to undergo only by exercise among materials which admit the impression of its power,—which grow under it, which bend under it,—which resist,—which change under its influence,—which alter either through its might or in its presence, by it or before it. These, during times of tranquillity, are the objects with which, in the studious walks of sequestered life, Genius most loves to hold intercourse; by which it is reared and supported;—these are the qualities in action and in object, in image, in thought, and in feeling, from communion with which proceeds originally all that is creative in art and science, and all that is magnanimous in virtue.—Despair thinks of *safety*, and hath no purpose; fear thinks of safety; despondency looks the same way:—but these passions are far too selfish, and therefore too blind, to reach the thing at which they aim; even when there is in them sufficient dignity to have an aim.—All courage is a projection from ourselves; however short-lived, it is a motion of hope. But these thoughts bind too closely to something inward,—to the present and to the past,—that is, to the self which is or has been. Whereas the vigour of the human soul is from without and from futurity,—in breaking down limit, and losing and forgetting herself in the sensation and image of Country and of the human race; and, when she returns and is most restricted and confined, her dignity consists in the contemplation of a better and more exalted being, which, though proceeding from herself, she loves and is devoted to as to another.

(d)

Such is the burst and of power and virtue which may rise out of excessive national afflictions from tyranny and oppression;—such is the hallowing influence, and thus mighty is the sway, of the spirit of moral justice in the heart of the individual and over the wide world of humanity. Even the very faith in present miraculous interposition, which is so dire a weakness and cause of weakness in tranquil times when the listless Being turns to it as a cheap and ready substitute upon every occasion, where the man sleeps, and the Saint, or the image of

the Saint, is to perform his work, and to give effect to his wishes;—even this infirm faith, in a state of incitement from extreme passion sanctioned by a paramount sense of moral justice; having for its object a power which is no longer sole nor principal, but secondary and ministerial; a power added to a power; a breeze which springs up unthought-of to assist the strenuous oarsman;—even this faith is subjugated in order to be exalted; and—instead of operating as a temptation to relax or to be remiss, as an encouragement to indolence or cowardice; instead of being a false stay, a necessary and definite dependence which may fail—it passes into a habit of obscure and infinite confidence of the mind in its own energies, in the cause from its own sanctity, and in the ever-present invisible aid or momentary conspicuous approbation of the supreme Disposer of things.

Let the fire, which is never wholly to be extinguished, break out afresh; let but the human creature be roused; whether he have lain heedless and torpid in religious or civil slavery—have languished under a thraldom, domestic or foreign, or under both these alternately—or have drifted about a helpless member of a clan of disjointed and feeble barbarians; let him rise and act;—and his domineering imagination, by which from childhood he has been betrayed, and the debasing affections, which it has imposed upon him, will from that moment participate the dignity of the newly ennobled being whom they will now acknowledge for their master; and will further him in his progress, whatever be the object at which he aims. Still more inevitable and momentous are the results, when the individual knows that the fire, which is reanimated in him, is not less lively in the breasts of his associates; and sees the signs and testimonies of his own power, incorporated with those of a growing multitude and not to be distinguished from them, accompany him wherever he moves.—Hence those marvellous achievements which were performed by the first enthusiastic followers of Mohammed; and by other conquerors, who with their armies have swept large portions of the earth like a transitory wind, or have founded new religions or empires.—But, if the object contended for be worthy and truly great (as, in the instance of the Spaniards, we have seen that it is); if cruelties have been committed upon an ancient and venerable people, which ‘shake the human frame with horror;’ if not alone the life which is sustained by the bread of the mouth, but that—without which there is no life—the life in the soul, has been directly and mortally warred against; if reason has had abominations to endure in her inmost sanctuary;—then does intense passion, consecrated by a sudden revelation of justice, give birth to

those higher and better wonders which I have described; and exhibit true miracles to the eyes of men, and the noblest which can be seen. It may be added that,—as this union brings back to the right road the faculty of imagination, where it is prone to err, and has gone farthest astray; as it corrects those qualities which (being in their essence indifferent), and cleanses those affections which (not being inherent in the constitution of man, nor necessarily determined to their object) are more immediately dependent upon the imagination, and which may have received from it a thorough taint of dishonour;—so the domestic loves and sanctities which are in their nature less liable to be stained,—so these, wherever they have flowed with a pure and placid stream, do instantly, under the same influence, put forth their strength as in a flood; and, without being sullied or polluted, pursue—exultingly and with song—a course which leads the contemplative reason to the ocean of eternal love.

(e)

The great end and difficulty of life for men of all classes, and especially difficult for those who live by manual labour, is a union of peace with innocent and laudable animation. Not by bread alone is the life of Man sustained; not by raiment alone is he warmed;—but by the genial and vernal inmate of the breast, which at once pushes forth and cherishes; by self-support and self-sufficing endeavours; by anticipations, apprehensions, and active remembrances; by elasticity under insult, and firm resistance to injury; by joy, and by love; by pride which his imagination gathers in from afar; by patience, because life wants not promises; by admiration; by gratitude which—debasement him not when his fellow-being is its object—habitually expands itself, for his elevation, in complacency towards his Creator.

Now, to the existence of these blessings, national independence is indispensable; and many of them it will itself produce and maintain. For it is some consolation to those who look back upon the history of the world to know—that, even without civil liberty, society may possess—diffused through its inner recesses in the minds even of its humblest members—something of dignified enjoyment. But, without national independence, this is impossible. The difference, between inbred oppression and that which is from without, is *essential*; inasmuch as the former does not exclude, from the minds of a people, the feeling of being self-governed; does not imply (as the latter does, when

patiently submitted to) an abandonment of the first duty imposed by the faculty of reason. In reality: where this feeling has no place, a people are not a society, but a herd; man being indeed distinguished among them from the brute; but only to his disgrace. I am aware that there are too many who think that, to the bulk of the community, this independence is of no value; that it is a refinement with which they feel they have no concern; inasmuch as, under the best frame of Government, there is an inevitable dependence of the poor upon the rich—of the many upon the few—so unrelenting and imperious as to reduce this other, by comparison, into a force which has small influence, and is entitled to no regard. Superadd civil liberty to national independence; and this position is overthrown at once: for there is no more certain mark of a sound frame of polity than this; that, in all individual instances (and it is upon these generalized that this position is laid down), the dependence is in reality far more strict on the side of the wealthy; and the labouring man leans less upon others than any man in the community.—But the case before us is of a country not internally free, yet supposed capable of repelling an external enemy who attempts its subjugation. If a country have put on chains of its own forging; in the name of virtue, let it be conscious that to itself it is accountable: let it not have cause to look beyond its own limits for reproof: and,—in the name of humanity,—if it be self-depressed, let it have its pride and some hope within itself. The poorest Peasant, in an unsubdued land, feels this pride. I do not appeal to the example of Britain or of Switzerland, for the one is free, and the other lately was free (and, I trust, will ere long be so again): but talk with the Swede; and you will see the joy he finds in these sensations. With him animal courage (the substitute for many and the friend of all the manly virtues) has space to move in; and is at once elevated by his imagination, and softened by his affections: it is invigorated also; for the whole courage of his Country is in his breast.

In fact: the Peasant, and he who lives by the fair reward of his manual labour, has ordinarily a larger proportion of his gratifications dependent upon these thoughts—than, for the most part, men in other classes have. For he is in his person attached, by stronger roots, to the soil of which he is the growth: his intellectual notices are generally confined within narrower bounds: in him no partial or antipatriotic interests counteract the force of those nobler sympathies and antipathies which he has in right of his Country; and lastly the belt or girdle of his mind has never been stretched to utter relaxation by false philosophy, under a conceit of making it sit more easily and

gracefully. These sensations are a social inheritance to him; more important, as he is precluded from luxurious—and those which are usually called refined—enjoyments.

Love and admiration must push themselves out towards some quarter: otherwise the moral man is killed. Collaterally they advance with great vigour to a certain extent—and they are checked: in that direction, limits hard to pass are perpetually encountered: but upwards and downwards, to ancestry and to posterity, they meet with gladsome help and no obstacles; the tract is interminable.—Perdition to the Tyrant who would wantonly cut off an independent Nation from its inheritance in past ages; turning the tombs and burial-places of the Forefathers into dreaded objects of sorrow, or of shame and reproach, for the Children! Look upon Scotland and Wales: though, by the union of these with England under the same Government (which was effected without conquest in one instance), ferocious and desolating wars, and more injurious intrigues, and sapping and disgraceful corruptions, have been prevented; and tranquillity, security, and prosperity, and a thousand interchanges of amity, not otherwise attainable, have followed;—yet the flashing eye, and the agitated voice, and all the tender recollections, with which the names of Prince Llewellyn and William Wallace are to this day pronounced by the fire-side and on the public road, attest that these substantial blessings have not been purchased without the relinquishment of something most salutary to the moral nature of Man: else the remembrances would not cleave so faithfully to their abiding-place in the human heart. But, if these affections be of general interest, they are of especial interest to Spain; whose history, written and traditional, is preeminently stored with the sustaining food of such affections: and in no country are they more justly and generally prized, or more feelingly cherished.

In the conduct of this argument I am not speaking to the humbler ranks of society: it is unnecessary: *they* trust in nature, and are safe. The People of Madrid, and Corunna, and Ferrol, resisted to the last; from an impulse which, in their hearts, was its own justification. The failure was with those who stood higher in the scale. In fact; the universal rising of the Peninsula, under the pressure and in the face of the most tremendous military power which ever existed, is evidence which cannot be too much insisted upon; and is decisive upon this subject, as involving a question of virtue and moral sentiment. All ranks were penetrated with one feeling: instantaneous and universal was the acknowledgement. If there have been since individual fallings-off; those have been caused by that kind of after-thoughts which are

the bastard offspring of selfishness. The matter was brought home to Spain; and no Spaniard has offended herein with a still conscience.—It is to the worldlings of our own country, and to those who think without carrying their thoughts far enough, that I address myself. Let them know, there is no true wisdom without imagination; no genuine sense;—that the man, who in this age feels no regret for the ruined honour of other Nations, must be poor in sympathy for the honour of his own Country; and that, if he be wanting here towards that which circumscribes the whole, he neither has—nor can have—a social regard for the lesser communities which Country includes. Contract the circle, and bring him to his family; such a man cannot protect *that* with dignified love. Reduce his thoughts to his own person; he may defend himself,—what *he* deems his honour; but it is the *action* of a brave man from the impulse of the brute, or the motive of a coward.

(f)

Oppression, its own blind and predestined enemy, has poured this blessedness upon Spain,—that the enormity of the outrages, of which she has been the victim, has created an object of love and of hatred—of apprehensions and of wishes—adequate (if that be possible) to the utmost demands of the human spirit. The heart that serves in this cause, if it languish, must languish from its own constitutional weakness; and not through want of nourishment from without. But it is a belief propagated in books, and which passes currently among talking men as part of their familiar wisdom, that the hearts of the many *are* constitutionally weak; that they *do* languish; and are slow to answer to the requisitions of things. I entreat those, who are in this delusion, to look behind them and about them for the evidence of experience. Now this, rightly understood, not only gives no support to any such belief; but proves that the truth is in direct opposition to it. The history of all ages; tumults after tumults; wars, foreign or civil, with short or with no breathing-spaces, from generation to generation; wars—why and wherefore? yet with courage, with perseverance, with self-sacrifice, with enthusiasm—with cruelty driving forward the cruel man from its own terrible nakedness, and attracting the more benign by the accompaniment of some shadow which seems to sanctify it; the senseless weaving and interweaving of factions—vanishing and reviving and piercing each other like the Northern Lights; public commotions, and those in the bosom of the individual; the long calenture of fancy to

which the Lover is subject; the blast, like the blast of the desert, which sweeps perennially through a frightful solitude of its own making in the mind of the Gamester; the slowly quickening but ever quickening descent of appetite down which the Miser is propelled; the agony and cleaving oppression of grief; the ghost-like hauntings of shame; the incubus of revenge; the life-distemper of ambition;—these inward existences, and the visible and familiar occurrences of daily life in every town and village; the patient curiosity and contagious acclamations of the multitude in the streets of the city and within the walls of the theatre; a procession, or a rural dance; a hunting, or a horse-race; a flood, or a fire; rejoicing and ringing of bells for an unexpected gift of good fortune, or the coming of a foolish heir to his estate;—these demonstrate incontestibly that the passions of men (I mean, the soul of sensibility in the heart of man)—in all quarrels, in all contests, in all quests, in all delights, in all employments which are either sought by men or thrust upon them—do immeasurably transcend their objects. The true sorrow of humanity consists in this;—not that the mind of man fails; but that the course and demands of action and of life so rarely correspond with the dignity and intensity of human desires: and hence that, which is slow to languish, is too easily turned aside and abused. But—with the remembrance of what has been done, and in the face of the interminable evils which are threatened—a Spaniard can never have cause to complain of this, while a follower of the Tyrant remains in arms upon the Peninsula.

Here then they, with whom I *hope*, take their stand. There is a spiritual community binding together the living and the dead; the good, the brave, and the wise, of all ages. We would not be rejected from this community; and therefore do we hope.

FROM *ESSAYS UPON EPITAPHS*
(1810)

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ESSAYS UPON EPITAPHS: ONE

It needs scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their Dead are interred. Among savage Tribes unacquainted with Letters, this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the Graves, or by Mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation; and, secondly, to preserve their memory. 'Never any,' says Cambden, 'neglected burial but some savage Nations; as the Bactrians which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet Philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes; some dissolute Courtiers, as Mecaenas, who was wont to say, *Non tumulum curo; sepe lit natura relictos.*

'I'm careless of a Grave:—Nature her dead will save.'

As soon as Nations had learned the use of letters, Epitaphs were inscribed upon these Monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived Monuments and Epitaphs from two sources of feeling: but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of Epitaphs, Weever, in his discourse of funeral Monuments, says rightly, 'proceeded from the presage or fore-feeling of Immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the Scholars of Linus the Theban Poet, who flourished about the year of the World two thousand seven hundred; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses then called of him *Oelina*, afterwards *Epitaphia*, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the Sepulchres.'

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of Immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows; mere love, or the yearning of Kind towards Kind, could not have produced it. The Dog or Horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his Companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding Associates shall bemoan his death, or pine for his loss; he cannot pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it; and

therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love, which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone; will the conjunction of these account for the desire? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our Friends or Kindred after Death, or even in Absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the *social* feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that Man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a Child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal Spirits with which the Lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational Creature, is endowed; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the Child; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of Death; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what had been instilled into him! Has such an unfolder of the mysteries of Nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of Children upon the subject of origination? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrousness of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young Children meditate feelingly upon Death and Immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a Child stand by the side of a running Stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: 'towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?' And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be Sea or Ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a Map, or from the real

object, in Nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been *as* inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting that the sense of Immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her Offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal that, for my own part, it is to me inconceivable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward senses the impression of Death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has through that coincidence alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of Death were not thus counterbalanced, such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no motions of the life of love; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a Creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves uncountenanced by the faith that Man is an immortal being; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in Immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the Deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange Country, found the Corse of an unknown person lying by the Sea-side; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the piety of that Act.

Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead Body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt; saying, 'see the Shell of the flown Bird!' But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought, to which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human Body was of no more value than the worthless Shell from which the living fowl had departed, would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter, we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human Nature, he would have cared no more, for the Corse of the Stranger than for the dead body of a Seal or Porpoise which might have been cast up by the Waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in Sympathy with the best feelings of our Nature; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this Planet, a voyage, towards the regions where the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birthplace in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the Sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes; so, the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the Country of everlasting Life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts, till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands the thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the Laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accordingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the Remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said, that a sepulchral Monument is a tribute to a Man as a human Being; and that an Epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling

and something more; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his individual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the Survivors, and for the common benefit of the living: which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, in *close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased*: and these, it may be added, among the modern Nations of Europe are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the Walls of Towns and Cities; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the way-sides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. I could ruminare upon the beauty which the Monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of Nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the Traveller, leaning upon one of the Tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, 'Pause, Traveller!' so often found upon the Monuments. And to its Epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of Life as a Journey—Death as a Sleep overcoming the tired Wayfarer—of Misfortune as a Storm that falls suddenly upon him—of Beauty as a Flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered of Virtue that standeth firm as a Rock against the beating Waves;—of Hope 'undermined insensibly like the Poplar by the side of the River that has fed it,' or blasted in a moment like a Pine-tree by the stroke of lightening upon the Mountain-top—admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing Breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected Fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that Nature, with which it was in unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages: and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the Inhabitants of large Towns and Cities, by the custom of depositing the Dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those Edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that

Tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obtruded upon the notice of Men occupied with the cares of the World, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when Death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of Nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our Monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless Church-yard of a large Town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish Cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the Grove of Cypress in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been expressed with true sensibility by an ingenuous Poet of the present day. The subject of his Poem is 'All Saints Church, Derby:' he has been deploring the forbidding and unseemly appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the Inhabitants of large Towns in the Country.

Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot,
 Where healing Nature her benignant look
 Ne'er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
 With tresses drooping o'er her sable stole,
 She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,
 Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgins erst,
 With annual moan upon the mountains wept
 Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
 So placid, so congenial to the wish
 The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
 The silent grave, I would have stayed:

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven
 Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
 The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds,
 Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
 'Twere brooding on the Dead inhumed beneath.
 There, while with him, the holy Man of Uz,
 O'er human destiny I sympathised,
 Counting the long, long periods prophecy
 Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
 Of resurrection, oft the blue-eyed Spring
 Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove
 Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer

The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroyed:
And I would bless her visit; for to me
'Tis sweet to trace the consonance that links
As one, the works of Nature and the word
Of God.—

JOHN EDWARDS.

A Village Church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of Nature, may indeed be most favourably contrasted with that of a Town of crowded Population; and Sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients, with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the Sabbath-day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the Graves of Kindred and Friends, gathered together in that general Home towards which the thoughtful yet happy Spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a Parish Church, in the stillness of the Country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in Cities and Villages, the Dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an Epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the Nations of Antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind; upon departed Worth—upon personal or social Sorrow and Admiration—upon Religion individual and social—upon Time, and upon Eternity. Accordingly it suffices, in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contains nothing that shall shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an Epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some Thought or Feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our Nature touchingly expressed; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude. A Husband bewails a Wife; a Parent breathes a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost Child; a Son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed Father or Mother; a Friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the Tenant of the Grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This, and a pious admonition to the Living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in Immortality, is the language of a thousand Church-yards; and it does not often happen that any thing, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the Dead or to the Living, is to be found in them. This

want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr. Johnson, in his *Essay upon the Epitaphs of Pope*, to two causes; first, the scantiness of the Objects of human praise; and, secondly, the want of variety in the Characters of men; or to use his own words, 'to the fact, that the greater part of Mankind have no Character at all.' Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation; but does not become a Critic and a Moralist speaking seriously upon a serious Subject. The objects of admiration in Human Nature are not scanty but abundant; and every Man has a Character of his own, to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this: That to analyse the Characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of Men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the Minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us: with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The Light of Love in our Hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that Light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect: nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another; and, least of all, do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of Sorrow, Admiration, or Regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their Friends and Kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalizing Receptacle of the Dead.

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that it should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity as connected with the subject of Death—the source from which an Epitaph proceeds; of death and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so strikingly as to entitle an Epitaph to high praise; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest unless other excellencies be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once what these excellencies are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition. It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear

conception, conveyed to the Reader's mind, of the Individual, whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the Deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject; and these ought to be bound together and solemnized into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The Reader ought to know who and what the Man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the Individual lamented. But the Writer of an Epitaph is not an Anatomist who dissects the internal frame of the mind; he is not even a Painter who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity: his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the Grave; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes! The character of a deceased Friend or beloved Kinsman is not seen, nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a Tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualizes and beautifies it; that takes away indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely, may impress and affect the more. Shall we say then that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that accordingly the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered?—It *is* truth, and of the highest order! for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist, yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: it is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the Dead and the affections of the Living!—This may easily be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment!—Enmity melts away; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and, through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a Man to the Tombstone on which shall be inscribed an Epitaph on his Adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recommended. Would he turn from it as from an idle tale? Ah! no—the thoughtful look, the sigh, and perhaps

the involuntary tear, would testify that it had a sane, a generous, and good meaning; and that on the Writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the Grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on Earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a Spirit in Heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the Trunk and the main Branches of the Worth of the Deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and scrupulously pursued, especially if this be done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate its own purpose; forcing the passing Spectator to this conclusion,—either that the Dead did not possess the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised a monument to his memory, and must therefore be supposed to have been closely connected with him, were incapable of perceiving those merits; or at least during the act of composition had lost sight of them; for, the Understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the Mourner be other than cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried Person or the Survivors, the Memorial is unaffecting and profitless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon these points, of nature and condition, wherein all men resemble each Other, as in the Temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the Grave which gathers all Human Beings to itself, and 'equalizes the lofty and the low.' We suffer and we weep with the same heart; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit; our hopes look to the same quarter; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character; which if they do not, (as will for the most part be the case) when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can

the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an Epitaph is not a proud Writing shut up for the studious; it is exposed to all, to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired; the stooping Old Man cons the engraven record like a second horn-book;—the Child is proud that he can read it—and the Stranger is introduced by its mediation to the company of a Friend: it is concerning all, and for all:—in the Church-yard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of Heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the Writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a Monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which with instinctive decency retires from notice. The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled; strong indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also: for how can the Narrator otherwise be trusted? Moreover, a Grave is a tranquillizing object: resignation, in course of time, springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended. The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the Author who had given way upon this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral Oration or elegiac Poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why Epitaphs so often personate the Deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own Tombstone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone; that a state of rest is come; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing

the office of a Judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is Death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialized. By this tender fiction the Survivors bind themselves to a sedate sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the Living and the Dead by their appropriate affections. And I may observe, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of Immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an Epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the Survivors directly; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of Society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the Survivors speak in their own Persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable: as it admits a wider range of notices; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the ground-work of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect Epitaph; but it must be observed that one is meant which will best answer the *general* ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less suit public Men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of Peace or War, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in Art, Literature, or Science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their Country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenour of thought which Epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that, if it be the *actions* of a Man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act; and such sentiments dwelt upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made this necessary distinction I proceed.—The mighty Benefactors of mankind, as they

are not only known by the immediate Survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest Posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place; nor of delineations of character to individualize them. This is already done by their Works, in the Memories of Men. Their naked names, and a grand comprehensive sentiment of civic Gratitude, patriotic Love, or human Admiration; or the utterance of some elementary Principle most essential in the constitution of true Virtue; or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual Power, these are the only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an Altar would not be unworthy!

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
 The labour of an age in piled stones,
 Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
 Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
 Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment
 Hast built thyself a livelong Monument.
 And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
 That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die.

FROM ESSAYS UPON EPITAPHS: THREE

The purpose of the remarks given in the last Essay was chiefly to assist the reader in separating truth and sincerity from falsehood and affectation; presuming that if the unction of a devout heart be wanting every thing else is of no avail. It was shewn that a current of just thought and feeling may flow under a surface of illustrative imagery so impure as to produce an effect the opposite of that which was intended. Yet, though this fault may be carried to an intolerable *degree*, the reader will have gathered that in our estimation it is not *in kind* the most offensive and injurious. We have contrasted it in its excess with instances where the genuine current or vein was wholly wanting; where the thoughts and feelings had no vital union; but were artificially connected, or formally accumulated, in a manner that would imply discontinuity and feebleness of mind upon any occasion; but still more reprehensible here! I will proceed to give milder examples, not of this last kind but of the former; namely of failure from various causes where the groundwork is good.

Take, holy earth! all that my soul holds dear:
 Take that best gift which Heaven so lately gave:
 To Bristol's fount I bore with trembling care,
 Her faded form. She bowed to taste the wave—
 And died. Does youth, does beauty read the line?
 Does sympathetic fear their breasts alarm?
 Speak, dead Maria! breathe a strain divine;
 Even from the grave thou shalt have power to charm.
 Bid them be chaste, be innocent, like thee:
 Bid them in duty's sphere as meekly move:
 And if so fair, from vanity as free,
 As firm in friendship, and as fond in love;
 Tell them, tho' tis an awful thing to die,
 ('Twas e'en to thee) yet, the dread path once trod;
 Heaven lifts its everlasting portals high,
 And bids 'the pure in heart behold their God.'

This Epitaph has much of what we have demanded: but it is debased in some instances by weakness of expression, in others by false prettiness. '*She bowed to taste the wave and died.*' The plain truth was, she drank the Bristol waters which failed to restore her, and her death soon followed; but the expression involves a multitude of petty occupations for the fancy: '*She bowed*'—was there any truth in this?—'*to taste the wave*', the water of a mineral spring which must have been drunk out of a Goblet. Strange application of the word *Wave!* '*and died.*' This would have been a just expression if the water had killed her; but, as it is, the tender thought involved in the disappointment of a hope however faint is left unexpressed; and a shock of surprize is given, entertaining perhaps to a light fancy, but to a steady mind unsatisfactory—because false. '*Speak! dead Maria breathe a strain divine!*' This verse flows nobly from the heart and the imagination: but perhaps it is not one of those impassioned thoughts which should be fixed in language upon a sepulchral stone. It is in its nature too poignant and transitory. A Husband meditating by his Wife's grave would throw off such a feeling, and would give voice to it; and it would be in its place in a Monody to her Memory but, if I am not mistaken, ought to have been suppressed here, or uttered after a different manner. The implied impersonation of the Deceased (according to the tenor of what has before been said) ought to have been more general and shadowy. '*And if so fair, from vanity as free—As firm in friendship and as fond in love—Tell them*', these are two sweet verses, but the long suspension of the sense excites the expectation of a thought less common than the concluding one; and is an

instance of a failure in doing what is most needful and most difficult in an Epitaph to do; namely, to give to universally received truths a pathos and spirit which shall re-admit them into the soul like revelations of the moment.

I have said that this excellence is difficult to attain; and why? is it because nature is weak—no! Where the soul has been thoroughly stricken, (and Heaven knows, the course of life has placed all men, at some time or other, in that condition) there is never a want of *positive* strength; but because the adversary of nature, (call that adversary Art or by what name you will) is *comparatively* strong. The far-searching influence of the power, which, for want of a better name, we will denominate, Taste, is in nothing more evinced than in the changeful character and complexion of that species of composition which we have been reviewing. Upon a call so urgent, it might be expected that the affections, the memory, and the imagination would be *constrained* to speak their genuine language. Yet if the few specimens which have been given in the course of this enquiry do not demonstrate the fact, the Reader need only look into any collection of Epitaphs to be convinced that the faults predominant in the literature of every age will be as strongly reflected in the sepulchral inscriptions as any where; nay perhaps more so, from the anxiety of the Author to do justice to the occasion: and especially if the composition be in verse; for then it comes more avowedly in the shape of a work of art; and, of course, is more likely to be coloured by the works of art holden in most esteem at the time. In a bulky Volume of Poetry entitled, ELEGANT EXTRACTS in Verse, which must be known to most of my Readers, as it is circulated every where and in fact constitutes at this day the poetical library of our Schools, I find a number of Epitaphs, in verse, of the last century; and there is scarcely one which is not thoroughly tainted by the artifices which have overrun our writings in metre since the days of Dryden and Pope. Energy, stillness, grandeur, tenderness, those feelings which are the pure emanations of nature, those thoughts which have the infinitude of truth, and those expressions which are not what the garb is to the body but what the body is to the soul, themselves a constituent part and power or function in the thought—all these are abandoned for their opposites,—as if our Countrymen, through successive generations, had lost the sense of solemnity and pensiveness (not to speak of deeper emotions) and resorted to the Tombs of their Forefathers and Contemporaries only to be tickled and surprized. Would we not recoil from such gratifications, in such a place, if the general literature of the Country had not co-operated with

other causes insidiously to weaken our sensibilities and deprave our judgements? Doubtless, there are shocks of event and circumstance, public and private, by which for all minds the truths of Nature will be elicited; but sorrow for that Individual or people to whom these special interferences are necessary, to bring them into communion with the inner spirit of things! for such intercourse must be profitless in proportion as it is unfrequent, irregular, and transient. Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil to be trifled with: they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of the thought but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift; such a one as those poisoned vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had power to consume and to alienate from his right mind the victim who put them on. Language, if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve. From a deep conviction then that the excellence of writing, whether in prose or verse, consists in a conjunction of Reason and Passion, a conjunction which must be of necessity benign; and that it might be deduced from what has been said that the taste, intellectual Power, and morals of a Country are inseparably linked in mutual dependence, I have dwelt thus long upon this argument. And the occasion justifies me: for how could the tyranny of bad taste be brought home to the mind more aptly than by shewing in what degree the feelings of nature yield to it when we are rendering to our friends this solemn testimony of our love? more forcibly than by giving proof that thoughts cannot, even upon this impulse, assume an outward life without a transmutation and a fall?

FROM *THE EXCURSION* (1814)

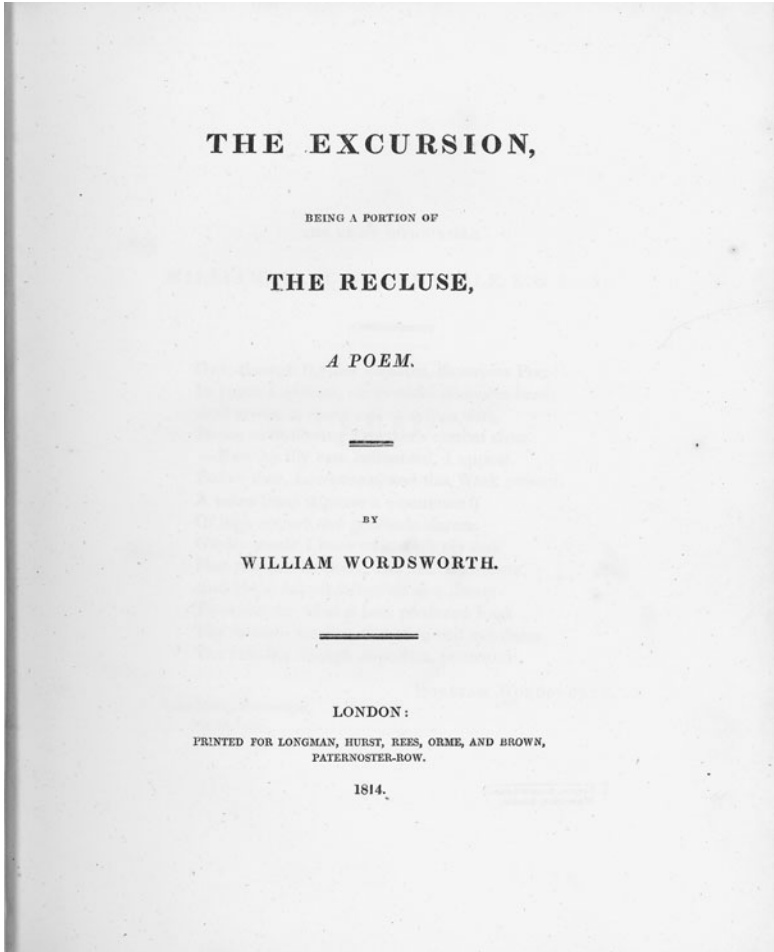


FIG. 7 Title-page to *The Excursion*.

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From the Preface to *The Excursion*:
the Prospectus to *The Recluse*

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

So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard,
Holist of Men.—Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil. 30
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form;
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,

Nor aught of blinder vacancy—scooped out
 By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man,
 My haunt, and the main region of my Song. 40
 —Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
 From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
 Pitches her tents before me as I move,
 An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
 Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
 Sought in the Atlantic Main, why should they be
 A history only of departed things,
 Or a mere fiction of what never was? 50
 For the discerning intellect of Man,
 When wedded to this goodly universe
 In love and holy passion, shall find these
 A simple produce of the common day.
 —I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
 Would chaunt, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
 Of this great consummation:—and by words
 Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
 Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain 60
 To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
 How exquisitely the individual Mind
 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
 Of the whole species) to the external World
 Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too,
 Theme this but little heard of among Men,
 The external World is fitted to the Mind;
 And the creation (by no lower name
 Can it be called) which they with blended might
 Accomplish:—this is our high argument. 70
 —Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
 Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
 And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
 Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
 Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
 Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang

Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
 Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
 Within the walls of Cities; may these sounds
 Have their authentic comment,—that even these 80
 Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!
 —Come thou prophetic Spirit that inspir'st
 The human Soul of universal earth,
 Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
 A metropolitan Temple in the hearts
 Of mighty Poets; upon me bestow
 A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
 With star-like virtue in its place may shine;
 Shedding benignant influence,—and secure, 90
 Itself, from all malevolent effect
 Of those mutations that extend their sway
 Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
 I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
 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, 100
 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!

from *The Excursion*

BOOK ONE: 'THE WANDERER'

'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high:
 Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
 Through a pale steam; but all the northern downs,
 In clearest air ascending, shewed far off
 A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung

From many a brooding cloud; far as the sight
 Could reach, those many shadows lay in spots
 Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
 Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed.
 Pleasant to him who on the soft cool moss 10
 Extends his careless limbs along the front
 Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
 A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
 Where the wren warbles; while the dreaming Man,
 Half conscious of the soothing melody,
 With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,
 By that impending covert made more soft,
 More low and distant ! Other lot was mine;
 Yet with good hope that soon I should obtain
 As grateful resting-place, and livelier joy. 20
 Across a bare wide Common I was toiling,
 With languid feet, which by the slippery ground
 Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
 The host of insects gathering round my face,
 And ever with me as I paced along.

Upon that open level stood a Grove,
 The wished-for Port to which my steps were bound.
 Thither I came, and there—amid the gloom
 Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms—
 Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls 30
 That stared upon each other! I looked round,
 And to my wish and to my hope espied
 Him whom I sought; a Man of reverend age,
 But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
 There was he seen upon the Cottage bench,
 Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
 An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
 And in the middle of the public way
 Stationed, as if to rest himself, with face 40
 Turned tow'ards the sun then setting, while that staff
 Afforded to his Figure, as he stood,
 Detained for contemplation or repose,
 Graceful support; the countenance of the Man
 Was hidden from my view, and he himself

Unrecognized; but, stricken by the sight,
 With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
 A glad congratulation we exchanged
 At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
 We parted, nothing willingly; and now 50
 He by appointment waited for me here,
 Beneath the shelter of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends: I from my Childhood up
 Had known him.—In a little Town obscure,
 A market-village, seated in a tract
 Of mountains, where my school-day time was passed,
 One room he owned, the fifth part of a house,
 A place to which he drew, from time to time,
 And found a kind of home or harbour there.

He loved me; from a swarm of rosy Boys 60
 Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
 For my grave looks—too thoughtful for my years.
 As I grew up it was my best delight
 To be his chosen Comrade. Many a time,
 On holidays, we wandered through the woods,
 A pair of random travellers; we sate—
 We walked; he pleased me with his sweet discourse
 Of things which he had seen; and often touched
 Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
 Turned inward; or at my request he sang 70
 Old songs—the product of his native hills;
 A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
 Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
 As cool refreshing Water, by the care
 Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
 Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of drought.
 Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse:
 How precious when in riper days I learned
 To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
 In the plain presence of his dignity! 80

Oh ! many are the Poets that are sown
 By Nature; Men endowed with highest gifts,
 The vision and the faculty divine,
 Yet wanting the accomplishment of Verse,

(Which, in the docile season of their youth,
 It was denied them to acquire, through lack
 Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
 Or haply by a temper too severe,
 Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame),
 Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
 By circumstance to take unto the height 90
 The measure of themselves, these favored Beings,
 All but a scattered few, live out their time,
 Husbanding that which they possess within,
 And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest minds
 Are often those of whom the noisy world
 Hears least; else surely this Man had not left
 His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
 But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
 So not without distinction had he lived, 100
 Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
 And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
 And something that may serve to set in view
 The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
 The doings, observations, which his mind
 Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;
 Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
 Or rise, as venerable Nature leads,
 The high and tender Muses shall accept
 With gracious smile, deliberately pleased, 110
 And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born:^o
 There, on a small hereditary Farm,
 An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
 His Father dwelt; and died in poverty;
 While He, whose lowly fortune I retrace,
 The youngest of three sons, was yet a babe,
 A little One—unconscious of their loss.
 But ere he had outgrown his infant days
 His widowed Mother, for a second Mate, 120
 Espoused the Teacher of the Village School;
 Who on her offspring zealously bestowed
 Needful instruction; not alone in arts
 Which to his humble duties appertained,

But in the lore of right and wrong, the rule
 Of human kindness, in the peaceful ways
 Of honesty, and holiness severe.
 A virtuous Household though exceeding poor!
 Pure Livers were they all, austere and grave,
 And fearing God; the very Children taught 130
 Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
 And an habitual piety, maintained
 With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
 In summer, tended cattle on the Hills;
 But, through the inclement and the perilous days
 Of long-continuing winter, he repaired
 To his Step-father's School, that stood alone,
 Sole Building on a mountain's dreary edge,
 Far from the sight of City spire, or sound 140
 Of Minster clock! From that bleak Tenement
 He, many an evening to his distant home
 In solitude returning, saw the Hills
 Grow larger in the darkness, all alone
 Beheld the stars come out above his head,
 And travelled through the wood, with no one near
 To whom he might confess the things he saw.
 So the foundations of his mind were laid.
 In such communion, not from terror free,
 While yet a Child, and long before his time, 150
 He had perceived the presence and the power
 Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
 Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
 And colour so distinct, that on his mind
 They lay like substances, and almost seemed
 To haunt the bodily sense. He had received
 (Vigorous in native genius as he was)
 A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
 With these impressions would he still compare
 All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms; 160
 And, being still unsatisfied with aught
 Of dimmer character, he thence attained
 An active power to fasten images
 Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines

Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
 The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
 While yet a Child, with a Child's eagerness
 Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
 On all things which the moving seasons brought
 To feed such appetite: nor this alone 170
 Appeased his yearning:—in the after day
 Of Boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
 And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
 He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
 Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
 Or by creative feeling overborne,
 Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
 Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
 He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
 Expression ever varying!

Thus informed, 180
 He had small need of books; for many a Tale
 Traditional, round the mountains hung,
 And many a Legend, peopling the dark woods,
 Nourished Imagination in her growth,
 And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
 By which she is made quick to recognize
 The moral properties and scope of things.
 But eagerly he read, and read again,
 Whate'er the Minister's old Shelf supplied;
 The life and death of Martyrs, who sustained, 190
 With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
 Triumphantly displayed in records left
 Of Persecution, and the Covenant—Times
 Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour!
 And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
 A stragglng volume, torn and incomplete,
 That left half-told the preternatural tale,
 Romance of Giants, chronicle of Fiends,
 Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
 Strange and uncouth; dire faces, figures dire, 200
 Sharp-knee'd, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
 With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
 Could never be forgotten!

In his heart,

Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
 Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
 By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
 Or by the silent looks of happy things,
 Or flowing from the universal face
 Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
 Of Nature, and already was prepared, 210
 By his intense conceptions, to receive
 Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
 Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
 To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

From early childhood, even, as hath been said,
 From his sixth year, he had been sent abroad
 In summer to tend herds: such was his task
 Thenceforward 'till the later day of youth.
 O then what soul was his, when, on the tops 220
 Of the high mountains, he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
 In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touch'd,
 And in their silent faces did he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
 The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form
 All melted into him; they swallowed up
 His animal being; in them did he live, 230
 And by them did he live; they were his life.
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops, 240
 Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
 Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
 Oh then how beautiful, how bright appeared

The written Promise! He had early learned
 To reverence the Volume which displays
 The mystery, the life which cannot die:
 But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith;
 There did he see the writing;—all things there
 Breathed immortality, revolving life,
 And greatness still revolving; infinite; 250
 There littleness was not; the least of things
 Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
 Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
 What wonder if his being thus became
 Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
 Low thoughts had there no place; yet was his heart
 Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,
 Oft as he called those extacies to mind,
 And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
 Wisdom, which works thro' patience; thence he learned 260
 In many a calmer hour of sober thought
 To look on Nature with a humble heart,
 Self-questioned where it did not understand,
 And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time; yet to a neighbouring town
 He duly went with what small overplus
 His earnings might supply, and brought away
 The Book which most had tempted his desires
 While at the Stall he read. Among the hills
 He gazed upon that mighty Orb of Song 270
 The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
 The annual savings of a toilsome life,
 His Step-father supplied; books that explain
 The purer elements of truth involved
 In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
 (Especially perceived where nature droops
 And feeling is suppressed,) preserve the mind
 Busy in solitude and poverty.
 These occupations oftentimes deceived
 The listless hours, while in the hollow vale, 280
 Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
 In pensive idleness. What could he do
 With blind endeavours, in that lonesome life,

Thus thirsting daily? Yet still uppermost
 Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
 Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
 In all things which from her sweet influence
 Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
 Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
 He clothed the nakedness of austere truth. 290
 While yet he lingered in the rudiments
 Of science, and among her simplest laws,
 His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
 The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
 To measure th' altitude of some tall crag
 Which is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak
 Familiar with forgotten years, that shews
 Inscribed, as with the silence of the thought,
 Upon its bleak and visionary sides,
 The history of many a winter storm, 300
 Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus, before his eighteenth year was told,
 Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
 With an increasing weight; he was o'erpowered
 By Nature, by the turbulence subdued
 Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
 And the first virgin passion of a soul
 Communing with the glorious Universe.
 Full often wished he that the winds might rage
 When they were silent; far more fondly now 310
 Than in his earlier season did he love
 Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds
 That live in darkness:—from his intellect
 And from the stillness of abstracted thought
 He asked repose; and I have heard him say
 That often, failing at this time to gain
 The peace required, he scanned the laws of light
 Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
 From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
 A cloud of mist, which in the sunshine frames 320
 A lasting tablet—for the observer's eye
 Varying its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,

And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus, even from Childhood upward, was he reared;
For intellectual progress wanting much,
Doubtless, of needful help—yet gaining more;
And every moral feeling of his soul.
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content 330
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.
—But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summoned to select the course
Of humble industry which promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
The Mother strove to make her Son perceive
With what advantage he might teach a School
In the adjoining Village; but the Youth,
Who of this service made a short essay, 340
Found that the wanderings of his thought were then
A misery to him; that he must resign
A task he was unable to perform.

That stern yet kindly spirit, Who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,^o
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,^o
(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own stedfast clouds)—did now impel
His restless Mind to look abroad with hope.
—An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on, 350
Through dusty ways, in storm, from door to door,
A vagrant Merchant bent beneath his load!
Yet do such Travellers find their own delight;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
Gained merited respect in simpler times;
When Squire, and Priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependant
Upon the PEDLAR'S toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few 360
Of his adventurous Countrymen were led
By perseverance in this Track of life

To competence and ease;—for him it bore
 Attractions manifold;—and this he chose.
 He asked his Mother's blessing; and, with tears
 Thanking his second Father, asked from him
 Paternal blessings. The good Pair bestowed
 Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
 Foreboding evil. From his native hills
 He wandered far; much did he see of Men, 370
 Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
 Their passions, and their feelings; chiefly those
 Essential and eternal in the heart,
 Which, 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 380
 Upon the bounties of the year, and felt
 The 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 390
 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 chearfulness,
 He had no painful pressure from without
 That made him turn aside from wretchedness
 With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer^o
 With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came 400
 That in our best experience he was rich,
 And in the wisdom of our daily life.
 For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,

He had observed the progress and decay
 Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
 The History of many Families;
 How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown
 By passion or mischance; or such misrule
 Among the unthinking masters of the earth
 As make the nations groan.—This active course, 410
 Chosen in youth, through manhood he pursued,
 Till due provision for his modest wants
 Had been obtained;—and, thereupon, resolved
 To pass the remnant of his days—untasked
 With needless services,—from hardship free.
 His Calling laid aside, he lived at ease:
 But still he loved to pace the public roads
 And the wild paths; and, when the summer's warmth
 Invited him, would often leave his home
 And journey far, revisiting those scenes 420
 Which to his memory were most endeared.
 —Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, untouched
 By worldly-mindedness, or anxious care;
 Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
 By knowledge gathered up from day to day;—
 Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
 With whom from childhood he grew up, had held
 The strong hand of her purity; and still
 Had watched him with an unrelenting eye. 430
 This he remembered in his riper age
 With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
 But by the native vigour of his mind,
 By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
 By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
 Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth,
 He had imbibed of fear or darker thought
 Was melted all away: so true was this
 That sometimes his religion seemed to me
 Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods, 440
 Who to the model of his own pure heart
 Framed his belief, as grace divine inspired,
 Or human reason dictated with awe.

—And surely never did there live on earth
 A Man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
 And teasing ways of Children vexed not him,
 Nor could he bid them from his presence, tired
 With questions and importunate demands:
 Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
 Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale, 450
 To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
 Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb;
 Such as might suit a rustic sire, prepared
 For sabbath duties; yet he was a Man
 Whom no one could have passed without remark.
 Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
 And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
 Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
 Into a narrower circle of deep red,
 But had not tamed his eye; that, under brows 460
 Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought
 From years of youth; which, like a Being made
 Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
 To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
 Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course of life
 Who now, with no Appendage but a Staff,
 The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
 Upon that Cottage bench reposed his limbs,
 Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay, 470
 His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
 The shadows of the breezy elms above
 Dappling his face. He had not heard my steps
 As I approached; and near him did I stand
 Unnoticed in the shade, some minutes' space.
 At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
 Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
 Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose,
 And ere the pleasant greeting that ensued
 Was ended, 'Tis,' said I, 'a burning day;
 My lips are parched with thirst, but you, I guess, 480

Have somewhere found relief.' He, at the word,
 Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
 The fence hard by, where that aspiring shrub
 Looked out upon the road. It was a plot
 Of garden-ground run wild, its matted weeds
 Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they passed,
 The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips,
 Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems
 In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap 490
 The broken wall. I looked around, and there,
 Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
 Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a Well
 Shrouded with willow-flowers and plummy fern.
 My thirst I slaked, and from the cheerless spot
 Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
 Where sate the Old Man on the Cottage bench;
 And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
 I yet was standing, freely to respire,
 And cool my temples in the fanning air, 500
 Thus did he speak. 'I see around me here
 Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
 Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
 And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
 Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon
 Even of the good is no memorial left.
 —The Poets, in their elegies and songs
 Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
 They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,
 And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak, 510
 In these their invocations, with a voice
 Obedient to the strong creative power
 Of human passion. Sympathies there are
 More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
 That steal upon the meditative mind,
 And grow with thought. Beside yon Spring I stood,
 And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
 One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
 Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
 When, every day, the touch of human hand 520
 Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
 In mortal stillness; and they ministered

To human comfort. As I stooped to drink,
 Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
 The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
 Green with the moss of years, a pensive sight
 That moved my heart!—recalling former days
 When I could never pass that road but She
 Who lived within these walls, at my approach,
 A Daughter's welcome gave me; and I loved her 530
 As my own child. O Sir! the good die first,
 And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
 Burn to the socket. Many a Passenger
 Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
 When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
 From that forsaken Spring; and no one came
 But he was welcome; no one went away
 But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
 The light extinguished of her lonely Hut,
 The Hut itself abandoned to decay, 540
 And She forgotten in the quiet grave!

I speak,' continued he, 'of One whose stock
 Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
 She was a Woman of a steady mind,
 Tender and deep in her excess of love,
 Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
 Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
 Her temper had been framed, as if to make
 A Being—who by adding love to peace
 Might live on earth a life of happiness. 550
 Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
 The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
 Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
 Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
 That he was often seated at his loom,
 In summer, ere the Mower was abroad
 Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
 Ere the last Star had vanished.—They who passed
 At evening, from behind the garden fence
 Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply, 560
 After his daily work, until the light
 Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost

In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
 In peace and comfort; and a pretty Boy
 Was their best hope,—next to the God in Heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
 Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
 Two blighting seasons when the fields were left
 With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
 A worse affliction in the plague of war; 570
 This happy Land was stricken to the heart!
 A Wanderer then among the Cottages
 I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
 The hardships of that season; many rich
 Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor;
 And of the poor did many cease to be
 And their place knew them not. Meanwhile abridged
 Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
 To numerous self-denials, Margaret
 Went struggling on through those calamitous years 580
 With chearful hope: but, ere the second autumn,
 Her life's true Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
 Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
 He lingered long; and when his strength returned,
 He found the little he had stored, to meet
 The hour of accident or crippling age,
 Was all consumed. Two children had they now,
 One newly born. As I have said, it was
 A time of trouble; shoals of Artisans
 Were from their daily labour turned adrift 590
 To seek their bread from public charity,
 They, and their wives and children—happier far
 Could they have lived as do the little birds
 That peck along the hedges, or the Kite
 That makes his dwelling on the mountain Rocks!

A sad reverse it was for Him who long
 Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
 This lonely Cottage. At his door he stood,
 And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
 That had no mirth in them; or with his knife 600
 Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
 Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook

In house or garden, any casual work
 Of use or ornament; and with a strange,
 Amusing, yet uneasy novelty,
 He blended, where he might, the various tasks
 Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
 But this endured not; his good humour soon
 Became a weight in which no pleasure was:
 And poverty brought on a petted mood 610
 And a sore temper: day by day he drooped,
 And he would leave his work—and to the Town,
 Without an errand, would direct his steps,
 Or wander here and there among the fields.
 One while he would speak lightly of his Babes,
 And with a cruel tongue: at other times
 He tossed them with a false unnatural joy:
 And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
 Of the poor innocent children. "Every smile,"
 Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees, 620
 "Made my heart bleed."

At this the Wanderer paused;
 And, looking up to those enormous Elms,
 He said, "Tis now the hour of deepest noon.—
 At this still season of repose and peace,
 This hour, when all things which are not at rest
 Are chearful; while this multitude of flies
 Is filling all the air with melody;
 Why should a tear be in an Old Man's eye?
 Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
 And in the weakness of humanity, 630
 From natural wisdom turn our hearts away,
 To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears,
 And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
 The calm of nature with our restless thoughts?"

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone:
 But, when he ended, there was in his face
 Such easy chearfulness, a look so mild,
 That for a little time it stole away
 All recollection, and that simple Tale
 Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound. 640

A while on trivial things we held discourse,
 To me soon tasteless. In my own despite
 I thought of that poor Woman as of one
 Whom I had known and loved. We had rehearsed
 Her homely Tale with such familiar power,
 With such an active countenance, an eye
 So busy, that the things of which he spake
 Seemed present; and, attention now relaxed,
 There was a heart-felt chillness in my veins.—
 I rose; and, turning from the breezy shade,
 Went forth into the open air, and stood
 To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.
 Long time I had not staid, ere, looking round
 Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
 And begged of the Old Man that, for my sake,
 He would resume his story.—

650

He replied,
 ‘It were a wantonness, and would demand
 Severe reproof, if we were Men whose hearts
 Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
 Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
 A momentary pleasure, never marked
 By reason, barren of all future good.
 But we have known that there is often found
 In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
 A power to virtue friendly; were’t not so,
 I am a Dreamer among men, indeed
 An idle Dreamer! ’Tis a common Tale,
 An ordinary sorrow of Man’s life,
 A tale of silent suffering hardly clothed
 In bodily form—But, without further bidding,
 I will proceed.—

660

670

While thus it fared with them,
 To whom this Cottage, till those hapless years,
 Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
 To travel in a Country far remote.
 And glad I was, when, halting by yon gate
 That leads from the green lane, once more I saw
 These lofty elm-trees. Long I did not rest:
 With many pleasant thoughts I cheared my way
 O’er the flat Common.—Having reached the door

I knocked,—and, when I entered with the hope
 Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me
 A little while; then turned her head away
 Speechless,—and sitting down upon a chair
 Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
 Or how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
 She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir!
 I cannot tell how she pronounced my name.—
 With fervent love, and with a face of grief
 Unutterably helpless, and a look
 That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
 If I had seen her Husband. As she spake
 A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
 Nor had I power to answer ere she told
 That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
 He left his House: two wretched days has passed,
 And on the third, as wistfully she raised
 Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
 Like one in trouble, for returning light,
 Within her chamber-casement she espied
 A folded paper, lying as if placed
 To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
 She opened—found no writing, but therein
 Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
 Silver and gold.—“I shuddered at the sight,”
 Said Margaret, “for I knew it was his hand
 Which placed it there: and ere that day was ended,
 That long and anxious day! I learned from One
 Sent hither by my Husband to impart
 The heavy news,—that he had joined a Troop
 Of Soldiers, going to a distant Land.
 —He left me thus—he could not gather heart
 To take a farewell of me; for he feared
 That I should follow with my Babes, and sink
 Beneath the misery of that wandering Life.”

This Tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
 And, when she ended, I had little power
 To give her comfort, and was glad to take
 Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
 To cheer us both:—but long we had not talked

Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,—
 And with a brighter eye she look'd around 720
 As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
 We parted.—'Twas the time of early spring;
 I left her busy with her garden tools;
 And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
 And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
 Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
 With tender cheerfulness; and with a voice
 That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale, 730
 With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
 Through many a wood, and many an open ground,
 In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
 Drooping, or blithe of heart, as might befall;
 My best companions now the driving winds,
 And now the "trotting brooks" and whispering trees,
 And now the music of my own sad steps,
 With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
 And disappeared.—I journeyed back this way
 Towards the wane of Summer; when the wheat 740
 Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass
 Springing afresh had o'er the hay-field spread
 Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
 I found that she was absent. In the shade,
 Where now we sit, I waited her return.
 Her Cottage, then a cheerful Object, wore
 Its customary look,—only, I thought,
 The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
 Hung down in heavier tufts: and that bright weed,
 The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root 750
 Along the window's edge, profusely grew,
 Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
 And strolled into her garden. It appeared
 To lag behind the season, and had lost
 Its pride of neatness. From the border lines
 Composed of daisy and resplendent thrift,
 Flowers straggling forth had on those paths encroached
 Which they were used to deck:—Carnations, once
 Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less

For the peculiar pains they had required, 760
 Declined their languid heads—without support.
 The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
 Had twined about her two small rows of pease,
 And dragged them to the earth.—Ere this an hour
 Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps,
 And, as I walked before the door, it chanced
 A Stranger passed; and, guessing whom I sought,
 He said that she was used to ramble far.—
 The sun was sinking in the west; and now
 I sate with sad impatience. From within 770
 Her solitary Infant cried aloud;
 Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
 The voice was silent. From the bench I rose;
 But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
 The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
 The longer I remained more desolate.
 And, looking round, I saw the corner stones,
 Till then unnoticed, on either side the door
 With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er
 With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the Sheep, 780
 That fed upon the Common, thither came
 Familiarly; and found a couching-place
 Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
 From these tall elms;—the Cottage-clock struck eight;—
 I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
 Her face was pale and thin, her figure too
 Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
 “It grieves me you have waited here so long,
 But, in good truth, I’ve wandered much of late,
 And, sometimes,—to my shame I speak, have need 790
 Of my best prayers to bring me back again.”
 While on the board she spread our evening meal,
 She told me,—interrupting not the work
 Which gave employment to her listless hands—
 That she had parted with her elder Child;
 To a kind Master on a distant farm
 Now happily apprenticed—“I perceive
 You look at me, and you have cause; to-day
 I have been travelling far; and many days
 About the fields I wander, knowing this 800

Only, that what I seek I cannot find.
 And so I waste my time: for I am changed;
 And to myself," said she, "have done much wrong
 And to this helpless Infant. I have slept
 Weeping, and weeping I have waked; my tears
 Have flowed as if my body were not such
 As others are; and I could never die.
 But I am now in mind and in my heart
 More easy; and I hope," said she, "that Heaven
 Will give me patience to endure the things
 Which I behold at home." It would have grieved
 Your very soul to see her; Sir, I feel
 The story linger in my heart: I fear
 'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
 To that poor Woman:—so familiarly
 Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
 And presence, and so deeply do I feel
 Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
 A momentary trance comes over me;
 And to myself I seem to muse on One
 By sorrow laid asleep;—or borne away,
 A human being destined to awake
 To human life, or something very near
 To human life, when he shall come again
 For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved
 Your very soul to see her: evermore
 Her eyelids drooped, her eyes were downward cast;
 And, when she at her table gave me food,
 She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
 Her body was subdued. In every act
 Pertaining to her house affairs, appeared
 The careless stillness of a thinking mind
 Self-occupied; to which all outward things
 Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
 But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
 No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
 We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
 I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
 For her Son's use, some tokens of regard,

Which with a look of welcome she received;
 And I exhorted her to have her trust
 In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
 I took my staff, and when I kissed her babe
 The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
 With the best hope and comfort I could give;
 She thanked me for my wish:—but for my hope
 Methought she did not thank me.

I returned,

And took my rounds along this road again
 Ere on its sunny bank the primrose flower
 Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring. 850
 I found her sad and drooping; she had learned
 No tidings of her Husband; if he lived
 She knew not that he lived; if he were dead
 She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
 In person and appearance; but her House
 Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence.
 The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
 Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
 Which, in the Cottage window, heretofore 860
 Had been piled up against the corner panes
 In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
 Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
 As they had chanced to fall. Her Infant Babe
 Had from its Mother caught the trick of grief,
 And sighed among its playthings. Once again
 I turned towards the garden gate, and saw,
 More plainly still, that poverty and grief
 Were now come nearer to her: weeds defaced
 The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass; 870
 No ridges there appeared of clear black mold,
 No winter greenness; of her herbs and flowers,
 It seemed the better part were gnawed away
 Or trampled into earth; a chain of straw,
 Which had been twined about the slender stem
 Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root;
 The bark was nibbled round by truant Sheep.
 —Margaret stood near, her Infant in her arms,
 And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
 She said, "I fear it will be dead and gone 880

Ere Robert come again." Towards the House
 Together we returned; and she enquired
 If I had any hope:—but for her Babe
 And for her little orphan Boy, she said,
 She had no wish to live, that she must die
 Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
 Still in its place; his Sunday garments hung
 Upon the self-same nail; his very staff
 Stood undisturbed behind the door. And when,
 In bleak December, I retraced this way, 890
 She told me that her little Babe was dead,
 And she was left alone. She now, released
 From her maternal cares, had taken up
 The employment common through these Wilds, and gained
 By spinning hemp a pittance for herself;
 And for this end had hired a neighbour's Boy
 To give her needful help. That very time
 Most willingly she put her work aside,
 And walked with me along the miry road 900
 Heedless how far; and, in such piteous sort
 That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
 That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
 For him whom she had lost. We parted then,
 Our final parting; for from that time forth
 Did many seasons pass ere I returned
 Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years;

From their first separation, nine long years,
 She lingered in unquiet widowhood;
 A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
 A sore heart-wasting! I have heard, my Friend, 910
 That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate
 Alone, through half the vacant Sabbath-day,
 And if a dog passed by she still would quit
 The shade, and look abroad. On this old Bench
 For hours she sate; and evermore her eye
 Was busy in the distance, shaping things
 That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
 Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line;
 There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
 Of the warm summer; from a belt of hemp 920

That girt her waist, spinning the long drawn thread
 With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
 A man whose garments shewed the Soldier's red
 Or crippled Mendicant in Sailor's garb,
 The little Child who sate to turn the wheel
 Ceased from his task; and she with faltering voice
 Made many a fond enquiry; and when they,
 Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
 Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
 That bars the Traveller's road, she often stood, 930
 And when a stranger Horseman came the latch
 Would lift, and in his face look wistfully:
 Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
 Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
 The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
 Sank to decay: for he was gone, whose hand,
 At the first nipping of October frost,
 Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
 Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived 940
 Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
 Until her House by frost, and thaw, and rain,
 Was sapped; and while she slept the nightly damps
 Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
 Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind;
 Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
 She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
 Have parted hence; and still that length of road,
 And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
 Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my Friend,
 In sickness she remained; and here she died, 950
 Last human Tenant of these ruined Walls!'

The Old Man ceased: he saw that I was moved;
 From that low Bench, rising instinctively
 I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
 To thank him for the Tale which he had told.
 I stood, and leaning o'er the Garden wall,
 Reviewed that Woman's sufferings; and it seemed
 To comfort me while with a Brother's love

I blessed her—in the impotence of grief.
 At length towards the Cottage I returned 960
 Fondly,—and traced, with interest more mild,
 That secret spirit of humanity
 Which, mid the calm oblivious tendencies
 Of Nature, mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
 And silent overgrowings, still survived.
 The Old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
 ‘My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
 The purposes of wisdom ask no more;°
 Be wise and chearful; and no longer read
 The forms of things with an unworthy eye. 970
 She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
 I well remember that those very plumes,
 Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
 By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o’er,
 As once I passed, did to my heart convey
 So still an image of tranquillity,
 So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
 Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
 That what we feel of sorrow and despair
 From ruin and from change, and all the grief 980
 The passing shews of Being leave behind,
 Appeared an idle dream, that could not live
 Where meditation was. I turned away
 And walked along my road in happiness.’

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
 A slant and mellow radiance, which began
 To fall upon us, while beneath the trees,
 We sate on that low Bench: and now we felt,
 Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
 A linnet warbled from those lofty elms, 990
 A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
 At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
 The Old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
 Of hopeful preparation, grasped his Staff:
 Together casting then a farewell look
 Upon those silent walls, we left the Shade;
 And, ere the Stars were visible, had reached
 A Village Inn,—our Evening resting-place.

FROM BOOK THREE, ll. 364-468

[In this passage the Solitary speaks]

His Countenance gave notice that my zeal
 Accorded little with his present mind;
 I ceased, and he resumed.—‘Ah! gentle Sir,
 Slight, if you will, the *means*; but spare to slight
 The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
 As the prime object of a wise Man’s aim,
 Security from shock of accident, 370
 Release from fear; and cherished peaceful days
 For their own sakes, as mortal life’s chief good,
 And only reasonable felicity.
 What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
 Through a long course of later ages, drove
 The Hermit to his Cell in forest wide;
 Or what detained him, till his closing eyes
 Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
 Fast anchored in the desert?—Not alone
 Dread of the persecuting sword—remorse, 380
 Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
 And unavengeable, defeated pride,
 Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
 Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,
 Love with despair, or grief in agony:—
 Not always from intolerable pangs
 He fled; but, compassed round by pleasure, sighed
 For independent happiness; craving peace,
 The central feeling of all happiness, 390
 Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
 A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
 But for its absolute self; a life of peace,
 Stability without regret or fear;
 That hath been, is, and shall be evermore!
 Such the reward he sought; and wore out Life,
 There, where on few external things his heart
 Was set, and those his own; or, if not his,
 Subsisting under Nature’s steadfast law.

What other yearning was the master tie
 Of the monastic Brotherhood; upon Rock^o 400
 Aerial, or in green secluded Vale,
 One after one, collected from afar,
 An undissolving Fellowship?—What but this,
 The universal instinct of repose,
 The longing for confirmed tranquillity;
 Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime:—
 The life where hope and memory are as one;
 Earth quiet and unchanged; the human Soul
 Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
 To meditation, in that quietness! 410
 Such was their scheme:—thrice happy he who gained
 The end proposed! And,—though the same were missed
 By multitudes, perhaps obtained by none,—
 They, for the attempt, and for the pains employed,
 Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
 From the unqualified disdain, that once
 Would have been cast upon them, by my Voice
 Delivering its decisions from the seat
 Of forward Youth:—that scruples not to solve
 Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules 420
 Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
 To overweening faith; and is inflamed,
 By courage, to demand from real life
 The test of act and suffering—to provoke
 Hostility, how dreadful when it comes,
 Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt!

A Child of earth, I rested, in that stage
 Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,
 Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
 That mine was a condition which required 430
 Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
 Without vicissitude; which, if the like
 Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
 I might have even been tempted to despise.
 But that which was serene was also bright;
 Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing,
 With joy, and—oh! that memory should survive
 To speak the word—with rapture! Nature's boon,

Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
 Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign; 440
 Abused, as all possessions are abused
 That are not prized according to their worth.
 And yet, what worth? what good is given to Men,
 More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven?
 What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?
 None! 'tis the general plaint of human kind
 In solitude, and mutually addressed
 From each to all, for wisdom's sake:—This truth
 The Priest announces from his holy seat;
 And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove, 450
 The Poet fits it to his pensive Lyre.
 Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
 Sharp contradictions hourly shall arise
 To cross the way; and we, perchance, by doom
 Of this same life, shall be compelled to grieve
 That the prosperities of love and joy
 Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure
 So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
 Oh! tremble Ye to whom hath been assigned
 A course of days composing happy months, 460
 And they as happy years; the present still
 So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
 Of a congenial future, that the wheels
 Of pleasure move without the aid of hope.
 For Mutability is Nature's bane;^o
 And slighted Hope will be avenged; and, when
 Ye need her favours, Ye shall find her not;
 But, in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony.'

FROM BOOK FOUR

(A) ll. 1-122

Here closed the Tenant of that lonely Vale
 His mournful Narrative—commenced in pain,
 In pain commenced, and ended without peace:
 Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with strains
 Of native feeling, grateful to our minds;
 And doubtless yielding some relief to his,

While we sate listening with compassion due.
 Such pity yet surviving, with firm voice,
 That did not falter though the heart was moved,
 The Wanderer said—

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‘One adequate support
 For the calamities of mortal life
 Exists, one only;—an assured belief
 That the procession of our fate, howe’er
 Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
 Of infinite benevolence and power,
 Whose everlasting purposes embrace
 All accidents, converting them to Good.
 —The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
 Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
 By acquiescence in the Will Supreme
 For Time and for Eternity; by faith,
 Faith absolute in God, including hope,
 And the defence that lies in boundless love
 Of his perfections; with habitual dread
 Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
 Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
 To the dishonour of his holy Name.
 Soul of our souls, and safeguard of the world!
 Sustain, Thou only canst, the sick of heart;
 Restore their languid spirits, and recal
 Their lost affections unto Thee, and thine!’

Then as we issued from that covert Nook,
 He thus continued—lifting up his eyes
 To Heaven.—‘How beautiful this dome of sky,
 And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
 At thy command, how awful! Shall the Soul,
 Human and rational, report of Thee
 Even less than these?—Be mute who will, who can,
 Yet I will praise thee with empasioned voice:
 My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,
 Cannot forget thee here; where Thou hast built,
 For thy own glory, in the wilderness!
 Me didst thou constitute a Priest of thine,
 In such a Temple as we now behold

Reared for thy presence: therefore, am I bound
 To worship, here, and everywhere—as One
 Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,
 From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
 From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
 And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace 50
 The particle divine remained unquenched;
 And, mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
 Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
 From Paradise transplanted. Wintry age
 Impends; the frost will gather round my heart;
 And, if they wither, I am worse than dead!
 —Come Labour, when the worn-out frame requires
 Perpetual sabbath; come disease and want;
 And sad exclusion through decay of sense;
 But leave me unabated trust in Thee— 60
 And let thy favour, to the end of life,
 Inspire me with ability to seek
 Repose and hope among eternal things—
 Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,
 And will possess my portion in content!

And what are things Eternal?—Powers depart,
 The grey-haired Wanderer steadfastly replied,
 Answering the question which himself had asked,
 ‘Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
 And Passions hold a fluctuating seat: 70
 But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
 And subject neither to eclipse or wane,
 Duty exists;—immutably survive,^o
 For our support, the measures and the forms,
 Which an abstract Intelligence supplies;
 Whose kingdom is, where Time and Space are not:
 Of other converse, which mind, soul, and heart,
 Do, with united urgency, require,
 What more, that may not perish? Thou, dread Source,
 Prime, self-existing Cause and End of all, 80
 That, in the scale of Being, fill their place,
 Above our human region, or below,

Set and sustained;—Thou—Who didst wrap the cloud
 Of Infancy around us, that Thyself,
 Therein, with our simplicity awhile
 Might'st hold, on earth, communion undisturbed—
 Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
 Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
 And touch as gentle as the morning light,
 Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense, 90
 And reason's steadfast rule—thou, thou, alone
 Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
 Which thou includest, as the Sea her Waves:
 For adoration thou endurest; endure
 For consciousness the motions of thy will;
 For apprehension those transcendent truths
 Of the pure Intellect, that stand as laws,
 (Submission constituting strength and power)
 Even to thy Being's infinite majesty!
 This Universe shall pass away—a frame 100
 Glorious! because the shadow of thy might,
 A step, or link, for intercourse with Thee.
 Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet
 No more shall stray where Meditation leads,
 By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
 Loved haunts like these, the unimprisoned Mind
 May yet have scope to range among her own,
 Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
 If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
 Still, it may be allowed me to remember 110
 What visionary powers of eye and soul
 In youth were mine; when, stationed on the top
 Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
 The Sun rise up, from distant climes returned
 Darkness to chase, and sleep, and bring the day
 His bounteous gift! or saw him, tow'rd's the Deep
 Sink—with a retinue of flaming Clouds
 Attended; then, my Spirit was entranced
 With joy exalted to beatitude;
 The measure of my soul was filled with bliss, 120
 And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
 With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

(B) ll. 627–883

[The Wanderer is speaking]

‘Upon the breast of new-created Earth
 Man walked; and when and wheresoe’er he moved,
 Alone or mated, Solitude was not.
 He heard, upon the wind, the articulate Voice 630
 Of God; and Angels to his sight appeared,
 Crowning the glorious hills of Paradise;
 Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
 Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
 With winged Messengers; who daily brought
 To his small Island in the etherial deep
 Tidings of joy and love.—From these pure Heights
 (Whether of actual vision, sensible
 To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
 Have condescendingly been shadowed forth 640
 Communications spiritually maintained,
 And Intuitions moral and divine)
 Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned
 That flowing years repealed not: and distress
 And grief spread wide; but Man escaped the doom
 Of destitution;—Solitude was not.
 —Jehovah—shapeless Power above all Powers,
 Single and one, the omnipresent God,
 By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
 Or cloud of darkness, localized in heaven, 650
 On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark;
 Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
 Between the Cherubim—on the chosen Race
 Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
 Judgments, that filled the Land from age to age
 With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear;
 And with amazement smote;—thereby to assert
 His scorned, or unacknowledged Sovereignty.
 And when the One, ineffable of name,
 In nature indivisible, withdrew 660
 From mortal adoration or regard,
 Not then was Deity engulfed, nor Man,

The rational Creature, left, to feel the weight
 Of his own reason, without sense or thought
 Of higher reason and a purer will,
 To benefit and bless, through mightier power:
 —Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
 Altar and Image and the inclusive walls
 And roofs of Temples built by human hands—
 The loftiest heights ascending, from their tops, 670
 With myrtle-wreathed Tiara on his brows,
 Presented sacrifice to Moon and Stars,
 And to the winds and Mother Elements,
 And the whole Circle of the Heavens, for him
 A sensitive Existence, and a God,
 With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise:
 Or, less reluctantly to bonds of Sense
 Yielding his Soul, the Babylonian framed
 For influence undefined a personal Shape;
 And, from the Plain, with toil immense, upreared 680
 Tower eight times planted on the top of Tower;^o
 That Belus, nightly to his splendid Couch
 Descending, there might rest; and, from that Height
 Pure and serene, the Godhead overlook
 Winding Euphrates, and the City vast
 Of his devoted Worshippers, far-stretched;
 With grove, and field, and garden, interspersed;
 Their Town, and foodful Region for support
 Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields, 690
 Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
 Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
 Looked on the Polar Star, as on a Guide
 And Guardian of their course, that never closed
 His steadfast eye. The Planetary Five
 With a submissive reverence they beheld;
 Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
 Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
 Carrying through Ether, in perpetual round,
 Decrees and resolutions of the Gods; 700
 And, by their aspects, signifying works
 Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.

—The Imaginative Faculty was Lord
 Of observations natural; and, thus
 Led on, those Shepherds made report of Stars
 In set rotation passing to and fro,
 Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
 And its invisible counterpart, adorned
 With answering Constellations, under earth
 Removed from all approach of living sight,
 But present to the Dead; who, so they deemed,
 Like those celestial Messengers, beheld
 All accidents, and Judges were of all.

710

The lively Grecian, in a Land of hills,
 Rivers, and fertile plains, and sounding shores,
 Under a cope of variegated sky,
 Could find commodious place for every God,
 Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
 From the surrounding Countries—at the choice
 Of all Adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
 As nicest observation furnished hints
 For studious fancy, did his hand bestow
 On fluent Operations a fixed Shape;
 Metal or Stone, idolatrously served.
 And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
 Of Art, this palpable array of Sense,
 On every side encountered; in despite
 Of the gross fictions, chaunted in the streets
 By wandering Rhapsodists; and in contempt
 Of doubt and bold denials hourly urged
 Amid the wrangling Schools—a SPIRIT hung,
 Beautiful Region! o'er thy Towns and Farms,
 Statues and Temples, and memorial Tombs;
 And emanations were perceived; and acts
 Of immortality, in Nature's course,
 Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
 As bonds, on grave Philosopher imposed
 And armed Warrior; and in every grove
 A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
 When piety more awful had relaxed.
 —“Take, running River, take these Locks of mine”—
 Thus would the Votary say—“this severed hair

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My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
 Thankful for my beloved child's return.
 Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,
 Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the chrystal lymph
 With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
 And moisten all day long these flowery fields."
 And doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
 Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose 750
 Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired;
 That hath been, is, and where it was and is
 There shall be,—seen, and heard, and felt, and known,
 And recognized,—existence unexposed
 To the blind walk of mortal accident;
 From diminution safe and weakening age;
 While Man grows old, and dwindles, and decays;
 And countless generations of Mankind
 Depart; and leave no vestige where they trod.

We live by admiration, hope, and love; 760
 And even as these are well and wisely fixed,
 In dignity of being we ascend.
 But what is error?'—'Answer he who can!
 The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed,
 'Love, Hope, and Admiration—are they not
 Mad Fancy's favourite Vassals? Does not Life
 Use them, full oft, as Pioneers to ruin,
 Guides to destruction? Is it well to trust
 Imagination's light when Reason's fails,
 The unguarded taper where the guarded faints? 770
 —Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
 What error is; and, of our errors, which
 Doth most debase the mind; the genuine seats
 Of power, where are they? Who shall regulate,
 With truth, the scale of intellectual rank?'

'Methinks,' persuasively the Sage replied,
 'That for this arduous office You possess
 Some rare advantages. Your early days
 A grateful recollection must supply
 Of much exalted good that may attend 780
 Upon the very humblest state.—Your voice
 Hath in my hearing often testified

That poor Men's Children, they, and they alone,
 By their condition taught, can understand
 The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
 For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
 How feelingly religion may be learned
 In smoky Cabins, from a Mother's tongue—
 Heard while the Dwelling vibrates to the din
 Of the contiguous Torrent, gathering strength 790
 At every moment—and, with strength, increase
 Of fury; or while Snow is at the door,
 Assaulting and defending, and the Wind,
 A sightless Labourer, whistles at his work—
 Fearful, but resignation tempers fear,
 And piety is sweet to Infant minds.
 —The Shepherd Lad, who in the sunshine carves,
 On the green turf, a dial—to divide
 The silent hours; and who to that report
 Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt 800
 His round of pastoral duties, is not left
 With less intelligence for *moral* things
 Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
 Within himself, a measure and a rule,
 Which to the Sun of Truth he can apply,
 That shines for him, and shines for all Mankind.
 Experience, daily fixing his regards
 On Nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
 And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
 This knowledge ample recompence affords 810
 For manifold privations; he refers
 His notions to this standard; on this rock,
 Rests his desires; and hence, in after life,
 Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
 Imagination—not permitted here
 To waste her powers, as in the Worldling's mind,
 On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
 And trivial ostentation—is left free
 And puissant to range the solemn walks
 Of time and nature, girded by a zone 820
 That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
 Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
 Of his poor hut, or on the mountain top,

Or in the cultured field, a Man like this
 (Take from him what you will upon the score
 Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
 For noble purposes of mind: his heart
 Beats to the heroic song of ancient days;
 His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
 And those Illusions, which excite the scorn 830
 Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
 Are they not mainly outward Ministers
 Of inward Conscience? with whose service charged
 They come and go, appear and disappear;
 Diverting evil purposes, remorse
 Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
 Or pride of heart abating: and, whene'er
 For less important ends those Phantoms move,
 Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
 Among wild mountains and unpeopled heaths, 840
 Filling a space else vacant, to exalt
 The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers?

Once more to distant Ages of the world
 Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
 The face which rural Solitude might wear^o
 To the unenlightened Swains of pagan Greece.
 —In that fair Clime, the lonely Herdsman, stretched
 On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
 With music lulled his indolent repose:
 And, in some fit of weariness, if he, 850
 When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
 A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
 Which his poor skill could make, his Fancy fetched,
 Even from the blazing Chariot of the Sun,
 A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,
 And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
 The nightly Hunter, lifting up his eyes
 Towards the crescent Moon, with grateful heart
 Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
 That timely light, to share his joyous sport: 860
 And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,
 Across the lawn and through the darksome grove,
 (Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes

By echo multiplied from rock or cave)
 Swept in the storm of chase, as Moon and Stars
 Glance rapidly along the clouded heavens,
 When winds are blowing strong. The Traveller slaked
 His thirst from Rill or gushing Fount, and thanked
 The Naiad.—Sunbeams, upon distant Hills^o
 Gliding apace, with Shadows in their train, 870
 Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
 Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
 The Zephyrs, fanning as they passed, their wings,
 Lacked not, for love, fair Objects, whom they wooed
 With gentle whisper. Withered Boughs grotesque,
 Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
 From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
 In the low vale, or on steep mountain side;
 And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
 Of the live Deer, or Goat's depending beard; 880
 These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
 Of gamesome Deities! or Pan himself,
 The simple Shepherd's awe-inspiring God.'

(C) ll. 1125–1271

[The Wanderer is speaking]

'I have seen
 A curious Child, who dwelt upon a tract
 Of inland ground, applying to his ear
 The convolutions of a smooth-lipped Shell;
 To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
 Listened intensely; and his countenance soon 1130
 Brightened with joy; for murmurings from within
 Were heard,—sonorous cadences! whereby,
 To his belief, the Monitor expressed
 Mysterious union with its native Sea.
 Even such a Shell the Universe itself
 Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
 I doubt not, when to You it doth impart
 Authentic tidings of invisible things;
 Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;

And central peace, subsisting at the heart 1140
 Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
 Adore, and worship, when you know it not;
 Pious beyond the intention of your thought;
 Devout above the meaning of your will.
 —Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
 The estate of Man would be indeed forlorn
 If false conclusions of the reasoning Power
 Made the Eye blind, and closed the passages
 Through which the Ear converses with the heart.
 Has not the Soul, the Being of your Life 1150
 Received a shock of awful consciousness,
 In some calm season, when these lofty Rocks
 At night's approach bring down the unclouded Sky,
 To rest upon their circumambient walls;
 A Temple framing of dimensions vast,
 And yet not too enormous for the sound
 Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
 Sublime of instrumental harmony,
 To glorify the Eternal! What if these
 Did never break the stillness that prevails 1160
 Here, if the solemn Nightingale be mute,
 And the soft Woodlark here did never chaunt
 Her vespers, Nature fails not to provide
 Impulse and utterance. The whispering Air
 Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
 And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;
 The little Rills, and Waters numberless,
 Inaudible by day-light, blend their notes
 With the loud Streams: and often, at the hour
 When issue forth the first pale Stars, is heard, 1170
 Within the circuit of this Fabric huge,
 One Voice—the solitary Raven, flying
 Athwart the concave of the dark-blue dome,
 Unseen, perchance above the power of sight—
 An iron knell! with echoes from afar
 Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
 The wanderer accompanies her flight
 Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
 Diminishing by distance till it seemed
 To expire, yet from the Abyss is caught again, 1180

And yet again recovered!

But descending

From these Imaginative Heights, that yield
 Far-stretching views into Eternity,
 Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
 Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend
 Even here, where her amenities are sown
 With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
 To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
 Where on the labours of the happy Throng
 She smiles, including in her wide embrace 1190
 City, and Town, and Tower,—and Sea with Ships
 Sprinkled,—be our Companion while we track
 Her rivers populous with gliding life;
 While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
 And pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
 Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
 In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
 Where living Things, and Things inanimate,
 Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
 And speak to social Reason's inner sense,^o 1200
 With inarticulate language.

—For the Man,

Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
 Of Nature, who with understanding heart,
 Doth know and love, such Objects as excite
 No morbid passions, no disquietude,
 No vengeance, and no hatred, needs must feel
 The joy of that pure principle of Love
 So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
 Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose 1210
 But seek for objects of a kindred love
 In Fellow-natures, and a kindred joy.
 Accordingly, he by degrees, perceives
 His feelings of aversion softened down;
 A holy tenderness pervade his frame.
 His sanity of reason not impaired,
 Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
 From a clear Fountain flowing, he looks round
 And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks:
 Until abhorrence and contempt are things

He only knows by name; and, if he hear 1220
 From other mouths, the language which they speak,
 He is compassionate; and has no thought,
 No feeling which can overcome his love.

And further; by contemplating these Forms
 In the relations which they bear to Man,
 He shall discern, how, through the various means
 Which silently they yield, are multiplied
 The spiritual Presences of absent Things,
 Convoked by knowledge; and for his delight
 Still ready to obey the gentle call. 1230

Trust me, that for the Instructed, time will come
 When they shall meet no object but may teach
 Some acceptable lesson to their minds
 Of human suffering, or of human joy.
 For them shall all things speak of Man, they read
 Their duties in all forms; and general laws,
 And local accidents, shall tend alike
 To rouse, to urge; and, with the will confer
 The ability to spread the blessings wide
 Of true philanthropy. The light of love 1240

Not failing, perseverance from their steps
 Departing not, they shall at length obtain
 The glorious habit by which Sense is made
 Subservient still to moral purposes,
 Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
 The naked Spirit, ceasing to deplore
 The burthen of existence. Science then
 Shall be a precious Visitant; and then,
 And only then, be worthy of her name.
 For then her Heart shall kindle; her dull Eye, 1250
 Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang
 Chained to its object in brute slavery;
 But taught with patient interest to watch
 The processes of things, and serve the cause
 Of order and distinctness, not for this
 Shall it forget that its most noble use,
 Its most illustrious province, must be found
 In furnishing clear guidance, a support
 Not treacherous, to the Mind's *excursive* Power.

—So build we up the Being that we are; 1260
 Thus deeply drinking—in the Soul of Things
 We shall be wise perforce; and while inspired
 By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
 Unswerving shall we move, as if impelled
 By strict necessity, along the path
 Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
 Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
 Or indirect shall tend to feed and nurse
 Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
 Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights 1270
 Of love divine, our intellectual Soul.'

FROM BOOK SEVEN, ll. 998–1079

'So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,'
 The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
 'All that this World is proud of. From their spheres 1000
 The stars of human glory are cast down;
 Perish the roses and the flowers of Kings,^o
 Princes and Emperors, and the crowns and palms
 Of all the Mighty, withered and consumed!
 Nor is power given to lowliest Innocence
 Long to protect her own. The Man himself
 Departs; and soon is spent the Line of those
 Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
 In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
 Did most resemble him. Degrees and Ranks, 1010
 Fraternities and Orders—heaping high
 New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
 And placing trust in privilege confirmed
 And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
 Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
 Of Desolation, aimed: to slow decline
 These yield, and these to sudden overthrow;
 Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
 Expire; and Nature's pleasant robe of green,
 Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps 1020
 Their monuments and their memory. The vast Frame
 Of social nature changes evermore

Her organs and her members, with decay
 Restless; and restless generation, powers
 And functions dying and produced at need,—
 And by this law the mighty Whole subsists:
 With an ascent and progress in the main;
 Yet oh! how disproportioned to the hopes
 And expectations of self-flattering minds!
 —The courteous Knight, whose bones are here interred, 1030
 Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
 For strife and ferment in the minds of men;
 Whence alteration, in the forms of things,
 Various and vast. A memorable age!
 Which did to him assign a pensive lot,
 —To linger 'mid the last of those bright Clouds,
 That, on the steady breeze of honour, sailed
 In long procession calm and beautiful.
 He, who had seen his own bright Order fade,
 And its devotion gradually decline, 1040
 (While War, relinquishing the lance and shield,
 Her temper changed and bowed to other laws)
 Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
 That violent Commotion, which o'erthrew,
 In town, and city, and sequestered glen,
 Altar, and Cross, and Church of solemn roof,
 And old religious House—Pile after Pile;
 And shook the Tenants out into the fields,
 Like wild Beasts without home! Their hour was come;
 But why no softening thought of gratitude, 1050
 No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt?
 Benevolence is mild; nor borrows help,
 Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force,
 Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
 But Human-kind rejoices in the might
 Of Mutability and airy Hopes,
 Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
 Those meditations of the soul, which feed
 The retrospective Virtues. Festive songs
 Break from the maddened Nations at the sight 1060
 Of sudden overthrow; and cold neglect
 Is the sure consequence of slow decay.
 —Even,' said the Wanderer, 'as that courteous Knight,

Bound by his vow to labour for redress
 Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
 By sword and lance the law of gentleness,
 If I may venture of myself to speak,
 Trusting that not incongruously I blend
 Low things with lofty, I too shall be doomed
 To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
 Of the poor calling which my Youth embraced
 1070
 With no unworthy prospect. But enough;
 —Thoughts crowd upon me—and 'twere seemlier now
 To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
 For the pathetic Records which his voice
 Hath here delivered; words of heartfelt truth,
 Tending to patience when Affliction strikes;
 To hope and love; to confident repose
 In God; and reverence for the dust of Man!

FROM BOOK NINE, ll. 1-138

'To every Form of Being is assigned,'^o
 Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
 'An *active* principle:—howe'er removed
 From sense and observation, it subsists
 In all things, in all natures, in the stars
 Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
 In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
 That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
 The moving waters, and the invisible air.
 Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
 10
 Beyond itself, communicating good,
 A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
 Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
 No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
 It circulates, the Soul of all the Worlds.
 This is the freedom of the Universe;
 Unfolded still the more, more visible,
 The more we know; and yet is revered least,
 And least respected, in the human Mind,
 Its most apparent home. The food of hope
 20
 Is meditated action; robbed of this

Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
 We perish also; for we live by hope
 And by desire; we see by the glad light,
 And breathe the sweet air of futurity,
 And so we live, or else we have no life.
 To-morrow—nay perchance this very hour,
 (For every moment hath its own to-morrow!)
 —Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost sick
 With present triumph, will be sure to find 30
 A field before them freshened with the dew
 Of other expectations;—in which course
 Their happy year spins round. The Youth obeys
 A like glad impulse; and so moves the Man
 Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears—,
 Or so he ought to move. 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—but for this, 40
 That it is given her thence in age to hear
 Reverberations; and a choral song,
 Commingling with the incense that ascends
 Undaunted, tow'rd's the imperishable heavens,
 From her own lonely altar?—Do not think
 That Good and Wise will ever be allowed,
 Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate
 As shall divide them wholly from the stir
 Of hopeful nature. Rightly is it said
 That Man descends into the VALE of years; 50
 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, which 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. 60
 Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
 Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,

With all the shapes upon their surface spread.
 But, while the gross and visible frame of things
 Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
 Yea almost on the mind itself, and seems
 All unsubstantialized,—how loud the voice
 Of waters, with invigorated peal
 From the full River in the vale below,
 Ascending!—For on that superior height 70
 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, touches 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 80
 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 this, that we thereby should gain
 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 90
 To the vast multitude; whose doom it is
 To run the giddy round of vain delight,
 Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
 Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
 And termination of his mortal course,
 Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
 Have not been starved by absolute neglect;
 Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil;
 To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford 100
 Proof of the sacred love she bears for all;
 Whose birth-right Reason, therefore, may ensure.

For me, consulting what I feel within
 In times when most existence with herself
 Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
 That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope
 And Reason's sway predominates, even so far,
 Country, society, and time itself,
 That saps the individual's bodily frame,
 And lays the generations low in dust, 110
 Do, by the Almighty Ruler's grace, partake
 Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
 And cherishing with ever-constant love,
 That tires not, nor betrays. Our Life is turned
 Out of her course, wherever Man is made
 An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
 Or implement, a passive Thing employed
 As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
 Of common right or interest in the end;
 Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt. 120
 Say, what can follow for a rational Soul
 Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
 And strength in evil? Hence an after-call
 For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
 And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
 And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
 Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues
 Was Man created; but to obey the law
 Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known
 That when we stand upon our native soil, 130
 Unelbowed by such objects as oppress
 Our active powers, those powers themselves become
 Strong to subvert our noxious qualities:
 They sweep away infection from the heart;
 And, by the substitution of delight,
 Suppress all evil; whence the Being moves
 In beauty through the world; and all who see
 Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood.'

FROM *POEMS* (1815)

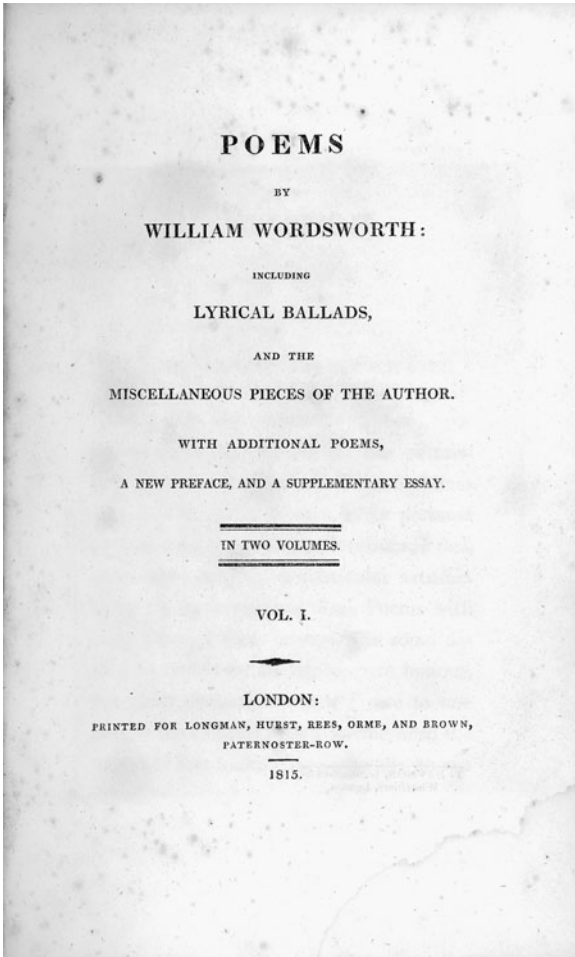


FIG. 8 Title-page to Wordsworth's first collected poetical works, *Poems* (1815).

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FROM THE PREFACE TO *POEMS* (1815)

All Poets, except the dramatic, have been in the practice of feigning that their works were composed to the music of the harp or lyre: with what degree of affectation this has been done in modern times, I leave to the judicious to determine. For my own part, I have not been disposed to violate probability so far, or to make such a large demand upon the Reader's charity. Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical; and, therefore, cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject. Poems, however humble in their kind, if they be good in that kind, cannot read themselves: the law of long syllable and short must not be so inflexible—the letter of metre must not be so impassive to the spirit of versification—as to deprive the Reader of a voluntary power to modulate, in subordination to the sense, the music of the poem;—in the same manner as his mind is left at liberty, and even summoned, to act upon its thoughts and images. But, though the accompaniment of a musical instrument be frequently dispensed with, the true Poet does not therefore abandon his privilege distinct from that of the mere Proseman;

'He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.'

I come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following Poems. 'A man,' says an intelligent Author, 'has "imagination," in proportion as he can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense: it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (φανταζεσθαι is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterized. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced.'—*British Synonyms discriminated, by W. Taylor.*

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by Etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide, his conductor, his escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning, and no other, what term is left to designate that Faculty of which the Poet is 'all compact'; he whose eye glances from earth to heaven, whose spiritual attributes body-forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape; or what is left to characterise fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity?—Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a Class of the following Poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the Shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his Farm, thus addresses his Goats;

'Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
Dumosa *pendere* procul de rupe videbo,'

‘—half way down
Hangs one who gathers samphire,'

is the well-known expression of Shakespear, delineating an ordinary image upon the Cliffs of Dover. In these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word: neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appearance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

'As when far off at Sea a Fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoxial winds
Close sailing from Bengala or the Isles

Of Ternate or Tydore, whence Merchants bring
 Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
 Ply, stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
 Far off the flying Fiend.'

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word, *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: First, the Fleet, an aggregate of many Ships, is represented as one mighty Person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters; but, taking advantage of its appearance of the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratification of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime object to which it is compared.

From images of sight we will pass to those of sound:

'Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods*';

of the same bird,

'His voice was *buried* among trees,
 Yet to be come at by the breeze';

'Oh, Cuckoo! shall I call thee *Bird*,
 Or but a wandering *Voice*?'

The Stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which the Bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. 'His voice was buried among trees,' a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this Bird is marked; and characterising its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade; yet a note so peculiar, and withal so pleasing, that the breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the Poet feels, penetrates the shade in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

'Shall I call thee Bird
 Or but a wandering Voice?'

This concise interrogation characterises the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the Cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a

corporeal existence; the imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the Cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of Spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other, and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to react upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The Reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the Goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the Shepherd, contemplating it from the seclusion of the Cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffecting the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with, and opposed to, each other!

‘As a huge Stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
Wonder to all who do the same espy
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
Like a Sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun himself.
Such seemed this Man; not all alive or dead,
Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
And moveth altogether if it move at all.’

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The Stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the Sea-beast; and the Sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the

original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the Cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power: but the Imagination also shapes and *creates*; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact Fleet, as one Person, has been introduced ‘Sailing from Bengala,’ ‘They,’ i.e. the ‘Merchants,’ representing the Fleet resolved into a Multitude of Ships, ‘ply’ their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: ‘So’ (referring to the word ‘As’ in the commencement) ‘seemed the flying Fiend’; the image of his Person acting to recombine the multitude of Ships into one body,—the point from which the comparison set out. ‘So seemed,’ and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the Poet’s mind, and to that of the Reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions!

Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.

Hear again this mighty Poet,—speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from Heaven the rebellious Angels,

Attended by ten thousand, thousand Saints
He onward came: far off his coming shone,—

the retinue of Saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendour of that indefinite abstraction, ‘His coming!’

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present Volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the Reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters, and determines the course of actions: I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed Friends, ‘draws all things to one, which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their

accessaries, take one colour and serve to one effect.* The grand storehouse of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, is the prophetic and lyrical parts of the holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton, to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome because the anthropomorphism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; and all things tended in him towards the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions; and at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations,—of which his character of *Una* is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakespear are an inexhaustible source.

‘I tax not you, ye Elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you Kingdoms, called you Daughters.’

And if, bearing in mind the many Poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention; yet justified by a recollection of the insults which the Ignorant, the Incapable, and the Presumptuous have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself; I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given, in these unfavourable times, evidence of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance.

I dismiss this subject with observing—that, in the series of Poems placed under the head of Imagination, I have begun with one of the earliest processes of Nature in the development of this faculty. Guided

* Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth.

by one of my own primary consciousnesses, I have represented a commutation and transfer of internal feelings, co-operating with external accidents to plant, for immortality, images of sound and sight, in the celestial soil of the Imagination. The Boy, there introduced, is listening, with something of a feverish and restless anxiety, for the recurrence of the riotous sounds which he had previously excited; and, at the moment when the intensesness of his mind is beginning to remit, he is surprised into a perception of the solemn and tranquillizing images which the Poem describes.—The Poems next in succession exhibit the faculty exerting itself upon various objects of the external universe; then follow others, where it is employed upon feelings, characters, and actions; and the Class is concluded with imaginative pictures of moral, political, and religious sentiments.

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterized as the Power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, 'the aggregative and associative Power,' my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these, are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from every thing but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming,

'In shape no bigger than an agate stone
On the fore-finger of an Alderman.'

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's pillar; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas;—because these, and if they were a million times as high, it would be the same, are bounded: The expression is, 'His stature reached the sky!' the illimitable firmament!—When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature than

upon expression and effect, less upon casual and outstanding, than upon inherent and internal, properties:—moreover, the images invariably modify each other.—The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprizing, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images, trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion; the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur, but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our Nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal.—Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalry with the Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with the materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own Country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples.—Referring the Reader to those inestimable Volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the *Paradise Lost*;

‘The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the Sun.’

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathizing Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

‘Sky lowered, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion of the mortal sin.’

The associating link is the same in each instance;—dew or rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as

indications of sorrow. A flash of surprize is the effect in the former case, a flash of surprize and nothing more; for the nature of things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects of the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous that the mind acknowledges the justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in Nature so manifested; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as 'Earth had, before, trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.'

FROM ESSAY, SUPPLEMENTARY TO
THE PREFACE (1815)

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of Poetical Works, it is this,—that every Author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose Poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with them;—and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road:—he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original Poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the Reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein Men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all Men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on Men who stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of Readers by which they are to be humbled and humanized, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here.—TASTE, I would remind the Reader,

like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them. It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable,—being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, imagination; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or in ordinary language the pathetic and the sublime; are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary impulse elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies, *suffering*, but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry!—But,

‘Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
Itself discharges on its foes.’

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter,

the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid,—and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great Poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original Writer, at his first appearance in the world.—Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honor, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the Poet? Is it to be supposed that the Reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian Prince or General—stretched on his Palanquin, and borne by his Slaves? No, he is invigorated and inspirited by his Leader, in order that he may exert himself, for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem—that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true Poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others—that are complex and revolutionary; some—to which the heart yields with gentleness, others,—against which it struggles with pride: these varieties are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected—is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the Poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself—but to which it must descend by treading the steps of

thought. And for the sublime,—if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a Poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word, *popular*, applied to new works in Poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all Men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell!—The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in every thing which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness or to be made conscious of her power;—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the Poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the Poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts, (and Shakespeare must often have sighed over this truth) as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the Sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the *individual*, as well as the species, survives from age to age: whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal the individual quickly *perishes*; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of

novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above—that, of *good* Poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the People? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

‘—Past and future, are the wings
On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge—’
MS.

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that *Vox populi* which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error, who can believe that there is any thing of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is intitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterized, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them—that, if he were not persuaded that the Contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evinced something of the ‘Vision and the Faculty divine’; and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honor, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction;—from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

Characteristics of a Child three Years old

Loving she is, and tractable, though wild;
 And Innocence hath privilege in her
 To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
 And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
 Of trespasses, affected to provoke
 Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
 And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
 Not less if unattended and alone
 Than when both young and old sit gathered round
 And take delight in its activity, 10
 Even so this happy Creature of herself
 Is all sufficient: solitude to her^o
 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 impressed 20
 Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

Yew-Trees

There is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
 Which to this day stands single, in the midst
 Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore,
 Not loth to furnish weapons for the Bands
 Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
 To Scotland's Heaths; or Those that crossed the Sea
 And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
 Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
 Of vast circumference and gloom profound
 This solitary Tree!—a living thing 10
 Produced too slowly ever to decay;
 Of form and aspect too magnificent
 To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
 Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,

Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
 Huge trunks!—and each particular trunk a growth
 Of intertwined fibres serpentine
 Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved,—
 Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
 That threaten the prophane;—a pillared shade, 20
 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, 30
 United worship; or in mute repose
 To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
 Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

Yarrow Visited

SEPTEMBER, 1814

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Behold a Ruin hoary!
 The shattered front of Newark's Towers,^o
 Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
 For sportive youth to stray in;
 For manhood to enjoy his strength;
 And age to wear away in! 60
 Yon Cottage seems a bower of bliss;
 It promises protection
 To studious ease, and generous cares,
 And every chaste affection!

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
 The wild wood's fruits to gather,
 And on my True-love's forehead plant
 A crest of blooming heather!
 And what if I enwreathed my own!
 'Twere no offence to reason; 70
 The sober Hills thus deck their brows
 To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
 Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
 A ray of Fancy still survives—
 Her sunshine plays upon thee!
 Thy ever-youthful waters keep
 A course of lively pleasure;
 And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
 Accordant to the measure. 80

The vapours linger round the Heights,
 They melt, and soon must vanish;
 One hour is theirs, not more is mine—
 Sad thought, which I would banish,
 But that I know, where'er I go
 Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
 Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
 And cheer my mind in sorrow.

Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture

Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
 Yon Cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
 Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
 Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
 Which stopped that Band of Travellers on their way
 Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
 And shewed the Bark upon the glassy flood
 For ever anchored in her sheltering Bay.
 Soul-soothing Art! which Morning, Noon-Tide, Even
 Do serve with all their changeful pageantry! 10
 Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
 Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
 To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
 The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

'Surprized by joy—impatient as the Wind'

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

FROM *A LETTER TO A FRIEND OF*
ROBERT BURNS (1816)

TO JAMES GRAY, ESQ., EDINBURGH

Dear Sir,

I have carefully perused the Review of the Life of your friend Robert Burns*, which you kindly transmitted to me; the author has rendered a substantial service to the poet's memory; and the annexed letters are all important to the subject. After having expressed this opinion, I shall not trouble you by commenting upon the publication; but will confine myself to the request of Mr. Gilbert Burns, that I would furnish him with my notions upon the best mode of conducting the defence of his brother's injured reputation; a favourable opportunity being now afforded him to convey his sentiments to the world, along with a republication of Dr. Currie's book, which he is about to superintend. From the respect which I have long felt for the character of the person who has thus honoured me, and from the gratitude which, as a lover of poetry, I owe to the genius of his departed relative, I should most gladly comply with this wish; if I could hope that any suggestions of mine would be of service to the cause. But, really, I feel it is a thing of much delicacy, to give advice upon this occasion, as it appears to me, mainly, not a question of opinion, or of taste, but a matter of conscience. Mr. Gilbert Burns must know, if any man living does, what his brother was; and no one will deny that he, who possesses this knowledge, is a man of unimpeachable veracity. He has already spoken to the world in contradiction of the injurious assertions that have been made, and has told why he forbore to do this on their first appearance. If it be deemed advisable to reprint Dr. Currie's narrative, without striking out such passages as the author, if he were now alive, would probably be happy to efface, let there be notes attached to the most obnoxious of them, in which the misrepresentations may be corrected, and the exaggerations exposed. I recommend this course, if Dr. Currie's Life is to be

* A Review of the Life of Robert Burns, and of various criticisms on his character and writings, by Alexander Peterkin, 1814.

republished, as it now stands, in connexion with the poems and letters, and especially if prefixed to them; but, in my judgment, it would be best to copy the example which Mason has given in his second edition of Gray's works. There, inverting the order which had been properly adopted, when the Life and Letters were new matter, the poems are placed first; and the rest takes its place as subsidiary to them. If this were done in the intended edition of Burns's works, I should strenuously recommend, that a concise life of the poet be prefixed, from the pen of Gilbert Burns, who has already given public proof how well qualified he is for the undertaking. I know no better model as to proportion, and the degree of detail required, nor, indeed, as to the general execution, than the life of Milton by Fenton, prefixed to many editions of the *Paradise Lost*. But a more copious narrative would be expected from a brother; and some allowance ought to be made, in this and other respects, for an expectation so natural.

In this prefatory memoir, when the author has prepared himself by reflecting, that fraternal partiality may have rendered him, in some points, not so trust-worthy as others less favoured by opportunity, it will be incumbent upon him to proceed candidly and openly, as far as such a procedure will tend to restore to his brother that portion of public estimation, of which he appears to have been unjustly deprived. Nay, when we recal to mind the black things which have been written of this great man, and the frightful ones that have been insinuated against him; and, as far as the public knew, till lately, without complaint, remonstrance, or disavowal, from his nearest relatives; I am not sure that it would not be best, at this day, explicitly to declare to what degree Robert Burns had given way to pernicious habits, and, as nearly as may be, to fix the point to which his moral character had been degraded. It is a disgraceful feature of the times that this measure should be necessary; most painful to think that a *brother* should have such an office to perform. But, if Gilbert Burns be conscious that the subject will bear to be so treated, he has no choice; the duty has been imposed upon him by the errors into which the former biographer has fallen, in respect to the very principles upon which his work ought to have been conducted.

I well remember the acute sorrow with which, by my own fire-side, I first perused Dr. Currie's Narrative, and some of the letters, particularly of those composed in the latter part of the poet's life. If my pity for Burns was extreme, this pity did not preclude a strong indignation, of which he was not the object. If, said I, it were in the power of a biographer to relate the truth, the *whole* truth, and nothing

but the truth, the friends and surviving kindred of the deceased, for the sake of general benefit to mankind, might endure that such heart-rending communication should be made to the world. But in no case is this possible; and, in the present, the opportunities of directly acquiring other than superficial knowledge have been most scanty; for the writer has barely seen the person who is the subject of his tale; nor did his avocations allow him to take the pains necessary for ascertaining what portion of the information conveyed to him was authentic. So much for facts and actions; and to what purpose relate them even were they true, if the narrative cannot be heard without extreme pain; unless they are placed in such a light, and brought forward in such order, that they shall explain their own laws, and leave the reader in as little uncertainty as the mysteries of our nature will allow, respecting the spirit from which they derived their existence, and which governed the agent? But hear on this pathetic and awful subject, the poet himself, pleading for those who have transgressed!

‘One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it,
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far, perhaps, they rue it.
Who made the heart, ’tis *he* alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let’s be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What’s done we partly may compute,
But know not what’s *resisted*.’

How happened it that the recollection of this affecting passage did not check so amiable a man as Dr. Currie, while he was revealing to the world the infirmities of its author? He must have known enough of human nature to be assured that men would be eager to sit in judgment, and pronounce *decidedly* upon the guilt or innocence of Burns by his testimony; nay, that there were multitudes whose main interest in the allegations would be derived from the incitements which they found therein to undertake this presumptuous office. And where lies the collateral benefit, or what ultimate advantage can be expected, to counteract the injury that the many are thus tempted to do to their own minds; and to compensate the sorrow which must be fixed in the hearts of the considerate few, by language that

proclaims so much, and provokes conjectures as unfavourable as imagination can furnish? Here, said I, being moved beyond what it would become me to express, here is a revolting account of a man of exquisite genius, and confessedly of many high moral qualities, sunk into the lower depths of vice and misery! But the painful story, notwithstanding its minuteness, is incomplete,—in essentials it is deficient; so that the most attentive and sagacious reader cannot explain how a mind, so well established by knowledge, fell—and continued to fall, without power to prevent or retard its own ruin.

Would a bosom friend of the author, his counsellor and confessor, have told such things, if true, as this book contains? and who, but one possessed of the intimate knowledge which none but a bosom friend can acquire, could have been justified in making these avowals? Such a one, himself a pure spirit, having accompanied, as it were, upon wings, the pilgrim along the sorrowful road which he trod on foot; such a one, neither hurried down by its slippery descents, nor entangled among its thorns, nor perplexed by its windings, nor discomfited by its foundurous passages—for the instruction of others—might have delineated, almost as in a map, the way which the afflicted pilgrim had pursued till the sad close of his diversified journey. In this manner the venerable spirit of Isaac Walton was qualified to have retraced the unsteady course of a highly-gifted man, who, in this lamentable point, and in versatility of genius, bore no unobvious resemblance to the Scottish bard; I mean his friend COTTON—whom, notwithstanding all that the sage must have disapproved in his life, he honoured with the title of son. Nothing like this, however, has the biographer of Burns accomplished; and, with his means of information, copious as in some respects they were, it would have been absurd to attempt it. The only motive, therefore, which could authorize the writing and publishing matter so distressing to read—is wanting!

Nor is Dr. Currie's performance censurable from these considerations alone; for information, which would have been of absolute worth if in his capacity of biographer and editor he had known when to stop short, is rendered unsatisfactory and inefficacious through the absence of this reserve, and from being coupled with statements of improbable and irreconcilable facts. We have the author's letters discharged upon us in showers; but how few readers will take the trouble of comparing those letters with each other, and with the other documents of the publication, in order to come at a genuine knowledge of the writer's character!—The life of Johnson by Boswell had broken through many pre-existing delicacies, and afforded the British public an opportunity of acquiring

experience, which before it had happily wanted; nevertheless, at the time when the ill-selected medley of Burns's correspondence first appeared, little progress had been made (nor is it likely that, by the mass of mankind, much ever will be made) in determining what portion of these confidential communications escapes the pen in courteous, yet often innocent, compliance—to gratify the several tastes of correspondents; and as little towards distinguishing opinions and sentiments uttered for the momentary amusement of the writer's own fancy, from those which his judgment deliberately approves, and his heart faithfully cherishes. But the subject of this book was a man of extraordinary genius; whose birth, education, and employments had placed and kept him in a situation far below that in which the writers and readers of expensive volumes are usually found. Critics upon works of fiction have laid it down as a rule that remoteness of place, in fixing the choice of a subject, and in prescribing the mode of treating it, is equal in effect to distance of time;—restraints may be thrown off accordingly. Judge then of the delusions which artificial distinctions impose, when to a man like Doctor Currie, writing with views so honourable, the *social condition* of the individual of whom he was treating, could seem to place him at such a distance from the exalted reader, that ceremony might be discarded with him, and his memory sacrificed, as it were, almost without compunction. The poet was laid where these injuries could not reach him; but he had a parent, I understand, an admirable woman, still surviving; a brother like Gilbert Burns!—a widow estimable for her virtues; and children, at that time infants, with the world before them, which they must face to obtain a maintenance; who remembered their father probably with the tenderest affection; and whose opening minds, as their years advanced, would become conscious of so many reasons for admiring him.—Ill-fated child of nature, too frequently thine own enemy,—unhappy favourite of genius, too often misguided,—this is indeed to be 'crushed beneath the furrow's weight!'

Why, sir, do I write to you at this length, when all that I had to express in direct answer to the request, which occasioned this letter, lay in such narrow compass?—Because having entered upon the subject, I am unable to quit it!—Your feelings, I trust, go along with mine; and, rising from this individual case to a general view of the subject, you will probably agree with me in opinion that biography, though differing in some essentials from works of fiction, is nevertheless, like them, an art,—an art, the laws of which are determined by the imperfections of our nature, and the constitution of society. Truth is not here, as in the sciences, and in natural philosophy, to be sought

without scruple, and promulgated for its own sake, upon the mere chance of its being serviceable; but only for obviously justifying purposes, moral or intellectual.

Silence is a privilege of the grave, a right of the departed: let him, therefore, who infringes that right, by speaking publicly of, for, or against, those who cannot speak for themselves, take heed that he opens not his mouth without a sufficient sanction. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is a rule in which these sentiments have been pushed to an extreme that proves how deeply humanity is interested in maintaining them. And it was wise to announce the precept thus absolutely; both because there exist in that same nature, by which it has been dictated, so many temptations to disregard it,—and because there are powers and influences, within and without us, that will prevent its being literally fulfilled—to the suppression of profitable truth. Penalties of law, conventions of manners, and personal fear, protect the reputation of the living; and something of this protection is extended to the recently dead,—who survive, to a certain degree, in their kindred and friends. Few are so insensible as not to feel this, and not to be actuated by the feeling. But only to philosophy enlightened by the affections does it belong justly to estimate the claims of the deceased on the one hand, and of the present age and future generations, on the other; and to strike a balance between them.—Such philosophy runs a risk of becoming extinct among us, if the coarse intrusions into the recesses, the gross breaches upon the sanctities, of domestic life, to which we have lately been more and more accustomed, are to be regarded as indications of a vigorous state of public feeling—favourable to the maintenance of the liberties of our country.—Intelligent lovers of freedom are from necessity bold and hardy lovers of truth; but, according to the measure in which their love is intelligent, is it attended with a finer discrimination, and a more sensitive delicacy. The wise and good (and all others being lovers of licence rather than of liberty are in fact slaves) respect, as one of the noblest characteristics of Englishmen, that jealousy of familiar approach, which, while it contributes to the maintenance of private dignity, is one of the most efficacious guardians of rational public freedom.

The general obligation upon which I have insisted, is especially binding upon those who undertake the biography of *authors*. Assuredly, there is no cause why the lives of that class of men should be pried into with the same diligent curiosity, and laid open with the same disregard of reserve, which may sometimes be expedient in composing the history of men who have borne an active part in the

world. Such thorough knowledge of the good and bad qualities of these latter, as can only be obtained by a scrutiny of their private lives, conduces to explain not only their own public conduct, but that of those with whom they have acted. Nothing of this applies to authors, considered merely as authors. Our business is with their books,—to understand and to enjoy them. And, of poets more especially, it is true—that, if their works be good, they contain within themselves all that is necessary to their being comprehended and relished. It should seem that the ancients thought in this manner; for of the eminent Greek and Roman poets, few and scanty memorials were, I believe, ever prepared; and fewer still are preserved. It is delightful to read what, in the happy exercise of his own genius, Horace chooses to communicate of himself and his friends; but I confess I am not so much a lover of knowledge, independent of its quality, as to make it likely that it would much rejoice me, were I to hear that records of the Sabine poet and his contemporaries, composed upon the Boswellian plan, had been unearthed among the ruins of Herculaneum. You will interpret what I am writing, *liberally*. With respect to the light which such a discovery might throw upon Roman manners, there would be reasons to desire it: but I should dread to disfigure the beautiful ideal of the memories of those illustrious persons with incongruous features, and to sully the imaginative purity of their classical works with gross and trivial recollections. The least weighty objection to heterogeneous details, is that they are mainly superfluous, and therefore an incumbrance.

But you will perhaps accuse me of refining too much; and it is, I own, comparatively of little importance, while we are engaged in reading the Iliad, the Eneid, the tragedies of Othello and King Lear, whether the authors of these poems were good or bad men; whether they lived happily or miserably. Should a thought of the kind cross our minds, there would be no doubt, if irresistible external evidence did not decide the question unfavourably, that men of such transcendent genius were both good and happy: and if, unfortunately, it had been on record that they were otherwise, sympathy with the fate of their fictitious personages would banish the unwelcome truth whenever it obtruded itself, so that it would but slightly disturb our pleasure. Far otherwise is it with that class of poets, the principal charm of whose writings depends upon the familiar knowledge which they convey of the personal feelings of their authors. This is eminently the case with the effusions of Burns;—in the small quantity of narrative that he has given, he himself bears no inconsiderable part, and he has produced

no drama. Neither the subjects of his poems, nor his manner of handling them, allow us long to forget their author. On the basis of his human character he has reared a poetic one, which with more or less distinctness presents itself to view in almost every part of his earlier, and, in my estimation, his most valuable verses. This poetic fabric, dug out of the quarry of genuine humanity, is airy and spiritual:—and though the materials, in some parts, are coarse, and the disposition is often fantastic and irregular, yet the whole is agreeable and strikingly attractive. Plague, then, upon your remorseless hunters after matter of fact (who, after all, rank among the blindest of human beings) when they could convince you that the foundations of this admirable edifice are hollow; and that its frame is unsound! Granting that all which has been raked up to the prejudice of Burns were literally true; and that it added, which it does not, to our better understanding of human nature and human life (for that genius is not incompatible with vice, and that vice leads to misery—the more acute from the sensibilities which are the elements of genius—we needed not those communications to inform us) how poor would have been the compensation for the deduction made, by this extrinsic knowledge, from the intrinsic efficacy of his poetry—to please, and to instruct!

In illustration of this sentiment, permit me to remind you that it is the privilege of poetic genius to catch, under certain restrictions of which perhaps at the time of its being exerted it is but dimly conscious, a spirit of pleasure wherever it can be found,—in the walks of nature, and in the business of men.—The poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer aspects of war: nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love though immoderate—from convivial pleasure though intemperate—nor from the presence of war though savage, and recognized as the hand-maid of desolation. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature; both with reference to himself and in describing the conditions of others. Who, but some impenetrable dunce or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, Tam o' Shanter? The poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion; the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest

thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and, while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within.—I pity him who cannot perceive that, in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect.

‘Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious
O’er a’ the *ills* of life victorious.’

What a lesson do these words convey of charitable indulgence for the vicious habits of the principal actor in this scene, and of those who resemble him!—Men who to the rigidly virtuous are objects almost of loathing, and whom therefore they cannot serve! The poet, penetrating the unsightly and disgusting surfaces of things, has unveiled with exquisite skill the finer ties of imagination and feeling, that often bind these beings to practices productive of so much unhappiness to themselves, and to those whom it is their duty to cherish; and, as far as he puts the reader in possession of this intelligent sympathy, he qualifies him for exercising a salutary influence over the minds of those who are thus deplorably enslaved.

Not less successfully does Burns avail himself of his own character and situation in society, to construct out of them a poetic self,—introduced as a dramatic personage—for the purpose of inspiriting his incidents, diversifying his pictures, recommending his opinions, and giving point to his sentiments. His brother can set me right if I am mistaken when I express a belief that, at the time when he wrote his story of ‘Death and Dr. Hornbook,’ he had very rarely been intoxicated, or perhaps even much exhilarated by liquor. Yet how happily does he lead his reader into that track of sensations! and with what lively humour does he describe the disorder of his senses and the confusion of his understanding, put to test by a deliberate attempt to count the horns of the moon!

‘But whether she had three or four
He could na’ tell.’

Behold a sudden apparition that disperses this disorder, and in a moment chills him into possession of himself. Coming upon no more important mission than the grisly phantom was charged with, what mode of introduction could have been more efficient or appropriate?

But, in those early poems, through the veil of assumed habits and pretended qualities, enough of the real man appears to shew that he was conscious of sufficient cause to dread his own passions, and to bewail his errors! We have rejected as false sometimes in the letter, and of necessity as false in the spirit, many of the testimonies that others have borne against him:—but, by his own hand—in words the import of which cannot be mistaken—it has been recorded that the order of his life but faintly corresponded with the clearness of his views. It is probable that he would have proved a still greater poet if, by strength of reason, he could have controlled the propensities which his sensibility engendered; but he would have been a poet of a different class: and certain it is, had that desirable restraint been early established, many peculiar beauties which enrich his verses could never have existed, and many accessory influences, which contribute greatly to their effect, would have been wanting. For instance, the momentous truth of the passage already quoted, ‘One point must still be greatly dark,’ &c. could not possibly have been conveyed with such pathetic force by any poet that ever lived, speaking in his own voice; unless it were felt that, like Burns, he was a man who preached from the text of his own errors; and whose wisdom, beautiful as a flower that might have risen from seed sown from above, was in fact a scion from the root of personal suffering. Whom did the poet intend should be thought of as occupying that grave over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of its ‘poor inhabitant,’ it is supposed to be inscribed that

‘—Thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stained his name.’

Who but himself,—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration *from his own will*—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! What more was required of the biographer than to have put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realized, and that the record was authentic?—Lastingly is it to be regretted in respect to this memorable being, that inconsiderate intrusion has not left us at liberty to enjoy his mirth, or his love; his wisdom or his wit; without an admixture of useless, irksome, and painful details, that take from his poems so much of that right—which, with all his carelessness, and frequent breaches of self-respect, he was not negligent to maintain for them—the right of imparting solid instruction through the medium of unalloyed pleasure.

You will have noticed that my observations have hitherto been confined to Dr. Currie's book: if, by fraternal piety, the poison can be sucked out of this wound, those inflicted by meaner hands may be safely left to heal of themselves. Of the other writers who have given their names, only one lays claim to even a slight acquaintance with the author, whose moral character they take upon them publicly to anatomize. The Edinburgh reviewer—and him I single out because the author of the vindication of Burns has treated his offences with comparative indulgence, to which he has no claim, and which, from whatever cause it might arise, has interfered with the dispensation of justice—the Edinburgh reviewer thus writes:* 'The *leading vice* in Burns's character, and the *cardinal deformity*, indeed, of ALL his productions, was his contempt, or affectation of contempt, for prudence, decency, and regularity, and his admiration of thoughtlessness, oddity, and vehement sensibility: his belief, in short, in the dispensing power of genius and social feelings in all matters of morality and common sense;' adding, that these vices and erroneous notions 'have communicated to a great part of his productions a character of immorality at once contemptible and hateful.' We are afterwards told, that he is *perpetually* making a parade of his thoughtlessness, inflammability, and imprudence; and, in the next paragraph, that he is *perpetually* doing something else; i.e. 'boasting of his own independence.'—Marvellous address in the commission of faults! not less than Caesar shewed in the management of business; who, it is said, could dictate to three secretaries upon three several affairs, at one and the same moment! But, to be serious. When a man, self-elected into the office of a public judge of the literature and life of his contemporaries, can have the audacity to go these lengths in framing a summary of the contents of volumes that are scattered over every quarter of the globe, and extant in almost every cottage of Scotland, to give the lie to his labours; we must not wonder if, in the plentitude of his concern for the interest of abstract morality, the infatuated slanderer should have found no obstacle to prevent him from insinuating that the poet, whose writings are to this degree stained and disfigured, was 'one of the sons of fancy and of song, who spent in vain superfluities the money that belongs of right to the pale industrious tradesman and his famishing infants; and who rave about friendship and philosophy in a tavern, while their wives' hearts,' &c. &c.

* From Mr Peterkin's pamphlet, who vouches for the accuracy of his citations; omitting, however, to apologize for their length.

It is notorious that this persevering Aristarch,* as often as a work of original genius comes before him, avails himself of that opportunity to re-proclaim to the world the narrow range of his own comprehension. The happy self-complacency, the unsuspecting vain-glory, and the cordial *bonhomme*, with which this part of his duty is performed, do not leave him free to complain of being hardly dealt with if any one should declare the truth, by pronouncing much of the foregoing attack upon the intellectual and moral character of Burns, to be the trespass (for reasons that will shortly appear, it cannot be called the venial trespass) of a mind obtuse, superficial, and inept. What portion of malignity such a mind is susceptible of, the judicious admirers of the poet, and the discerning friends of the man, will not trouble themselves to enquire; but they will wish that this evil principle had possessed more sway than they are at liberty to assign to it, the offender's condition would not then have been so hopeless. For malignity *selects* its diet; but where is to be found the nourishment from which vanity will revolt? Malignity may be appeased by triumphs real or supposed, and will then sleep, or yield its place to a repentance producing dispositions of good will, and desires to make amends for past injury; but vanity is restless, reckless, intractable, unappeasable, insatiable. Fortunate is it for the world when this spirit incites only to actions that meet with an adequate punishment in derision; such, as in a scheme of poetical justice, would be aptly required by assigning to the agents, when they quit this lower world, a station in that not uncomfortable limbo—the Paradise of Fools! But, assuredly, we shall have here another proof that ridicule is not the test of truth, if it prevent us from perceiving, that *depravity* has no ally more active, more inveterate, nor, from the difficulty of divining to what kind and degree of extravagance it may prompt, more pernicious than self-conceit. Where this alliance is too obvious to be disputed, the culprit ought not to be allowed the benefit of contempt—as a shelter from detestation; much less should he be permitted to plead, in excuse for his transgressions, that especial malevolence had little or no part in them. It is not recorded, that the

* A friend, who chanced to be present while the author is correcting the proof sheet, observes that Aristarchus is libelled by this application of his name, and advises that 'Zoilus' should be substituted. The question lies between spite and presumption; and it is not easy to decide upon a case where the claims of each party are so strong: but the name of Aristarch, who, simple man! would allow no verse to pass for Homer's which he did not approve of, is retained, for reasons that will be deemed cogent.

ancient, who set fire to the temple of Diana, had a particular dislike to the goddess of chastity, or held idolatry in abhorrence: he was a fool, an egregious fool, but not the less, on that account, a most odious monster. The tyrant who is described as having rattled his chariot along a bridge of brass over the heads of his subjects, was, no doubt, inwardly laughed at; but what if this mock Jupiter, not satisfied with an empty noise of his own making, had amused himself with throwing fire-brands upon the house-tops, as a substitute for lightning; and, from his elevation, had hurled stones upon the heads of his people, to shew that he was a master of the destructive bolt, as well as of the harmless voice of the thunder!—The lovers of all that is honourable to humanity have recently had occasion to rejoice over the downfall of an intoxicated despot, whose vagaries furnish more solid materials by which the philosopher will exemplify how strict is the connection between the ludicrously, and the terribly fantastic. We know, also, that Robespierre was one of the vainest men that the most vain country upon earth has produced;—and from this passion, and from that cowardice which naturally connects itself with it, flowed the horrors of his administration. It is a descent, which I fear you will scarcely pardon, to compare these redoubtable enemies of mankind with the anonymous conductor of a perishable publication. But the moving spirit is the same in them all; and, as far as difference of circumstances, and disparity of powers, will allow, manifests itself in the same way; by professions of reverence for truth, and concern for duty—carried to the giddiest heights of ostentation, while practice seems to have no other reliance than on the omnipotence of falshood.

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FROM *THE RIVER DUDDON* (1820)

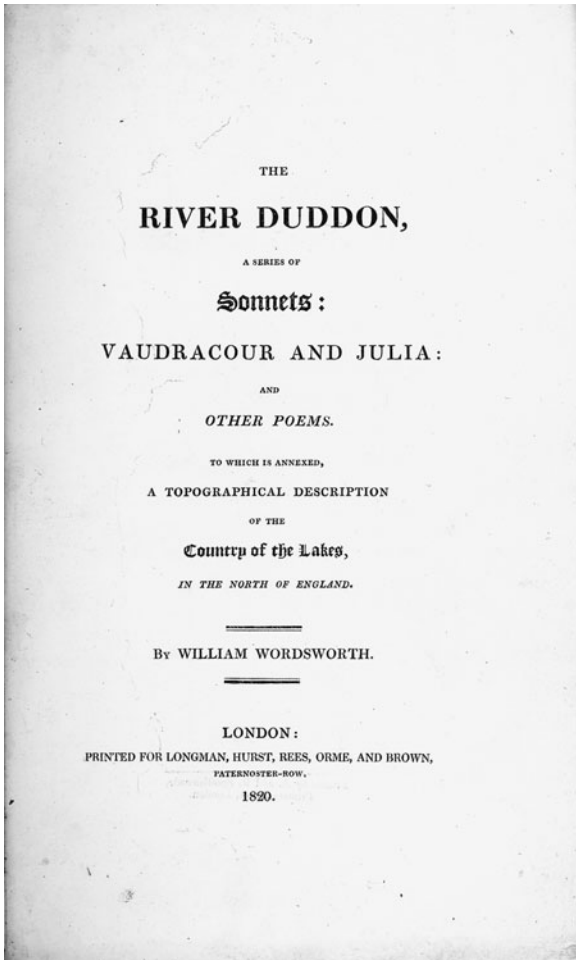


FIG. 9 Title-page of *The River Duddon* (1820).

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The River Duddon

CONCLUSION

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 10
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as tow'rd the silent tomb we go,
Thro' love, thro' hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

Composed at Cora Linn

IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER

'—How Wallace fought for Scotland, left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks
Her Natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty.'

MS.

Lord of the Vale! astounding Flood!
The dullest leaf, in this thick wood,
Quakes—conscious of thy power;
The caves reply with hollow moan;
And vibrates, to its central stone,
Yon time-cemented Tower!

And yet how fair the rural scene!
For thou, O Clyde, hast ever been
Beneficent as strong;
Pleased in refreshing dews to steep

10

The little trembling flowers that peep
Thy shelving rocks among.

Hence all who love their country, love
To look on thee—delight to rove
Where they thy voice can hear;
And, to the patriot-warrior's Shade,
Lord of the vale! to Heroes laid
In dust, that voice is dear!

Along thy banks, at dead of night,
Sweeps visibly the Wallace Wight;^o
Or stands, in warlike vest,
Aloft, beneath the moon's pale beam,
A Champion worthy of the Stream,
Yon grey tower's living crest!

20

But clouds and envious darkness hide
A Form not doubtfully descried:—
Their transient mission o'er,
O say to what blind regions flee
These Shapes of awful phantasy?
To what untrodden shore?

30

Less than divine command they spurn;
But this we from the mountains learn,
And this the valleys show,
That never will they deign to hold
Communion where the heart is cold
To human weal and woe.

The man of abject soul in vain
Shall walk the Marathonian Plain;
Or thrid the shadowy gloom,
That still invests the guardian Pass,
Where stood sublime Leonidas,^o
Devoted to the tomb.^o

40

Nor deem that it can aught avail
For such to glide with oar or sail
Beneath the piny wood,
Where Tell once drew, by Uri's lake,^o
His vengeful shafts—prepared to slake
Their thirst in Tyrants' blood!

*To the Rev. Dr. W—. (With the Sonnets to the River
Duddon, and Other Poems in this Collection)*

The Minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage eaves;
While, smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling Laurels, thick with leaves,
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings;
Keen was the air, but could not freeze
Nor check the music of the strings; 10
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the chords with strenuous hand.

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every Inmate's claim;
The greeting given, the music played
In honour of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And "merry Christmas" wished to all!

O Brother! I revere the choice
That took thee from thy native hills; 20
And it is given thee to rejoice:
Though public care full often tills
(Heaven only witness of the toil)
A barren and ungrateful soil.

Yet, would that Thou, with me and mine,
Hadst heard this never-failing rite;
And seen on other faces shine
A true revival of the light;
Which Nature, and these rustic Powers,
In simple childhood, spread through ours! 30

For pleasure hath not ceased to wait
On these expected annual rounds,
Whether the rich man's sumptuous gate
Call forth the unelaborate sounds,

Or they are offered at the door
That guards the lowliest of the poor.

How touching, when, at midnight, sweep
Snow-muffled winds, and all is dark,
To hear—and sink again to sleep!
Or, at an earlier call, to mark, 40
By blazing fire, the still suspense
Or self-complacent innocence;

The mutual nod,—the grave disguise
Of hearts with gladness brimming o'er;
And some unbidden tears that rise
For names once heard, and heard no more;
Tears brightened by the serenade
For infant in the cradle laid!

Ah! not for emerald fields alone,
With ambient streams more pure and bright 50
Than fabled Cytherea's zone^o
Glittering before the Thunderer's sight,
Is to my heart of hearts endeared,
The ground where we were born and reared!

Hail, ancient Manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
Remnants of love whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws;
Hail, Usages of pristine mould,
And ye, that guard them, Mountains old! 60

Bear with me, Brother! quench the thought
That slights this passion, or condemns;
If thee fond Fancy ever brought
From the proud margin of the Thames,
And Lambeth's venerable towers,
To humbler streams, and greener bowers.

Yes, they can make, who fail to find,
Short leisure even in busiest days;
Moments—to cast a look behind,
And profit by those kindly rays 70
That through the clouds do sometimes steal,
And all the far-off past reveal.

Hence, while the imperial City's din
 Beats frequent on thy satiate ear,
 A pleased attention I may win
 To agitations less severe,
 That neither overwhelm nor cloy,
 But fill the hollow vale with joy!

Ode

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY
 SPLENDOR AND BEAUTY

I

Had this effulgence disappeared
 With flying haste, I might have sent
 Among the speechless clouds a look
 Of blank astonishment;
 But 'tis endued with power to stay,
 And sanctify one closing day,
 That frail Mortality may see,
 What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
 Time was when field and watery cove
 With modulated echoes rang, 10
 While choirs of fervent Angels sang
 Their vespers in the grove;
 Or, ranged like stars along some sovereign height,
 Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
 Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
 Methinks, if audibly repeated now
 From hill or valley, could not move
 Sublimier transport, purer love,
 Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
 The shadow—and the peace supreme! 20

II

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
 And solemn harmony pervades
 The hollow vale from steep to steep,

And penetrates the glades.
 Far-distant images draw nigh,
 Called forth by wondrous potency
 Of beamy radiance, that imbues
 Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues!
 In vision exquisitely clear,
 Herds range along the mountain side; 30
 And glistening antlers are descried;
 And gilded flocks appear.
 Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
 But long as god-like 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;
 An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
 On ground which British shepherds tread! 40

III

And, if there be whom broken ties
 Afflict, or injuries assail,
 Yon hazy ridges to their eyes,
 Present a glorious scale,
 Climbing suffused with sunny air,
 To stop—no record hath told where!
 And tempting fancy to ascend,
 And with immortal spirits blend!
 —Wings at my shoulder seem to play;
 But, rooted here, I stand and gaze 50
 On those bright steps that heaven-ward raise
 Their practicable way.
 Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad
 And see to what fair countries ye are bound!
 And if some Traveller, weary of his road,
 Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
 Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
 And wake him with such gentle heed
 As may attune his soul to meet the dow'r
 Bestowed on this transcendent hour! 60

IV

Such hues from their celestial Urn
 Were wont to stream before my 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, 70
 If aught unworthy be my choice,
 From THEE if I would swerve,
 O, 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;
 —'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades,
 And Night approaches with her shades. 80

Ode

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE

I

Within the mind strong fancies work,
 A deep delight the bosom thrills,
 Oft as I pass along the fork
 Of these fraternal hills:
 Where, save the rugged road, we find
 No appanage of human kind;
 Nor hint of man, if stone or rock
 Seem not his handy-work to mock
 By something cognizably shaped;
 Mockery—or model—roughly hewn, 10
 And left as if by earthquake strewn,

Or from the Flood escaped:—
 Altars for Druid service fit;
 (But where no fire was ever lit
 Unless the glow-worm to the skies
 Thence offer nightly sacrifice;)
 Wrinkled Egyptian monument;
 Green moss-grown tower; or hoary tent;
 Tents of a camp that never shall be raised;
 On which four thousand years have gazed!

20

II

Ye plowshares sparkling on the slopes!
 Ye snow-white lambs that trip
 Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
 Of restless ownership!
 Ye trees that may to-morrow fall,
 To feed the instatiate Prodigal!
 Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
 All that the fertile valley shields;
 Wages of folly—baits of crime;—
 Of life's uneasy game the stake,—
 Playthings that keep the eyes awake
 Of drowsy, dotard Time;—
 O care! O guilt!—O vales and plains,
 Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
 A Genius dwells, that can subdue
 At once all memory of You,—
 Most potent when mists veil the sky,
 Mists that distort and magnify;
 While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
 Sigh forth their ancient melodies!

30

40

III

List to those shriller notes!—*that* march
 Perchance was on the blast,
 When through this Height's inverted arch
 Rome's earliest legion passed!
 —They saw, adventurously impelled,
 And older eyes than theirs beheld,

This block—and yon whose Church-like frame
 Gives to the savage Pass its name.
 Aspiring Road! that lov'st to hide
 Thy daring in a vapoury bourn, 50
 Not seldom may the hour return
 When thou shalt be my Guide;
 And I (as often we find cause,
 When life is at a weary pause,
 And we have panted up the hill
 Of duty with reluctant will)
 Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
 For the rich bounties of Constraint;
 Whence oft invigorating transports flow
 That Choice lacked courage to bestow! 60

IV

My soul was grateful for delight
 That wore a threatening brow;
 A veil is lifted—can she slight
 The scene that opens now?
 Though habitation none appear,
 The greenness tells, man must be there;
 The shelter—that the perspective
 Is of the clime in which we live;
 Where Toil pursues his daily round;
 Where Pity sheds sweet tears, and Love, 70
 In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
 Inflicts his tender wound.
 —Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
 How beautiful the world below;
 Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
 The brook adown the rocky steeps.
 Farewell thou desolate Domain!
 Hope, pointing to the cultured Plain,
 Carols like a shepherd boy;
 And who is she?—can that be Joy? 80
 Who, with a sun-beam for her guide,
 Smoothly skims the meadows wide;
 While Faith, from yonder opening cloud,

To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
 'Whate'er the weak may dread the wicked dare,
 Thy lot, O man, is good, thy portion fair!'

Ode.—1817

Beneath the concave of an April sky,
 When all the fields with freshest green were dight,
 Appeared, in presence of that spiritual eye
 That aids or supersedes our grosser sight,
 The form and rich habiliments of One
 Whose countenance bore resemblance to the sun,
 When it reveals, in evening majesty,
 Features half lost amid their own pure light.
 Poised in the middle region of the air
 He hung,—then floated with angelic ease, 10
 Softening that bright effulgence by degrees,
 Until he reached a rock, of summit bare,
 Where oft the vent'rous Heifer drinks the summer breeze.
 Upon the apex of that lofty cone
 Alighted, there the Stranger stood alone;
 Fair as a gorgeous Fabric of the East
 Suddenly raised by some Enchanter's power,
 Where nothing was; and firm as some old Tower
 Of Britain's realm, whose leafy crest
 Waves high, embellished by a gleaming shower! 20

II

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings
 Rested a golden Harp;—he touched the strings;
 And, after prelude of unearthly sound
 Poured through the echoing hills around,
 He sang, 'No wintry desolations,
 Scorching blight, or noxious dew,
 Affect my native habitations;
 Buried in glory, far beyond the scope
 Of man's enquiring gaze, and imaged to his hope

(Alas, how faintly!) in the hue
 Profound of night's ethereal blue; 30
 And in the aspect of each radiant orb;—
 Some fixed, some wandering with no timid curb;
 But wandering orb and fixed, to mortal eye,
 Blended in absolute serenity,
 And free from semblance of decline;—
 So wills eternal Love with Power divine.

III

And what if his presiding breath
 Impart a sympathetic motion
 Unto the gates of life and death, 40
 Throughout the bounds of earth and ocean;
 Though all that feeds on nether air,
 Howe'er magnificent or fair,
 Grows but to perish, and entrust
 Its ruins to their kindred dust;
 Yet, by the Almighty's ever-during care,
 Her procreant vigils Nature keeps
 Amid the unfathomable deeps;
 And saves the peopled fields of earth
 From dread of emptiness or dearth. 50
 Thus, in their stations, lifting tow'rd the sky
 The foliaged head in cloud-like majesty,
 The shadow-casting race of Trees survive:
 Thus, in the train of Spring, arrive
 Sweet Flowers;—what living eye hath viewed
 Their myriads?—endlessly renewed,
 Wherever strikes the sun's glad ray:
 Wherever the joyous water stray;
 Wherever sportive zephyrs bend
 Their course, or genial showers descend! 60
 Rejoice, O men! the very Angels quit
 Their mansions unsusceptible of change,
 Amid your pleasant bowers to sit,
 And through your sweet vicissitudes to range!

IV

O, nursed at happy distance from the cares
 Of a too-anxious world, mild pastoral Muse!^o
 That, to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
 And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
 Prefer'st a garland culled from purple heath,
 Or blooming thicket moist with morning dews; 70
 Was such bright Spectacle vouchsafed to me?
 And was it granted to the simple ear
 Of thy contented Votary
 Such melody to hear!
Him rather suits it, side by side with thee,
 Wrapped in a fit of pleasing indolence,
 While thy tired lute hangs on the hawthorn tree,
 To lie and listen, till o'er-drowsed sense
 Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence,
 To the soft murmur of the vagrant Bee. 80
 —A slender sound! yet hoary Time
 Doth, to the Soul exalt it with the chime
 Of all his years;—a company
 Of ages coming, ages gone;
 Nations from before them sweeping—
 Regions in destruction steeping;—
 But every awful note in unison
 With that faint utterance, which tells
 Of treasure sucked from buds and bells,
 For the pure keeping of those waxen cells; 90
 Where She, a statist prudent to confer
 Upon the public weal; a warrior bold,—
 Radiant all over with unburnished gold,
 And armed with living spear for mortal fight;
 A cunning forager
 That spreads no waste;—a social builder, one
 In whom all busy offices unite
 With all fine functions that afford delight,
 Safe through the winter storm in quiet dwells!

V

And is She brought within the power 100
 Of vision?—o'er this tempting flower
 Hovering until the petals stay
 Her flight, and take its voice away?
 Observe each wing—a tiny van!—
 The structure of her laden thigh;
 How fragile!—yet of ancestry
 Mysteriously remote and high;
 High as the imperial front of man,
 The roseate bloom on woman's cheek;
 The soaring eagle's curved beak; 110
 The white plumes of the floating swan;
 Old as the tyger's paws, the lion's mane
 Ere shaken by that mood of stern disdain
 At which the desert trembles.—Humming Bee!
 Thy sting was needless then, perchance unknown;
 The seeds of malice were not sown;
 All creatures met in peace, from fierceness free,
 And no pride blended with their dignity.
 —Tears had not broken from their source;
 Nor anguish strayed from her Tartarian den:° 120
 The golden years maintained a course
 Not undiversified, though smooth and even;
 We were not mocked with glimpse and shadow then;
 Bright Seraphs mixed familiarly with men;
 And earth and stars composed a universal heaven!

FROM *Topographical Description of the Country
of the Lakes in the North of England*

This Essay, which was published several years ago as an Introduction to some Views of the Lakes, by the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson, (an expensive work, and necessarily of limited circulation,) is now, with emendations and additions, attached to these volumes; from a consciousness of its having been written in the same spirit which dictated several of the poems, and from a belief that it will tend materially to illustrate them.

(a)

At Lucerne in Switzerland there existed, some years ago, a model of the Alpine country which encompasses the Lake of the four Cantons. The spectator ascended a little platform, and saw mountains, lakes, glaciers, rivers, woods, waterfalls, and valleys with their cottages and every other object contained in them, lying at his feet; all things being represented in their appropriate colours. It may be easily conceived that this exhibition afforded an exquisite delight to the imagination, which was thus tempted to wander at will from valley to valley, from mountain to mountain, through the deepest recesses of the Alps. But it supplied also a more substantial pleasure; for the sublime and beautiful region, with all its hidden treasures, and their bearings and relations to each other, was thereby comprehended and understood at once.

Something of this kind (as far as it can be performed by words, which must needs be inadequately) will here be attempted in respect to the Lakes in the north of England, and the vales and mountains enclosing and surrounding them. The delineation if tolerably executed will in some instances communicate to the traveller, who has already seen the objects, new information; and will assist in giving to his recollections a more orderly arrangement than his own opportunities of observing may have permitted him to make; while it will be still more useful to the future traveller, by directing his attention at once to distinctions in things which, without such previous aid, a length of time only could enable him to discover. It is hoped, also, that this Essay may become generally serviceable by leading to habits of more exact and considerate observation than, as far as the writer knows, have hitherto been applied to local scenery.

To begin, then, with the main outlines of the country. I know not how to give the reader a distinct image of these more readily, than by requesting him to place himself with me, in imagination, upon some given point; let it be the top of either of the mountains, Great Gavel, or Scawfell; or, rather, let us suppose our station to be a cloud hanging midway between those two mountains, at not more than half a mile's distance from the summit of each, and not many yards above their highest elevation; we shall then see stretched at our feet a number of valleys, not fewer than nine, diverging from the point, on which we are supposed to stand, like spokes from the nave of a wheel. First, we note, lying to the south-east, the vale of Langdale, which will conduct the eye to the long Lake of Winandermere stretched nearly to the sea; or rather to the sands of the vast bay of Morcamb, serving here for the rim of this imaginary wheel;—let us trace it in a direction from the south-east towards the south, and we shall next fix our eyes upon the vale of Coniston, running up likewise from the sea, but not (as all the other valleys do) to the nave of the wheel, and therefore it may not be inaptly represented as a broken spoke sticking in the rim. Looking forth again, with an inclination towards the west, immediately at our feet lies the Vale of Duddon, in which is no lake, but a copious stream winding among fields, rocks, and mountains, and terminating its course in the sands of Duddon. The fourth valley next to be observed, viz. that of Eskdale, is of the same general character as the last, yet beautifully discriminated from it by peculiar features. Next, almost due west, look down upon, and into, the deep valley of Wastdale, with its little chapel and half a dozen neat scattered dwellings, a plain of meadow and corn-ground intersected with stone walls apparently innumerable, like a large piece of lawless patch-work, or an array of mathematical figures, such as in the ancient schools of geometry might have been sportively and fantastically traced out upon sand. Beyond this little fertile plain lies, within its bed of steep mountains, the long, narrow, stern, and desolate Lake of Wastdale; and beyond this a dusky tract of level ground conducts the eye to the Irish Sea. The several vales of Ennerdale and Buttermere, with their lakes, next present themselves; and lastly, the vale of Borrowdale, of which that of Keswick is only a continuation, stretching due north, brings us to a point nearly opposite to the vale of Winandermere with which we began. From this it will appear, that the image of a wheel, thus far exact, is little more than half complete; but the deficiency on the eastern side may be supplied by the vales of Wytheburn, Ulswater, Hawswater, and the vale of Grasmere and Rydal; none of these,

however, run up to the central point between Great Gavel and Scawfell. From this, hitherto our central point, take a flight of not more than three or four miles eastward to the ridge of Helvellyn, and you will look down upon Wytheburn and St. John's Vale, which are a branch of the vale of Keswick; upon Ulswater, stretching due east, and not far beyond to the south-east, (though from this point not visible,) lie the vale and lake of Hawswater; and lastly, the vale of Grasmere, Rydal, and Ambleside, brings you back to Winandermere, thus completing, though on the eastern side in a somewhat irregular manner, the representative figure of the wheel.

Such, concisely given, is the general topographical view of the country of the Lakes in the north of England; and it may be observed, that, from the circumference to the centre, that is, from the sea or plain country to the mountain stations specified, there is—in the several ridges that enclose these vales and divide them from each other, I mean in the forms and surfaces, first, of the swelling grounds, next of the hills and rocks, and lastly of the mountains—an ascent of almost regular gradation from elegance and richness to their highest point of grandeur. It follows therefore from this, first, that these rocks, hills, and mountains, must present themselves to view in stages rising above each other, the mountains clustering together towards the central point; and, next; that an observer familiar with the several vales, must, from their various position in relation to the sun, have had before his eyes every possible embellishment of beauty, dignity, and splendour, which light and shadow can bestow upon objects so diversified. For example, in the vale of Winandermere, if the spectator looks for gentle and lovely scenes, his eye is turned towards the south; if for the grand, towards the north; in the vale of Keswick, which (as hath been said) lies almost due north of this, it is directly the reverse. Hence, when the sun is setting in summer far to the north-west, it is seen by the spectator from the shores or breast of Winandermere, resting among the summits of the loftiest mountains, some of which will perhaps be half or wholly hid by clouds, or by the blaze of light which the orb diffuses around it; and the surface of the lake will reflect before the eye correspondent colours through every variety of beauty, and through all degrees of splendour. In the vale of Keswick, at the same period, the sun sets over the humbler regions of the landscapes, and showers down upon them the radiance which at once veils and glorifies,—sending forth, meanwhile, broad streams of rosy, crimson, purple, or golden light, towards the grand mountains in the south and south-east, which, thus illuminated, with all their projections and

cavities, and with an intermixture of solemn shadows, are seen distinctly through a cool and clear atmosphere. Of course, there is as marked a difference between the *noontide* appearance of these two opposite vales. The bedimmed haze that overspreads the south, and the clear atmosphere and determined shadows of the clouds in the north, at the same time of the day, are each seen in these several vales, with a contrast as striking. The reader will easily perceive in what degree the intermediate vales partake of the same variety.

I do not indeed know any tract of country in which, within so narrow a compass, may be found an equal variety in the influences of light and shadow upon the sublime or beautiful features of landscape; and it is owing to the combined circumstances to which I have directed the reader's attention. From a point between Great Gavel and Scawfell, a shepherd would not require more than an hour to descend into any one of eight of the principal vales by which he would be surrounded; and all the others lie (with the exception of Haws-water) at but a small distance. Yet, though clustered together, every valley has its distinct and separate character; in some instances, as if they had been formed in studied contrast to each other, and in others with the united pleasing differences and resemblances of a sisterly rivalry. This concentration of interest gives to the country a decided superiority over the most attractive districts of Scotland and Wales, especially for the pedestrian traveller. In Scotland and Wales are found undoubtedly individual scenes, which, in their several kinds, cannot be excelled. But, in Scotland, particularly, what desolate and unimpressive tracts of country almost perpetually intervene! so that the traveller, when he reaches a spot deservedly of great celebrity, would find it difficult to determine how much of his pleasure is owing to excellence inherent in the landscape itself; and how much to an instantaneous recovery from an oppression left upon his spirits by the barrenness and desolation through which he has passed.

But, to proceed with our survey;—and, first, of the MOUNTAINS. Their *forms* are endlessly diversified, sweeping easily or boldly, in simple majesty, abrupt and precipitous, or soft and elegant. In magnitude and grandeur they are individually inferior to the most celebrated of those in some other parts of this island; but, in the combinations which they make, towering above each other, or lifting themselves in ridges like the waves of a tumultuous sea, and in the beauty and variety of their surfaces and their colours, they are surpassed by none.

The general *surface* of the mountains is turf, rendered rich and green by the moisture of the climate. Sometimes the turf, as in the

neighbourhood of Newlands, is little broken, the whole covering being soft and downy pasturage. In other places rocks predominate; the soil is laid bare by torrents and burstings of water from the sides of the mountains in heavy rains; and occasionally their perpendicular sides are seamed by ravines (formed also by rains and torrents) which, meeting in angular points, entrench and scar over the surface with numerous figures like the letters W and Y.

The MOUNTAINS are composed of the stone by mineralogists termed schist, which, as you approach the plain country, gives place to lime-stone and free-stone; but schist being the substance of the mountains, the predominant *colour* of their *rocky* parts is bluish, or hoary gray—the general tint of the lichens with which the bare stone is encrusted. With this blue or grey colour is frequently intermixed a red tinge, proceeding from the iron that interveins the stone, and impregnates the soil. The iron is the principle of decomposition in these rocks; and hence, when they become pulverized, the elementary particles crumbling down overspread in many places the steep and almost precipitous sides of the mountains with an intermixture of colours, like the compound hues of a dove's neck. When, in the heat of advancing summer, the fresh green tint of the herbage has somewhat faded, it is again revived by the appearance of the fern profusely spread every where; and, upon this plant, more than upon any thing else, do the changes which the seasons make in the colouring of the mountains depend. About the first week in October, the rich green, which prevailed through the whole summer, is usually passed away. The brilliant and various colours of the fern are then in harmony with the autumnal woods; bright yellow or lemon colour, at the base of the mountains, melting gradually, through orange, to a dark russet brown towards the summits, where the plant being more exposed to the weather is in a more advanced state of decay. Neither heath nor furze are *generally* found upon the *sides* of these mountains, though in some places they are richly adorned by them. We may add, that the mountains are of height sufficient to have the surface towards the summits softened by distance, and to imbibe the finest aerial hues. In common also with other mountains, their apparent forms and colours are perpetually changed by the clouds and vapours which float round them: the effect indeed of mist or haze, in a country of this character, is like that of magic. I have seen six or seven ridges rising above each other, all created in a moment by the vapours upon the side of a mountain, which, in its ordinary appearance, showed not a projecting point to furnish even a hint for such an operation.

I will take this opportunity of observing, that they, who have studied the appearances of nature, feel that the superiority, in point of visual interest, of mountainous over other countries—is more strikingly displayed in winter than in summer. This, as must be obvious, is partly owing to the *forms* of the mountains, which, of course, are not affected by the seasons; but also, in no small degree, to the greater variety that exists in their winter than their summer *colouring*. This variety is such, and so harmoniously preserved, that it leaves little cause of regret when the splendour of autumn is passed away. The oak-coppices, upon the sides of the mountains, retain russet leaves; the birch stands conspicuous with its silver stem and puce-coloured twigs; the hollies, with green leaves and scarlet berries, have come forth to view from among the deciduous trees, whose summer foliage had concealed them; the ivy is now plentifully apparent upon the stems and boughs of the trees, and among the woody rocks. In place of the uniform summer-green of the herbage and fern, many rich colours play into each other over the surface of the mountains; turf (the tints of which are interchangeably tawny-green, olive, and brown,) beds of withered fern, and grey rocks, being harmoniously blended together. The mosses and lichens are never so fresh and flourishing as in winter, if it be not a season of frost; and their minute beauties prodigally adorn the fore-ground. Wherever we turn, we find these productions of nature, to which winter is rather favourable than unkindly, scattered over the walls, banks of earth, rocks, and stones, and upon the trunks of trees, with the intermixture of several species of small fern, now green and fresh; and, to the observing passenger, their forms and colours are a source of inexhaustible admiration. Add to this the hoar-frost and snow, with all the varieties they create, and which volumes would not be sufficient to describe. I will content myself with one instance of the colouring produced by snow, which may not be uninteresting to painters. It is extracted from the memorandum-book of a friend; and for its accuracy I can speak, having been an eye-witness of the appearance. ‘I observed,’ says he, ‘the beautiful effect of the drifted snow upon the mountains; and the perfect *tone* of colour. From the top of the mountains downwards a rich olive was produced by the powdery snow and the grass, which olive was warmed with a little brown, and in this way harmoniously combined, by insensible gradations, with the white. The drifting took away the monotony of snow; and the whole vale of Grasmere, seen from the terrace walk in Easedale, was as varied, perhaps more so, than even in the pomp, of autumn. In the distance was Loughrigg-Fell, the basin-wall of the lake: this, from the

summit downward, was a rich orange-olive; then the lake of a bright olive-green, nearly the same tint as the snow-powdered mountain tops and high slopes in Easedale; and lastly, the church with its firs forming the centre of the view. Next to the church with its firs, came nine distinguishable hills, six of them with woody sides turned towards us, all of them oak-copses with their bright red leaves and snow-powdered twigs; these hills—so variously situated to each other, and to the view in general, so variously powdered, some only enough to give the herbage a rich brown tint, one intensely white and lighting up all the others—were not yet so placed, as in the most inobtrusive manner to harmonise by contrast with a perfect naked, snowless bleak summit in the far distance.'

Having spoken of the forms, surface, and colour of the mountains, let us descend into the VALLEYS. Though these have been represented under the general image of the spokes of a wheel, they are, for the most part, winding; the windings of many being abrupt and intricate. And, it may be observed, that, in one circumstance, the general shape of them all has been determined by that primitive conformation through which so many became receptacles of lakes. For they are not formed, as are most of the celebrated Welsh valleys, by an approximation of the sloping bases of the opposite mountains towards each other, leaving little more between than a channel for the passage of a hasty river; but the bottom of these valleys is, for the most part, a spacious and gently declining area, apparently level as the floor of a temple, or the surface of a lake, and beautifully broken, in many cases, by rocks and hills, which rise up like islands from the plain. In such of the valleys as make many windings, these level areas open upon the traveller in succession, divided from each other sometimes by a mutual approximation of the hills, leaving only passage for a river, sometimes by correspondent windings, without such approximation; and sometimes by a bold advance of one mountain towards that which is opposite to it. It may here be observed with propriety, that the several rocks and hills, which have been described as rising up like islands from the level area of the vale, have regulated the choice of the inhabitants in the situation of their dwellings. Where none of these are found, and the inclination of the ground is not sufficiently rapid easily to carry off the waters, (as in the higher part of Langdale, for instance,) the houses are not sprinkled over the middle part of the vales, but confined to their sides, being placed merely so far up the mountain as to protect them from the floods. But where these rocks and hills have been scattered over the plain of the vale, (as in Grasmere, Donnerdale, Eskdale, &c.) the beauty which they give to the scene is much heightened by a single cottage, or cluster of

cottages, that will be almost always found under them or upon their sides; dryness and shelter having tempted the Dalesmen to fix their habitations there.

I shall now speak of the LAKES of this country. The form of the lake is most perfect when, like Derwent-water and some of the smaller lakes, it least resembles that of a river;—I mean, when being looked at from any given point where the whole may be seen at once, the width of it bears such proportion to the length, that, however the outline may be diversified by far-shooting bays, it never assumes the shape of a river, and is contemplated with that placid and quiet feeling which belongs peculiarly to the lake—as a body of still water under the influence of no current; reflecting therefore the clouds, the light, and all the imagery of the sky and surrounding hills; expressing also and making visible the changes of the atmosphere, and motions of the lightest breeze, and subject to agitation only from the winds—

—The visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
 Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received
 Into the bosom of the *steady* lake!

It must be noticed, as a favourable characteristic of the lakes of this country, that, though several of the largest, such as Winandermere, Ulswater, Hawswater, &c., do, when the whole length of them is commanded from an elevated point, lose somewhat of the peculiar form of the lake, and assume the resemblance of a magnificent river; yet, as their shape is winding, (particularly that of Ulswater and Hawswater) when the view of the whole is obstructed by those barriers which determine the windings, and the spectator is confined to one reach, the appropriate feeling is revived; and one lake may thus in succession present to the eye the essential characteristic of many. But, though the forms of the large lakes have this advantage, it is nevertheless a circumstance favourable to the beauty of the country, that the largest of them are comparatively small; and that the same valley generally furnishes a succession of lakes, instead of being filled with one. The valleys in North Wales, as hath been observed, are not formed for the reception of lakes; those of Switzerland, Scotland, and this part of the north of England, are so formed; but, in Switzerland and Scotland, the proportion of diffused water is often too great, as at the lake of Geneva for instance, and in most of the Scotch lakes. No doubt it sounds magnificent and flatters the imagination to hear at a

distance of expanses of water so many leagues in length and miles in width; and such ample room may be delightful to the fresh-water sailor scudding with a lively breeze amid the rapidly-shifting scenery. But, who ever travelled along the banks of Loch-Lomond, variegated as the lower part is by islands, without feeling that a speedier termination of the long vista of blank water would be acceptable; and without wishing for an interposition of green meadows, trees, and cottages, and a sparkling stream to run by his side? In fact, a notion of grandeur, as connected with magnitude, has seduced persons of taste into a general mistake upon this subject. It is much more desirable, for the purposes of pleasure, that lakes should be numerous, and small or middle-sized, than large, not only for communication by walks and rides, but for variety, and for recurrence of similar appearances. To illustrate this by one instance:—how pleasing is it to have a ready and frequent opportunity of watching, at the outlet of a lake, the stream pushing its way among the rocks in lively contrast with the stillness from which it has escaped; and how amusing to compare its noisy and turbulent motions with the gentle playfulness of the breezes, that may be starting up or wandering here and there over the faintly-rippled surface of the broad water! I may add, as a general remark, that, in lakes of great width, the shores cannot be distinctly seen at the same time, and therefore contribute little to mutual illustration and ornament; and, if, like the American and Asiatic lakes, the opposite shores are out of sight of each other, then unfortunately the traveller is reminded of a nobler object; he has the blankness of a sea-prospect without the same grandeur and accompanying sense of power.

As the comparatively small size of the lakes in the North of England is favourable to the production of variegated landscape, their *boundary-line* also is for the most part gracefully or boldly indented. That uniformity which prevails in the primitive frame of the lower grounds among all chains or clusters of mountains where large bodies of still water are bedded, is broken by the *secondary* agents of nature, ever at work to supply the deficiencies of the mould in which things were originally cast. It need scarcely be observed that using the word, deficiencies, I do not speak with reference to those stronger emotions which a region of mountains is peculiarly fitted to excite. The bases of those huge barriers may run for a long space in straight lines, and these parallel to each other; the opposite sides of a profound vale may ascend as exact counterparts or in mutual reflection like the billows of a troubled sea; and the impression be, from its very simplicity, more awful and sublime. Sublimity is the result of Nature's first great dealings with the superficies of the earth; but the general tendency

of her subsequent operations is towards the production of beauty, by a multiplicity of symmetrical parts uniting in a consistent whole. This is every where exemplified along the margin of these lakes. Masses of rock, that have been precipitated from the heights into the area of waters, lie frequently like stranded ships; or have acquired the compact structure of jutting piers; or project in little peninsulas crested with native wood. The smallest rivulet—one whose silent influx is scarcely noticeable in a season of dry weather so faint is the dimple made by it on the surface of the smooth lake—will be found to have been not useless in shaping, by its deposits of gravel and soil in time of flood, a curve that would not otherwise have existed. But the more powerful brooks, encroaching upon the level of the lake, have in course of time given birth to ample promontories, whose sweeping line often contrasts boldly with the longitudinal base of the steeps on the opposite shore; while their flat or gently-sloping surface never fails to introduce, into the midst of desolation and barrenness, the elements of fertility, even where the habitations of men may not happen to have been raised. These alluvial promontories, however, threaten in some places to bisect the waters which they have long adorned; and, in course of ages, they will cause some of the lakes to dwindle into numerous and insignificant pools; which, in their turn, will finally be filled up. But the man of taste will say, it is an impertinent calculation that leads to such unwelcome conclusions;—let us rather be content with appearances as they are, and pursue in imagination the meandering shores, whether rugged steeps, admitting of no cultivation, descend into the water; or the shore is formed by gently-sloping lawns and rich woods, or by flat and fertile meadows stretching between the margin of the lake and the mountains. Among minuter recommendations will be noted with pleasure the curved rim of fine blue gravel thrown up by the waves, especially in bays exposed to the setting-in of strong winds; here and there are found, bordering the lake, groves, if I may so call them, of reeds and bulrushes; or plots of water-lilies lifting up their large circular leaves to the breeze, while the white flower is heaving upon the wave.

The ISLANDS are neither so numerous nor so beautiful as might be expected from the account I have given of the manner in which the level areas of the vales are so frequently diversified by rocks, hills, and hillocks, scattered over them; nor are they ornamented, as are several islands of the lakes in Scotland, by the remains of old castles or other places of defence, or of monastic edifices. There is however a beautiful cluster of islands on Winandermere; a pair pleasingly contrasted upon

Rydal; nor must the solitary green island at Grasmere be forgotten. In the bosom of each of the lakes of Ennerdale and Devock-water is a single rock which, owing to its neighbourhood to the sea, is—

‘The haunt of cormorants and sea-mews’ clang,’

a music well suited to the stern and wild character of the several scenes!

This part of the subject may be concluded with observing—that, from the multitude of brooks and torrents that fall into these lakes, and of internal springs by which they are fed, and which circulate through them like veins, they are truly living lakes, ‘*vivi lacus*,’ and are thus discriminated from the stagnant and sullen pools frequent among mountains that have been formed by volcanoes, and from the shallow meres found in flat and fenny countries. The water is also pure and crystalline; so that, if it were not for the reflections of the incumbent mountains by which it is darkened, a delusion might be felt, by a person resting quietly in a boat on the bosom of Winandermere or Derwent-water, similar to that which Carver so beautifully describes when he was floating alone in the middle of the lake Erie or Ontario, and could almost have imagined that his boat was suspended in an element as pure as air, or rather that the air and water were one.

Having spoken of Lakes I must not omit to mention, as a kindred feature of this country, those bodies of still water called TARNs. These are found in some of the valleys, and are very numerous upon the mountains. A Tarn, in a *Vale*, implies, for the most part, that the bed of the vale is not happily formed; that the water of the brooks can neither wholly escape, nor diffuse itself over a large area. Accordingly, in such situations, Tarns are often surrounded by a tract of boggy ground which has an unsightly appearance; but this is not always the case, and in the cultivated parts of the country, when the shores of the Tarn are determined, it differs only from the Lake in being smaller, and in belonging mostly to a smaller valley or circular recess. Of this class of miniature lakes Loughrigg Tarn, near Grasmere, is the most beautiful example. It has a margin of green firm meadows, of rocks, and rocky woods, a few reeds here, a little company of water-lilies there, with beds of gravel or stone beyond; a tiny stream issuing neither briskly nor sluggishly out of it; but its feeding rills, from the shortness of their course, so small as to be scarcely visible. Five or six cottages are reflected in its peaceful bosom; rocky and barren steeps rise up above the hanging enclosures; and the solemn pikes of Langdale overlook, from a distance, the low cultivated ridge of land that

forms the northern boundary of this small, quiet, and fertile domain. The *mountain* Tarns can only be recommended to the notice of the inquisitive traveller who has time to spare. They are difficult of access and naked; yet some of them are, in their permanent forms, very grand; and there are accidents of things which would make the meanest of them interesting. At all events, one of these pools is an acceptable sight to the mountain wanderer, not merely as an incident that diversifies the prospect, but as forming in his mind a centre or conspicuous point to which objects, otherwise disconnected or un-subordinated, may be referred. Some few have a varied outline, with bold heath-clad promontories; and, as they mostly lie at the foot of a steep precipice, the water, where the sun is not shining upon it, appears black and sullen; and round the margin huge stones and masses of rock are scattered; some defying conjecture as to the means by which they came there, and others obviously fallen from on high—the contribution of ages! The sense, also, of some repulsive power strongly put forth—excited by the prospect of a body of pure water unattended with groves and other cheerful rural images by which fresh water is usually accompanied, and unable to give any furtherance to the meagre vegetation around it—heightens the melancholy natural to such scenes. Nor is the feeling of solitude often more forcibly or more solemnly impressed than by the side of one of these mountain pools: though desolate and forbidding, it seems a distinct place to repair to; yet where the visitants must be rare, and there can be no disturbance. Water-fowl flock hither; and the lonely Angler may oftentimes here be seen; but the imagination, not content with this scanty allowance of society, is tempted to attribute a voluntary power to every change which takes place in such a spot, whether it be the breeze that wanders over the surface of the water, or the splendid lights of evening resting upon it in the midst of awful precipices.

There, sometimes does a leaping fish
 Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
 The crags repeat the raven's croak
 In symphony austere:
 Thither the rainbow comes, the cloud,
 And mists that spread the flying shroud
 And sunbeams, and the sounding blast,—

Though this country is, on one side, bounded by the sea, which combines beautifully, from some elevated points of view, with the

inland scenery; yet the estuaries cannot pretend to vie with those of Scotland and Wales:—the Lakes are such in the strict and usual sense of the word, being all of fresh water; nor have the Rivers; from the shortness of their course, time to acquire that body of water necessary to confer upon them much majesty. In fact, while they continue in the mountain and lake-country, they are rather large brooks than rivers. The water is perfectly pellucid, through which in many places are seen to a great depth their beds of rock or of blue gravel which give to the water itself an exquisitely cerulean colour: this is particularly striking in the rivers, Derwent and Duddon, which may be compared, such and so various are their beauties, to any two rivers of equal length of course in any country. The number of the torrents and smaller brooks is infinite, with their water-falls and water-breaks; and they need not here be described. I will only observe that, as many, even of the smallest of these rills, have either found, or made for themselves, recesses in the sides of the mountains or in the vales, they have tempted the primitive inhabitants to settle near them for shelter; and hence the retirement and seclusion by which these cottages are endeared to the eye of the man of sensibility.

The WOODS consist chiefly of oak, ash, and birch, and here and there a species of elm, with underwood of hazel, the white and black thorn, and hollies; in moist places alders and willows abound; and yews among the rocks. Formerly the whole country must have been covered with wood to a great height up the mountains; and native Scotch Firs (as in the northern part of Scotland to this day) must have grown in great profusion. But no one of these old inhabitants of the country remains, or perhaps has done for some hundreds of years; beautiful traces however of the universal sylvan appearance the country formerly had, are yet seen, both in the native coppice woods that remain, and have been protected by enclosures, and also in the forest-trees and hollies, which, though disappearing fast, are yet scattered both over the inclosed and uninclosed parts of the mountains. The same is expressed by the beauty and intricacy with which the fields and coppice-woods are often intermingled: the plough of the first settlers having followed naturally the veins of richer, dryer, or less stony soil; and thus it has shaped out an intermixture of wood and lawn with a grace and wildness which it would have been impossible for the hand of studied art to produce. Other trees have been introduced within these last fifty years, such as beeches, larches, limes, &c. and plantations of Scotch firs, seldom with advantage, and often with great injury to the appearance of the country; but the sycamore (which

I believe was brought into this island from Germany, not more than two hundred years ago) has long been the favourite of the cottagers; and, with the Scotch fir, has been chosen to screen their dwellings; and is sometimes found in the fields whither the winds or waters may have carried its seeds.

The want most felt, however, is that of timber trees. There are few magnificent ones to be found near any of the lakes; and, unless greater care be taken, there will in a short time scarcely be left an ancient oak that would repay the cost of felling. The neighbourhood of Rydal, notwithstanding the havoc which has been made, is yet nobly distinguished. In the woods of Lowther, also, is found an almost matchless store of the grandest trees, and all the majesty and wildness of the native forest.

(b)

From the time of the erection of these houses, till within the last fifty years, the state of society, though no doubt slowly and gradually improving, underwent no material change. Corn was grown in these vales (through which no carriage-road had been made) sufficient upon each estate to furnish bread for each family, and no more: notwithstanding the union of several tenements, the possessions of each inhabitant still being small, in the same field was seen an intermixture of different crops; and the plough was interrupted by little rocks, mostly overgrown with wood, or by spongy places, which the tillers of the soil had neither leisure nor capital to convert into firm land. The storms and moisture of the climate induced them to sprinkle their upland property with outhouses of native stone, as places of shelter for their sheep, where, in tempestuous weather, food was distributed to them. Every family spun from its own flock the wool with which it was clothed; a weaver was here and there found among them; and the rest of their wants were supplied by the produce of the yarn, which they carded and spun in their own houses, and carried to market, either under their arms, or more frequently on pack-horses, a small train taking their way weekly down the valley or over the mountains to the most commodious town. They had, as I have said, their rural chapel, and of course their minister, in clothing or in manner of life, in no respect differing from themselves, except on the Sabbath-day; this was the sole distinguished individual among them; every thing else, person and possession, exhibited a perfect equality, a community of

shepherds and agriculturists, proprietors, for the most part, of the lands which they occupied and cultivated.

While the process above detailed was going on, the native forest must have been every where receding; but trees were planted for the sustenance of the flocks in winter,—such was then the rude state of agriculture; and, for the same cause, it was necessary that care should be taken of some part of the growth of the native forest. Accordingly, in Queen Elizabeth's time, this was so strongly felt, that a petition was made to the Crown, praying, 'that the Blomaries in high Furness might be abolished, on account of the quantity of wood which was consumed in them for the use of the mines, to the great detriment of the cattle.' But this same cause, about a hundred years after, produced effects directly contrary to those which had been deprecated. The re-establishment, at that period, of furnaces upon a large scale, made it the interest of the people to convert the steeper and more stony of the enclosures, sprinkled over with remains of the native forest, into close woods, which, when cattle and sheep were excluded, rapidly sowed and thickened themselves. I have already directed the reader's attention to the cause by which tufts of wood, pasturage, meadow, and arable land, with its various produce, are intricately intermingled in the same field, and he will now see, in like manner, how enclosures entirely of wood, and those of cultivated ground, are blended all over the country under a law of similar wildness.

An historic detail has thus been given of the manner in which the hand of man has acted upon the surface of the inner regions of this mountainous country, as incorporated with and subservient to the powers and processes of nature. We will now take a view of the same agency acting, within narrower bounds, for the production of the few works of art and accommodations of life which, in so simple a state of society, could be necessary. These are merely habitations of man and coverts for beasts; roads and bridges, and places of worship.

And to begin with the *COTTAGES*. They are scattered over the valleys, and under the hill sides, and on the rocks; and, even to this day, in the more retired dales, without any intrusion of more assuming buildings.

Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing, on each other cheerful looks,
Like separated stars with clouds between.

MS.

The dwelling-houses, and contiguous outhouses, are, in many instances, of the colour of the native rock, out of which they have been built; but, frequently the dwelling-house has been distinguished from the barn and byer by roughcast and white wash, which, as the inhabitants are not hasty in renewing it, in a few years acquires, by the influence of weather, a tint at once sober and variegated. As these houses have been from father to son inhabited by persons engaged in the same occupations, yet necessarily with changes in their circumstances, they have received additions and accommodations adapted to the needs of each successive occupant, who, being for the most part proprietor, was at liberty to follow his own fancy; so that these humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a production of nature, and may (using a strong expression) rather be said to have grown than to have been erected;—to have risen by an instinct of their own out of the native rock! so little is there in them of formality; such is their wildness and beauty. Among the numerous recesses and projections in the walls and in the different stages of their roofs, are seen the boldest and most harmonious effects of contrasted sunshine and shadow. It is a favourable circumstance, that the strong winds, which sweep down the valleys, induced the inhabitants, at a time when the materials for building were easily procured, to furnish many of these dwellings with substantial porches; and such as have not this defence, are seldom unprovided with a projection of two large slates over their thresholds. Nor will the singular beauty of tile chimneys escape the eye of the attentive traveller. Sometimes a low chimney, almost upon a level with the roof, is overlaid with a slate, supported upon four slender pillars, to prevent the wind from driving the smoke down the chimney. Others are of a quadrangular shape, rising one or two feet above the roof; which low square is often surmounted by a tall cylinder, giving to the cottage chimney the most beautiful shape in which it is ever seen. Nor will it be too fanciful or refined to remark, that there is a pleasing harmony between a tall chimney of this circular form, and the living column of smoke, through the still air ascending from it. These dwellings, as has been said, are built of rough unhewn stone; and they are roofed with slates, which were rudely taken from the quarry before the present art of splitting them was understood, and are therefore rough and uneven in their surfaces, so that both the coverings and sides of the houses have furnished places of rest for the seeds of lichens, mosses, ferns, and flowers. Hence buildings, which, in their very form call to mind the processes of nature, do thus, clothed with this vegetable garb, appear to be received into the

bosom of the living principle of things, as it acts and exists among the woods and fields; and, by their colour and their shape, affectingly direct the thoughts to that tranquil course of nature and simplicity, along which the humble-minded inhabitants have through so many generations been led. Add the little garden with its shed for bee-hives, its small beds of pot-herbs, and its borders and patches of flowers for Sunday posies, with sometimes a choice few too much prized to be plucked; an orchard of proportioned size; a cheese-press, often supported by some tree near the door; a cluster of embowering sycamores for summer shade; with a tall Scotch fir, through which the winds sing when other trees are leafless; the little rill or household spout murmuring in all seasons;—combine these incidents and images together, and you have the representative idea of a mountain-cottage in this country so beautifully formed in itself, and so richly adorned by the hand of nature.

Till within the last fifty years there was no communication between any of these vales by carriage-roads; all bulky articles were transported on pack-horses. Owing, however, to the population not being concentrated in villages but scattered, the valleys themselves were intersected as now by innumerable lanes and pathways leading from house to house and from field to field. These lanes, where they are fenced by stone walls, are mostly bordered with ashes, hazels, wild roses, and beds of tall fern, at their base; while the walls themselves if old are overspread with mosses, small ferns, wild strawberries, the geranium, and lichens; and if the wall happen to rest against a bank of earth, it is sometimes almost wholly concealed by a rich facing of stone-fern. It is a great advantage to a traveller or resident, that these numerous lanes and paths, if he be a zealous admirer of nature, will introduce him, nay, will lead him on into all the recesses of the country, so that the hidden treasures of its landscapes will by an ever-ready guide be laid open to his eyes.

Likewise to the smallness of the several properties is owing the great number of bridges over the brooks and torrents, and the daring and graceful neglect of danger or accommodation with which so many of them are constructed, the rudeness of the forms of some, and their endless variety. But, when I speak of this rudeness, I must at the same time add that many of these structures are in themselves models of elegance, as if they had been formed upon principles of the most thoughtful architecture. It is to be regretted that these monuments of the skill of our ancestors, and of that happy instinct by which consummate beauty was produced, are disappearing fast; but

sufficient specimens remain to give a high gratification to the man of genuine taste. Such travellers as may not be accustomed to pay attention to these things, will excuse me if I point out the proportion between the span and elevation of the arch, the lightness of the parapet, and the graceful manner in which its curve follows faithfully that of the arch.

Upon this subject I have nothing further to notice, except the places of worship, which have mostly a little school-house adjoining. The architecture of these churches and chapels, where they have not been recently rebuilt or modernised, is of a style not less appropriate and admirable than that of the dwelling-houses and other structures. How sacred the spirit by which our forefathers were directed! The *religio loci* is no where outraged by these unstinted, yet unpretending, works of human hands. They exhibit generally a well-proportioned oblong with a suitable porch, in some instances a steeple tower, and in others nothing more than a small belfry in which one or two bells hang visibly.—But these objects, though pleasing in their forms, must necessarily, more than others in rural scenery, derive their interest from the sentiments of piety and reverence for the modest virtues and simple manners of humble life with which they may be contemplated. A man must be very insensible who would not be touched with pleasure at the sight of the chapel of Buttermere, so strikingly expressing by its diminutive size how small must be the congregation there assembled, as it were, like one family; and proclaiming at the same time to the passenger, in connection with the surrounding mountains, the depth of that seclusion in which the people live that has rendered necessary the building of a separate place of worship for so few. A Patriot, calling to mind the images of the stately fabrics of Canterbury, York, or Westminster, will find a heart-felt satisfaction in presence of this lowly pile, as a monument of the wise institutions of our country, and as evidence of the all-pervading and paternal care of that venerable Establishment of which it is perhaps the humblest daughter.—The edifice is scarcely larger than many of the single stones or fragments of rock which are scattered near it.

We have thus far confined our observations on this division of the subject to that part of these Dales which runs up far into the mountains. In addition to such objects as have been hitherto described, it may be mentioned that, as we descend towards the open part of the Vales, we meet with the remains of ancient Parks, and with old Mansions of more stately architecture; and it may be observed that to these circumstances the country owes whatever ornament it retains

of majestic and full-grown timber, as the remains of the park of the ancient family of the Ratcliffs at Derwentwater, Gowbray-park, and the venerable woods of Rydal. Through the open parts of the vales are scattered, with more spacious domains attached to them, houses of a middle rank, between the pastoral cottage and the old hall-residence of the more wealthy *Estatesman*.

Thus has been given a faithful description, the minuteness of which the reader will pardon, of the face of this country as it was, and had been through centuries, till within the last fifty years. Towards the head of these Dales was found a perfect Republic of Shepherds and Agriculturalists, among whom the plough of each man was confined to the maintenance of his own family, or to the occasional accommodation of his neighbour. Two or three cows furnished each family with milk and cheese. The Chapel was the only edifice that presided over these dwellings, the supreme head of this pure Commonwealth; the members of which existed in the midst of a powerful empire, like an ideal society or an organised community, whose constitution had been imposed and regulated by the mountains which protected it. Neither Knight, nor Esquire, nor high-born Nobleman, was here; but many of these humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land, which they walked over and tilled, had for more than five hundred years been possessed by men of their name and blood;—and venerable was the transition, when a curious traveller, descending from the heart of the mountains, had come to some ancient manorial residence in the more open parts of the Vales, which, through the rights attached to its proprietor, connected the almost visionary mountain Republic he had been contemplating with the substantial frame of society as existing in the laws and constitution of a mighty empire.

(c)

Houses or mansions suited to a mountainous region, should be 'not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired;' and the reasons for this rule, though they have been little adverted to, are evident. Mountainous countries, more frequently and forcibly than others, remind us of the power of the elements, as manifested in winds, snows, and torrents, and accordingly make the notion of exposure very unpleasing; while shelter and comfort are in proportion necessary and acceptable. Far-winding valleys difficult of access, and the feelings of simplicity habitually connected with mountain retirements, prompt us to turn

from ostentation as a thing there eminently unnatural and out of place. A mansion, amid such scenes, can never have sufficient dignity or interest to become principal in the landscape, and render the mountains, lakes, or torrents by which it may be surrounded, a subordinate part of the view. It is, I grant, easy to conceive, that an ancient castellated building, hanging over a precipice or raised upon an island, or the peninsula of a lake, like that of Kilchurn Castle, upon Loch Awe, may not want, whether deserted or inhabited, sufficient majesty to preside for a moment in the spectator's thoughts over the high mountains among which it is embosomed; but its titles are from antiquity—a power readily submitted to upon occasion as the vicegerent of Nature: it is respected, as having owed its existence to the necessities of things, as a monument of security in times of disturbance and danger long passed-away,—as a record of the pomp and violence of passion, and a symbol of the wisdom of law;—it bears a countenance of authority, which is not impaired by decay.

‘Child of loud-throated war, the mountain-stream
Roars in thy hearing; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age!’

MS.

To such honours a modern edifice can lay no claim; and the puny efforts of elegance appear contemptible, when, in such situations, they are obtruded in rivalry with the sublilities of Nature. But, towards the verge of a district like this of which we are treating, where the mountains subside into hills of moderate elevation, or in an undulating or flat country, a gentleman's mansion may, with propriety, become a principal feature in the landscape; and, itself being a work of art, works and traces of artificial ornament may, without censure, be extended around it, as they will be referred to the common centre, the house; the right of which to impress within certain limits a character of obvious ornament will not be denied, where no commanding forms of nature dispute it, or set it aside. Now, to a want of the perception of this difference, and to the causes before assigned, may chiefly be attributed the disfigurement which the Country of the Lakes has undergone, from persons who may have built, demolished, and planted, with full confidence, that every change and addition was or would become an improvement.

The principle that ought to determine the position, apparent size, and architecture of a house, viz. that it should be so constructed, and (if large) so much of it hidden, as to admit of its being gently

incorporated into the scenery of nature—should also determine its colour. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, ‘if you would fix upon the best colour for your house, turn up a stone, or pluck up a handful of grass by the roots, and see what is the colour of the soil where the house is to stand, and let that be your choice.’ Of course, this precept, given in conversation, could not have been meant to be taken literally. For example, in Low Furness, where the soil, from its strong impregnation with iron, is universally of a deep red, if this rule were strictly followed, the house also must be of a glaring red; in other places it must be of a sullen black; which would only be adding annoyance to annoyance. The rule, however, as a general guide, is good; and, in agricultural districts, where large tracts of soil are laid bare by the plough, particularly if (the face of the country being undulating) they are held up to view, this rule, though not to be implicitly adhered to, should never be lost sight of;—the colour of the house ought, if possible, to have a cast or shade of the colour of the soil. The principle is, that the house must harmonise with the surrounding landscape: accordingly, in mountainous countries, with still more confidence may it be said, ‘look at the rocks and those parts of the mountains where the soil is visible, and they will furnish a safe direction.’ Nevertheless, it will often happen that the rocks may bear so large a proportion to the rest of the landscape, and may be of such a tone of colour, that the rule may not admit even here of being implicitly followed. For instance, the chief defect in the colouring of the Country of the Lakes, (which is most strongly felt in the summer season) is an over-prevalence of a bluish tint, which the green of the herbage, the fern, and the woods, does not sufficiently counteract. If a house, therefore, should stand where this defect prevails, I have no hesitation in saying, that the colour of the neighbouring rocks would not be the best that could be chosen. A tint ought to be introduced approaching nearer to those which, in the technical language of painters, are called *warm*: this, if happily selected, would not disturb but would animate the landscape. How often do we see this exemplified upon a small scale by the native cottages, in cases where the glare of white-wash has been subdued by time and enriched by weather-stains! No harshness is then seen; but one of these cottages, thus coloured, will often form a central point to a landscape by which the whole shall be connected, and an influence of pleasure diffused over all the objects that compose the picture. But where the cold blue tint of the rocks is enriched by the iron tinge, the colour cannot be too closely imitated; and it will be produced of itself by the stones hewn from the adjoining quarry, and by the mortar,

which may be tempered with the most gravelly part of the soil. The pure blue gravel, from the bed of the river, is, however, more suitable to the mason's purpose, who will probably insist also that the house must be covered with rough-cast, otherwise it cannot be kept dry; if this advice be taken, the builder of taste will set about contriving such means as may enable him to come the nearest to the effect aimed at.

The supposed necessity of rough-cast to keep out rain in houses not built of hewn stone or brick, has tended greatly to injure English landscape, and the neighbourhood of these Lakes especially, by furnishing such apt occasion for whitening buildings. That white should be a favourite colour for rural residences is natural for many reasons. The mere aspect of cleanliness and neatness thus given, not only to an individual house, but, where the practice is general, to the whole face of the country, produces moral associations so powerful, that, in the minds of many, they take place of every other relating to such objects. But what has already been said upon the subject of cottages, must have convinced men of feeling and imagination, that a human habitation of the humblest class may be rendered more deeply interesting to the affections, and far more pleasing to the eye, by other influences than a sprightly tone of colour spread over its outside. I do not, however, mean to deny, that a small white building, embowered in trees, may, in some situations, be a delightful and animating object—in no way injurious to the landscape; but this only, where it sparkles from the midst of a thick shade, and in rare and solitary instances; especially if the country be itself rich, and pleasing, and full of grand forms. On the sides of bleak and desolate moors, we are indeed thankful for the sight of white cottages and white houses plentifully scattered, where, without these, perhaps every thing would be cheerless: this is said, however, with hesitation, and with a wilful sacrifice of some higher enjoyments. But I have certainly seen such buildings glittering at sunrise, and in wandering lights, with no common pleasure. The continental traveller also will remember, that the convents hanging from the rocks of the Rhine, the Rhone, the Danube, or among the Appenines or the mountains of Spain, are not looked at with less complacency when, as is often the case, they happen to be of a brilliant white. But this is perhaps owing, in no small degree, to the contrast of that lively colour with the gloom of monastic life, and to the general want of rural residences of smiling and attractive appearance, in those countries.

The objections to white, as a colour, in large spots or masses in landscapes, especially in a mountainous country, are insurmountable.

In nature, pure white is scarcely ever found but in small objects, such as flowers; or in those which are transitory, as the clouds, foam of rivers, and snow. Mr. Gilpin, who notices this, has also recorded the just remark of Mr. Locke, of N—, that white destroys the *gradations* of distance; and, therefore, an object of pure white can scarcely ever be managed with good effect in landscape-painting. Five or six white houses, scattered over a valley, by their obtrusiveness, dot the surface, and divide it into triangles, or other mathematical figures, haunting the eye, and disturbing that repose which might otherwise be perfect. I have seen a single white house materially impair the majesty of a mountain; cutting away, by a harsh separation, the whole of its base, below the point on which the house stood. Thus was the apparent size of the mountain reduced, not by the interposition of another object in a manner to call forth the imagination, which will give more than the eye loses; but what had been abstracted in this case was left visible; and the mountain appeared to take its beginning, or to rise from the line of the house, instead of its own natural base. But, if I may express my own individual feeling, it is after sunset, at the coming on of twilight, that white objects are most to be complained of. The solemnity and quietness of nature at that time are always marred, and often destroyed by them. When the ground is covered with snow, they are of course inoffensive; and in moonshine they are always pleasing—it is a tone of light with which they accord; and the dimness of the scene is enlivened by an object at once conspicuous and cheerful. I will conclude this subject with noticing, that the cold, slaty colour, which many persons, who have heard the white condemned, have adopted in its stead, must be disapproved of for the reason already given. The flaring yellow runs into the opposite extreme, and is still more censurable. Upon the whole, the safest colour, for general use, is something between a cream and a dust-colour, commonly called stone-colour;—there are, among the Lakes, examples of this that need not be pointed out.

The principle taken as our guide, viz. that the house should be so formed, and of such apparent size and colour, as to admit of its being gently incorporated with the scenery of nature, should also be applied to the management of the grounds and plantations, and is here more urgently needed; for it is from abuses in this department, far more even than from the introduction of exotics in architecture (if the phrase may be used) that this country has suffered. Larch and fir plantations have been spread every where, not merely with a view to profit, but in many instances for the sake of ornament. To those who

plant for profit, and are thrusting every other tree out of the way to make room for their favourite, the larch, I would utter first a regret that they should have selected these lovely vales for their vegetable manufactory, when there is so much barren and irreclaimable land in the neighbouring moors, and in other parts of the Island, which might have been had for this purpose at a far cheaper rate. And I will also beg leave to represent to them, that they ought not to be carried away by flattering promises from the speedy growth of this tree; because, in rich soils and sheltered situations, the wood, though it thrives fast, is full of sap, and of little value; and is, likewise, very subject to ravage from the attacks of insects, and from blight. Accordingly, in Scotland, where planting is much better understood, and carried on upon an incomparably larger scale than among us, good soil and sheltered situations are appropriated to the oak, the ash, and other deciduous trees; and the larch is now generally confined to barren and exposed ground. There the plant, which is a hardy one, is of slower growth; much less liable to injury; and the timber is of better quality. But there are many, whose circumstances permit them, and whose taste leads them, to plant with little regard to profit; and others, less wealthy, who have such a lively feeling of the native beauty of these scenes, that they are laudably not unwilling to make some sacrifices to heighten it. Both these classes of persons, I would entreat to enquire of themselves wherein that beauty which they admire consists. They would then see that, after the feeling has been gratified that prompts us to gather round our dwelling a few flowers and shrubs, which from the circumstance of their not being native, may, by their very looks, remind us that they owe their existence to our hands, and their prosperity to our care; they will see that, after this natural desire has been provided for, the course of all beyond has been predetermined by the spirit of the place. Before I proceed, with this subject, I will prepare my way with a remark of general application, by reminding those who are not satisfied with the restraint thus laid upon them, that they are liable to a charge of inconsistency, when they are so eager to change the face of that country, whose native attractions, by the act of erecting their habitations in it, they have so emphatically acknowledged. And surely there is not in this country a single spot that would not have, if well managed, sufficient dignity to support itself, unaided by the productions of other climates, or by elaborate decorations which might be becoming elsewhere.

But to return;—having adverted to the considerations that justify the introduction of a few exotic plants, provided they be confined

almost to the doors of the house, we may add, that a transition should be contrived without abruptness, from these foreigners to the rest of the shrubs, which ought to be of the kinds scattered by Nature through the woods—holly, broom, wild-rose, elder, dogberry, white and black thorn, &c., either these only, or such as are carefully selected in consequence of their uniting in form, and harmonising in colour with them, especially with respect to colour, when the tints are most diversified, as in autumn and spring. The various sorts of fruit-and-blossom-bearing trees usually found in orchards, to which may be added those of the woods,—namely, the wilding, black cherry tree, and wild cluster-cherry (here called heck-berry), may be happily admitted as an intermediate link between the shrubs and the forest trees; which last ought almost entirely to be such as are natives of the country. Of the birch, one of the most beautiful of the native trees, it may be noticed, that, in dry and rocky situations, it outstrips even the larch, which many persons are tempted to plant merely on account of the speed of its growth. Sycamore, and the Scotch fir (which, when it has room to spread out its arms, is a noble tree) may be placed with advantage near the house; for, from their massiveness, they unite well with buildings, and in some situations with rocks also; having, in their forms and apparent substances, the effect of something intermediate betwixt the immoveableness and solidity of stone, and the sprays and foliage of the lighter trees. If these general rules be just, what shall we say to whole acres of artificial shrubbery and exotic trees among rocks and dashing torrents, with their own wild wood in sight—where we have the whole contents of the nurseryman's catalogue jumbled together—colour at war with colour, and form with form—among the most peaceful subjects of Nature's kingdom every where discord, distraction, and bewilderment! But this deformity, bad as it is, is not so obtrusive as the small patches and large tracts of larch plantations that are over-running the hillsides. To justify our condemnation of these, let us again recur to Nature. The process, by which she forms woods and forests, is as follows. Seeds are scattered indiscriminately by winds, brought by waters, and dropped by birds. They perish, or produce, according as the soil upon which they fall is suited to them; and under the same dependence, the seedling or sucker, if not cropped by animals, thrives, and the tree grows, sometimes single, taking its own shape without constraint, but for the most part being compelled to conform itself to some law imposed upon it by its neighbours. From low and sheltered places, vegetation travels upwards to the more exposed; and the young plants are protected, and to a certain degree

fashioned, by those that have preceded them. The continuous mass of foliage which would be thus produced, is broken by rocks, or by glades or open places, where the browsing of animals has prevented the growth of wood. As vegetation ascends, the winds begin also to bear their part in moulding the forms of the trees; but, thus mutually protected, trees, though not of the hardiest kind, are enabled to climb high up the mountains. Gradually, however, by the quality of the ground, and by increasing exposure, a stop is put to their ascent; the hardy trees only are left; these also, by little and little, give way,—and a wild and irregular boundary is established, graceful in its outline, and never contemplated without some feeling more or less distinct of the powers of nature by which it is imposed.

Contrast the liberty that encourages, and the law that limits, this joint work of nature and time, with the disheartening necessities, restrictions, and disadvantages, under which the artificial planter must proceed, even he whom long observation and fine feeling have best qualified for his task. In the first place his trees, however well chosen and adapted to their several situations, must generally all start at the same time; and this circumstance would of itself prevent that fine connection of parts, that sympathy and organization, if I may so express myself, which pervades the whole of a natural wood, and appears to the eye in its single trees, its masses of foliage, and their various colours when they are held up to view on the side of a mountain; or, when spread over a valley, they are looked down upon from an eminence. It is then impossible, under any circumstances, for the artificial planter to rival the beauty of nature. But a moment's thought will show that, if ten thousand of this spiky tree, the larch, are stuck in at once upon the side of a hill, they can grow up into nothing but deformity; that, while they are suffered to stand, we shall look in vain for any of those appearances which are the chief sources of beauty in a natural wood.

(d)

I have been induced to speak thus at length with a wish to preserve the native beauty of this delightful district, because still farther changes in its appearance must inevitably follow, from the change of inhabitants and owners which is rapidly taking place.—About the same time that strangers began to be attracted to the country, and to feel a wish to settle in it, the difficulty, that would have stood in the way of their

procuring situations, was lessened by an unfortunate alteration in the circumstances of the native peasantry, proceeding from a cause which then began to operate, and is now felt in every house. The family of each man, whether *estatesman* or farmer, formerly had a twofold support; first the produce of his lands and flocks; and secondly, the profit drawn from the employment of the women and children, as manufacturers; spinning their own wool in their own houses, (work chiefly done in the winter season,) and carrying it to market for sale. Hence, however numerous the children, the income of the family kept pace with its increase. But, by the invention and universal application of machinery, this second resource has been wholly cut off; the gains being so far reduced, as not to be sought after but by a few aged persons disabled from other employment. Doubtless, the invention of machinery has not been to these people a pure loss; for the profits arising from home-manufactures operated as a strong temptation to choose that mode of labour in neglect of husbandry. They also participate in the general benefit which the island has derived from the increased value of the produce of land, brought about by the establishment of manufactories, and in the consequent quickening of agricultural industry. But this is far from making them amends; and now that home-manufactures are nearly done away, though the women and children might at many seasons of the year employ themselves with advantage in the fields beyond what they are accustomed to do, yet still all possible exertion in this way cannot be rationally expected from persons whose agricultural knowledge is so confined, and above all where there must necessarily be so small a capital. The consequence, then, is—that, farmers being no longer able to maintain themselves upon small farms, several are united in one, and the buildings go to decay, or are destroyed; and that the lands of the *estatesmen* being mortgaged and the owners constrained to part with them, they fall into the hands of wealthy purchasers, who in like manner unite and consolidate; and, if they wish to become residents, erect new mansions out of the ruins of the ancient cottages, whose little enclosures, with all the wild graces that grew out of them, disappear. The feudal tenure under which the estates are held has indeed done something towards checking this influx of new settlers; but so strong is the inclination that these galling restraints are endured; and it is probable that in a few years the country on the margin of the Lakes will fall almost entirely into the possession of Gentry, either strangers or natives. It is then much to be wished, that a better taste should prevail among these new proprietors; and, as they cannot

be expected to leave things to themselves, that skill and knowledge should prevent unnecessary deviations from that path of simplicity and beauty along which, without design and unconsciously, their humble predecessors have moved. In this wish the author will be joined by persons of pure taste throughout the whole Island, who, by their visits (often repeated) to the Lakes in the North of England, testify that they deem the district a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy.

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OTHER POEMS 1815-1846

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To B. R. Haydon, Esq.

High is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert:
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress, 10
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,—
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness:
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

November 1, 1815

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow as smooth as heaven can shed,
Shines like another Sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head—
Terrestrial—but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aerial Powers 10
Dissolve that beauty—destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes—till genial spring
Have filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

Sequel to [Beggars]

COMPOSED MANY YEARS AFTER

Where are they now, those wanton Boys?°
 For whose free range the daedal earth°
 Was filled with animated toys,
 And implements of frolic mirth;
 With tools for ready wit to guide;
 And ornaments of seemlier pride,
 More fresh, more bright, than Princes wear;
 For what one moment flung aside,
 Another could repair;
 What good or evil have they seen
 Since I their pastime witnessed here,
 Their daring wiles, their sportive cheer?
 I ask—but all is dark between!

10

Spirits of beauty and of grace!
 Associates in that eager chase;
 Ye, by a course to nature true,
 The sterner judgment can subdue;
 And waken a relenting smile
 When she encounters fraud or guile;
 And sometimes ye can charm away
 The inward mischief, or allay,
 Ye, who within the blameless mind
 Your favourite seat of empire find!

20

They met me in a genial hour,
 When universal nature breathed
 As with the breath of one sweet flower,—
 A time to overrule the power
 Of discontent, and check the birth
 Of thoughts with better thoughts at strife,
 The most familiar bane of life
 Since parting Innocence bequeathed
 Mortality to Earth!
 Soft clouds, the whitest of the year,
 Sailed through the sky—the brooks ran clear;

30

The lambs from rock to rock were bounding;
 With songs the budded groves resounding;
 And to my heart is still endeared
 The faith with which it then was cheered;
 The faith which saw that gladsome pair
 Walk through the fire with unsinged hair. 40
 Or, if such thoughts must needs deceive,
 Kind Spirits! may we not believe
 That they, so happy and so fair,
 Through your sweet influence, and the care
 Of pitying Heaven, at least were free
 From touch of *deadly* injury?
 Destined, whate'er their earthly doom,
 For mercy and immortal bloom!

Bruges

Bruges I saw attired with golden light
 (Streamed from the west) as with a robe of power:
 'Tis passed away;—and now the sunless hour,
 That slowly introducing peaceful night
 Best suits with fallen grandeur, to my sight
 Offers her beauty, her magnificence,
 And all the graces left her for defence
 Against the injuries of time, the spite
 Of Fortune, and the desolating storms
 Of future War. Advance not—spare to hide, 10
 O gentle Power of Darkness! these mild hues;
 Obscure not yet these silent avenues
 Of stateliest Architecture, where the forms
 Of Nun-like Females, with soft motion, glide!

Mutability

From low to high doth dissolution climb,
 And sinks from high to low, along a scale
 Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
 A musical but melancholy chime,
 Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
 Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
 Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
 The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
 That in the morning whitened hill and plain
 And is no more; drop like the tower sublime 10
 Of yesterday, which royally did wear
 Its crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
 Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
 Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

*To the Torrent at the Devil's
 Bridge, North Wales*

How art thou named? In search of what strange land
 From what huge height, descending? Can such force
 Of waters issue from a British source,
 Or hath not Pindus fed Thee, where the band^o
 Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with hand
 Desperate as thine? Or come the incessant shocks
 From that young Stream, that smites the throbbing rocks^o
 Of Viamala? There I seem to stand,
 As in Life's Morn; permitted to behold,
 From the dread chasm, woods climbing above woods 10
 In pomp that fades not, everlasting snows,
 And skies that ne'er relinquish their repose;
 Such power possess the Family of floods
 Over the minds of Poets, young or old!

'Scorn not the Sonnet'

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

Incident at Bruges

In Brugès town is many a street
 Whence busy life hath fled;
 Where, without hurry, noiseless feet,
 The grass-grown pavement tread.
 There heard we, halting in the shade
 Flung from a Convent-tower,
 A harp that tuneful prelude made
 To a voice of thrilling power.

The measure, simple truth to tell,
 Was fit for some gay throng; 10
 Though from the same grim turret fell
 The shadow and the song.
 When silent were both voice and chords
 The strain seemed doubly dear,
 Yet sad as sweet, for *English* words
 Had fallen upon the ear.

It was a breezy hour of eve;
 And pinnacle and spire
 Quivered and seemed almost to heave,
 Clothed with innocuous fire; 20
 But where we stood, the setting sun
 Showed little of his state;
 And, if the glory reached the Nun,
 'Twas through an iron grate.

Not always is the heart unwise,
 Nor pity idly born,
 If even a passing Stranger sighs
 For them who do not mourn.
 Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,
 Captive, whoe'er thou be! 30
 Oh! what is beauty, what is love,
 And opening life to thee?

Such feeling pressed upon my soul,
 A feeling sanctified
 By one soft trickling tear that stole
 From the Maiden at my side;
 Less tribute could she pay than this,
 Borne gaily o'er the sea,
 Fresh from the beauty and the bliss
 Of English liberty? 40

Yarrow Revisited

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

The title Yarrow Revisited will stand in no need of explanation, for Readers acquainted with the Author's previous poems suggested by that celebrated Stream.]

The gallant Youth, who may have gained,
 Or seeks, a 'Winsome Marrow,'^o
 Was but an Infant in the lap
 When first I looked on Yarrow;
 Once more, by Newark's Castle-gate
 Long left without a Warder,
 I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
 Great Minstrel of the Border!^o

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

For busy thoughts the Stream flowed on
 In foamy agitation;
 And slept in many a crystal pool
 For quiet contemplation: 20
 No public and no private care
 The freeborn mind enthralling,
 We made a day of happy hours,
 Our happy days recalling.

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

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

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

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

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

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

*On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from
 Abbotsford, for Naples*

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
 Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
 Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
 Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
 For kindred Power departing from their sight;
 While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
 Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
 Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
 Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
 Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue 10
 Than sceptred King or laurelled Conqueror knows,
 Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
 Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
 Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!°

'Calm is the fragrant air, and loth to lose'

Calm is the fragrant air, and loth to lose
 Day's grateful warmth, tho' moist with falling dews.
 Look for the stars, you'll say that there are none;
 Look up a second time, and, one by one,
 You mark them twinkling out with silvery light,
 And wonder how they could elude the sight.
 The birds, of late so noisy in their bowers,
 Warbled a while with faint and fainter powers,
 But now are silent as the dim-seen flowers:
 Nor does the Village Church-clock's iron tone 10
 The time's and season's influence disown;
 Nine beats distinctly to each other bound
 In drowsy sequence; how unlike the sound
 That, in rough winter, oft inflicts a fear
 On fireside Listeners, doubting what they hear!
 The Shepherd, bent on rising with the sun,
 Had closed his door before the day was done,
 And now with thankful heart to bed doth creep,
 And join his little Children in their sleep.
 The Bat, lured forth where trees the lane o'ershade, 20
 Flits and reflits along the close arcade;
 Far-heard the Dor-hawk chases the white Moth
 With burring note, which Industry and Sloth
 Might both be pleased with, for it suits them both.
 Wheels and the tread of hoofs are heard no more;
 One Boat there was, but it will touch the shore
 With the next dipping of its slackened oar;
 Faint sound, that, for the gayest of the gay,
 Might give to serious thought a moment's sway,
 As a last token of Man's toilsome day! 30

Airey-Force Valley

———Not a breath of air
Ruffles the bosom of this leafy glen.
From the brook's margin, wide around, the trees
Are stedfast as the rocks; the brook itself,
Old as the hills that feed it from afar,
Doth rather deepen than disturb the calm
Where all things else are still and motionless.
And yet, even now, a little breeze, perchance
Escaped from boisterous winds that rage without,
Has entered, by the sturdy oaks unfelt,
But to its gentle touch how sensitive
Is the light ash! that, pendent from the brow
Of yon dim cave, in seeming silence makes
A soft eye-music of slow-waving boughs,
Powerful almost as vocal harmony
To stay the wanderer's steps and soothe his thoughts.

10

FROM 'POSTSCRIPT' TO *YARROW REVISITED* (1835)

In the present volume, as in the author's previous poems, the reader will have found occasionally opinions expressed upon the course of public affairs, and feelings given vent to as national interests excited them. Since nothing, he trusts, has been uttered but in the spirit of reflective patriotism, those notices are left to produce their own effect; but, among the many objects of general concern, and the changes going forward, which he has glanced at in verse, are some especially affecting the lower orders of society: in reference to these, he wishes here to add a few words in plain prose.

Were he conscious of being able to do justice to those important topics, he might avail himself of the periodical press for offering anonymously his thoughts, such as they are, to the world; but he feels that, in procuring attention, they may derive some advantage, however small, from his name, in addition to that of being presented in a less fugitive shape. It is also not impossible that the state of mind which some of the foregoing poems may have produced in the reader, will dispose him to receive more readily the impression which he desires to make, and to admit the conclusions he would establish.

I. The first thing that presses upon his attention is the Poor-Law Amendment Act. He is aware of the magnitude and complexity of the subject, and the unwearied attention which it has received from men of far wider experience than his own; yet he cannot forbear touching upon one point of it, and to this he will confine himself, though not insensible to the objection which may reasonably be brought against treating a portion of this, or any other, great scheme of civil polity separately from the whole. The point to which he wishes to draw the reader's attention is, that *all* persons who cannot find employment, or procure wages sufficient to support the body in health and strength, are entitled to a maintenance by law.

This principle is acknowledged in the Report of the Commissioners: but is there not room for apprehension that some of the regulations of the new act have a tendency to render the principle nugatory by difficulties thrown in the way of applying it? If this be so, persons will not be wanting to show it, by examining the provisions of the act in detail,—an attempt which would be quite out of place here; but it will not, therefore, be deemed unbecoming in one who fears that the prudence of the head may, in framing some of those provisions,

have supplanted the wisdom of the heart, to enforce a principle which cannot be violated without infringing upon one of the most precious rights of the English people, and opposing one of the most sacred claims of civilised humanity.

There can be no greater error, in this department of legislation, than the belief that this principle does by necessity operate for the degradation of those who claim, or are so circumstanced as to make it likely they may claim, through laws founded upon it, relief or assistance. The direct contrary is the truth: it may be unanswerably maintained that its tendency is to raise, not to depress; by stamping a value upon life, which can belong to it only where the laws have placed men who are willing to work, and yet cannot find employment, above the necessity of looking for protection against hunger and other natural evils, either to individual and casual charity, to despair and death, or to the breach of law by theft or violence.

And here, as the fundamental principle has been recognised in the Report of the Commissioners, he is not at issue with them any farther than he is compelled to believe that their 'remedial measures' obstruct the application of it more than the interests of society require.

And, calling to mind the doctrines of political economy which are now prevalent, he cannot forbear to enforce the justice of the principle, and to insist upon its salutary operation.

And first for its justice: If self-preservation be the first law of our nature, would not every one in a state of nature be morally justified in taking to himself that which is indispensable to such preservation, where, by so doing, he would not rob another of that which might be equally indispensable to *his* preservation? And if the value of life be regarded in a right point of view, may it not be questioned whether this right of preserving life, at any expense short of endangering the life of another, does not survive man's entering into the social state; whether this right can be surrendered or forfeited, except when it opposes the divine law, upon any supposition of a social compact, or of any convention for the protection of mere rights of property?

But, if it be not safe to touch the abstract question of man's right in a social state to help himself even in the last extremity, may we not still contend for the duty of a Christian government, standing *in loco parentis* towards all its subjects, to make such effectual provision, that no one shall be in danger of perishing either through the neglect or harshness of its legislation? Or, waiving this, is it not indisputable that the claim of the state to the allegiance, involves the protection, of the subject? And, as all rights in one party impose a correlative duty

upon another, it follows that the right of the state to require the services of its members, even to the jeoparding of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when, from any cause, they may be unable to support themselves.

Let us now consider the salutary and benign operation of this principle. Here we must have recourse to elementary feelings of human nature, and to truths which from their very obviousness are apt to be slighted, till they are forced upon our notice by our own suffering or those of others. In the *Paradise Lost*, Milton represents Adam, after the Fall, as exclaiming, in the anguish of his soul—

‘Did I request Thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man; did I solicit Thee
From darkness to promote me?
... .. My will
Concurred not to my being.’

Under how many various pressures of misery have men been driven thus, in a strain touching upon impiety, to expostulate with the Creator; and under few so afflictive as when the source and origin of earthly existence have been brought back to the mind by its impending close in the pangs of destitution. But as long as, in our legislation, due weight shall be given to this principle, no man will be forced to bewail the gift of life in hopeless want of the necessaries of life.

Englishmen have, therefore, by the progress of civilisation among them, been placed in circumstances more favourable to piety and resignation to the divine will, than the inhabitants of other countries, where a like provision has not been established. And as Providence, in this care of our countrymen, acts through a human medium, the objects of that care must, in like manner, be more inclined towards a grateful love of their fellow-men. Thus, also, do stronger ties attach the people to their country, whether while they tread its soil, or, at a distance, think of their native land as an indulgent parent, to whose arms, even they who have been imprudent and undeserving may, like the prodigal son, betake themselves, without fear of being rejected.

Such is the view of the case that would first present itself to a reflective mind; and it is in vain to show, by appeals to experience, in contrast with this view, that provisions founded upon the principle have promoted profaneness of life, and dispositions the reverse of philanthropic, by spreading idleness, selfishness, and rapacity: for these evils have arisen, not as an inevitable consequence of the prin-

ciple, but for want of judgment in framing laws based upon it; and, above all, from faults in the mode of administering the law. The mischief that has grown to such a height from granting relief in cases where proper vigilance would have shown that it was not required, or in bestowing it in undue measure, will be urged by no truly enlightened statesman, as a sufficient reason for banishing the principle itself from legislation.

Let us recur to the miserable states of consciousness that it precludes.

There is a story told, by a traveller in Spain, of a female who, by a sudden shock of domestic calamity, was driven out of her senses, and ever after looked up incessantly to the sky, feeling that her fellow-creatures could do nothing for her relief. Can there be Englishmen who, with a good end in view, would, upon system, expose their brother Englishmen to a like necessity of looking upwards only; or downwards to the earth, after it shall contain no spot where the destitute can demand, by civil right, what by right of nature they are entitled to?

Suppose the objects of our sympathy not sunk into this blank despair, but wandering about as strangers in streets and ways, with the hope of succour from casual charity; what have we gained by such a change of scene? Woful is the condition of the famished Northern Indian, dependent, among winter snows, upon the chance passage of a herd of deer, from which one, if brought down by his rifle-gun, may be made the means of keeping him and his companions alive. As miserable is that of some savage Islander, who, when the land has ceased to afford him sustenance, watches for food which the waves may cast up, or in vain endeavours to extract it from the inexorable deep. But neither of these is in a state of wretchedness comparable to that, which is so often endured in civilised society: multitudes, in all ages, have known it, of whom may be said:-

‘Homeless, near a thousand homes they stood,
And near a thousand tables pined, and wanted food.’

The author may justly be accused of wasting time in an uncalled-for attempt to excite the feelings of his reader, if systems of political economy, widely spread, did not impugn the principle, and if the safeguards against such extremities were left unimpaired. It is broadly asserted by many, that every man who endeavours to find work, *may* find it: were this assertion capable of being verified, there still would remain a question, what kind of work, and how far may the labourer be

fit for it? For if sedentary work is to be exchanged for standing; and some light and nice exercise of the fingers, to which an artisan has been accustomed all his life, for severe labour of the arms; the best efforts would turn to little account, and occasion would be given for the unthinking and the unfeeling unwarrantably to reproach those who are put upon such employment, as idle, froward, and unworthy of relief, either by law or in any other way! Were this statement correct, there would indeed be an end of the argument, the principle here maintained would be superseded. But, alas! it is far otherwise. That principle, applicable to the benefit of all countries, is indispensable for England, upon whose coast families are perpetually deprived of their support by shipwreck, and where large masses of men are so liable to be thrown out of their ordinary means of gaining bread, by changes in commercial intercourse, subject mainly or solely to the will of foreign powers; by new discoveries in arts and manufactures; and by reckless laws, in conformity with theories of political economy, which, whether right or wrong in the abstract, have proved a scourge to tens of thousands, by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice.

But it is urged,—refuse altogether compulsory relief to the able-bodied, and the number of those who stand in need of relief will steadily diminish, through a conviction of an absolute necessity for greater forethought, and more prudent care of a man's earnings. Undoubtedly it would, but so also would it, and in a much greater degree, if the legislative provisions were retained, and parochial relief administered under the care of the upper classes, as it ought to be. For it has been invariably found, that wherever the funds have been raised and applied under the superintendence of gentlemen and substantial proprietors, acting in vestries, and as overseers, pauperism has diminished accordingly. Proper care in that quarter would effectually check what is felt in some districts to be one of the worst evils in the poor law system, viz. the readiness of small and needy proprietors to join in imposing rates that seemingly subject them to great hardships, while, in fact, this is done with an understanding, which prepares the way for the relief that each is ready to bestow upon his still poorer neighbours being granted to himself, or his relatives, when it shall be applied for.

But let us look to inner sentiments of a nobler quality, in order to know what we have to build upon. Affecting proofs occur in every one's experience, who is acquainted with the unfortunate and the indigent, of their unwillingness to derive their subsistence from aught but their own funds or labour, or to be indebted to parochial

assistance for the attainment of any object, however dear to them. A case was reported, the other day, from a coroner's inquest, of a pair who, through the space of four years, had carried about their dead infant from house to house, and from lodging to lodging, as their necessities drove them, rather than ask the parish to bear the expense of its interment: the poor creatures lived in the hope of one day being able to bury their child at their own cost. It must have been heart-rending to see and hear the mother, who had been called upon to account for the state in which the body was found, make this deposition. She and her husband had, it is true, been once in prosperity. But examples, where the spirit of independence works with equal strength, though not with like miserable accompaniments, are frequently to be found even yet among the humblest peasantry and mechanics. There is not, then, sufficient cause for doubting that a like sense of honour may be revived among the people, and their ancient habits of independence restored, without resorting to those severities which the new Poor Law Act has introduced.

But even if the surfaces of things only are to be examined, we have a right to expect that lawgivers should take into account the various tempers and dispositions of mankind: while some are led, by the existence of a legislative provision, into idleness and extravagance, the economical virtues might be cherished in others by the knowledge that, if all their efforts fail, they have in the Poor Laws a 'refuge from the storm and a shadow from the heat.' Despondency and distraction are no friends to prudence: the springs of industry will relax, if cheerfulness be destroyed by anxiety; without hope men become reckless, and have a sullen pride in adding to the heap of their own wretchedness. He who feels that he is abandoned by his fellow-men will be almost irresistibly driven to care little for himself; will lose his self-respect accordingly, and with that loss what remains to him of virtue?

With all due deference to the particular experience, and general intelligence of the individuals who framed the Act, and of those who in and out of parliament have approved of and supported it; it may be said, that it proceeds too much upon the presumption that it is a labouring man's own fault if he be not, as the phrase is, beforehand with the world. But the most prudent are liable to be thrown back by sickness, cutting them off from labour, and causing to them expense: and who but has observed how distress creeps upon multitudes without misconduct of their own; and merely from a gradual fall in the price of labour, without a correspondent one in the price of provisions; so that men who may have ventured upon the marriage

state with a fair prospect of maintaining their families in comfort and happiness, see them reduced to a pittance which no effort of theirs can increase? Let it be remembered, also, that there are thousands with whom vicious habits of expense are not the cause why they do not store up their gains; but they are generous and kind-hearted, and ready to help their kindred and friends; moreover, they have a faith in Providence that those who have been prompt to assist others, will not be left destitute, should they themselves come to need. By acting from these blended feelings, numbers have rendered themselves incapable of standing up against a sudden reverse. Nevertheless, these men, in common with all who have the misfortune to be in want, if many theorists had their wish, would be thrown upon one or other of those three sharp points of condition before adverted to, from which the intervention of law has hitherto saved them.

All that has been said tends to show how the principle contended for makes the gift of life more valuable, and has, the writer hopes, led to the conclusion that its legitimate operation is to make men worthier of that gift: in other words, not to degrade but to exalt human nature. But the subject must not be dismissed without adverting to the indirect influence of the same principle upon the moral sentiments of a people among whom it is embodied in law. In our criminal jurisprudence there is a maxim, deservedly eulogised, that it is better that ten guilty persons should escape, than that one innocent man should suffer; so, also, might it be maintained, with regard to the Poor Laws, that it is better for the interests of humanity among the people at large, that ten undeserving should partake of the funds provided, than that one morally good man, through want of relief, should either have his principles corrupted, or his energies destroyed; than that such a one should either be driven to do wrong, or be cast to the earth in utter hopelessness. In France, the English maxim of criminal jurisprudence is reversed; there, it is deemed better that ten innocent men should suffer, than one guilty escape: in France, there is no universal provision for the poor; and we may judge of the small value set upon human life in the metropolis of that country, by merely noticing the disrespect with which, after death, the body is treated, not by the thoughtless vulgar, but in schools of anatomy, presided over by men allowed to be, in their own art and in physical science, among the most enlightened in the world. In the East, where countries are overrun with population as with a weed, infinitely more respect is shown to the remains of the deceased; and what a bitter mockery is it, that this insensibility should be found where civil polity is so busy in

minor regulations, and ostentatiously careful to gratify the luxurious propensities, whether social or intellectual, of the multitude! Irreligion is, no doubt, much concerned with this offensive disrespect, shown to the bodies of the dead in France; but it is mainly attributable to the state in which so many of the living are left by the absence of compulsory provision for the indigent so humanely established by the law of England.

Sights of abject misery, perpetually recurring, harden the heart of the community. In the perusal of history, and of works of fiction, we are not, indeed, unwilling to have our commiseration excited by such objects of distress as they present to us; but, in the concerns of real life, men know that such emotions are not given to be indulged for their own sakes: there, the conscience declares to them that sympathy must be followed by action; and if there exist a previous conviction that the power to relieve is utterly inadequate to the demand, the eye shrinks from communication with wretchedness, and pity and compassion languish, like any other qualities that are deprived of their natural aliment. Let these considerations be duly weighed by those who trust to the hope that an increase of private charity, with all its advantages of superior discrimination, would more than compensate for the abandonment of those principles, the wisdom of which has been here insisted upon. How discouraging, also, would be the sense of injustice, which could not fail to arise in the minds of the well-disposed, if the burden of supporting the poor, a burden of which the selfish have hitherto by compulsion borne a share, should now, or hereafter, be thrown exclusively upon the benevolent.

By having put an end to the Slave Trade and Slavery, the British people are exalted in the scale of humanity; and they cannot but feel so, if they look into themselves, and duly consider their relation to God and their fellow-creatures. That was a noble advance; but a retrograde movement will assuredly be made, if ever the principle, which has been here defended, should be either avowedly abandoned, or but ostensibly retained.

*Extempore Effusion Upon the Death
of James Hogg*

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

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

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

10

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

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

20

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

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

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

30

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

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

40

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

Thoughts

Suggested the Day Following on the Banks of Nith, Near the Poet's [Burns's] Residence

Too frail to keep the lofty vow
 That must have followed when his brow
 Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—

 With holly spray,
 He faltered, drifted to and fro,
 And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
 Our minds when, lingering all too long,^o
 Over the grave of Burns we hung

 In social grief—
 Indulged as if it were a wrong
 To seek relief.

10

But, leaving each unquiet theme
 Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
 And prompt to welcome every gleam
 Of good and fair,
 Let us beside this limpid Stream
 Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
 Think rather of those moments bright 20
 When to the consciousness of right
 His course was true,
 When Wisdom prospered in his sight
 And virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,^o
 Freely as in youth's season bland,
 When side by side, his Book in hand,
 We wont to stray,
 Our pleasure varying at command
 Of each sweet Lay. 30

How oft inspired must he have trod
 These pathways, yon far-stretching road!
 There lurks his home: in that Abode,
 With mirth elate,
 Or in his nobly-pensive mood,
 The Rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
 Before it humbly let us pause,
 And ask of Nature, from what cause
 And by what rules
 She trained her Burns to win applause 40
 That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
 Are felt the flashes of his pen;
 He rules mid winter snows, and when
 Bees fill their hives;
 Deep in the general heart of men
 His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime
 Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime, 50
 And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
 From genuine springs,
 Shall dwell together till old Time
 Folds up his wings?

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven
 This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
 The rueful conflict, the heart riven
 With vain endeavour,
 And memory of Earth's bitter leaven,
 Effaced for ever.

60

But why to Him confine the prayer,
 When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
 On the frail heart the purest share
 With all that live?—
 The best of what we do and are,
 Just God, forgive!

At Furness Abbey

Here, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
 Man left this Structure to become Time's prey
 A soothing spirit follows in the way
 That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing.
 See how her Ivy clasps the sacred Ruin
 Fall to prevent or beautify decay;
 And, on the mouldered walls, how bright, how gay,
 The flowers in pearly dew their bloom renewing!
 Thanks to the place, blessings upon the hour;
 Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile
 Gleams on the grass-crowned top of yon tall Tower
 Whose cawing occupants with joy proclaim
 Prescriptive title to the shattered pile
 Where, Cavendish, *thine* seems nothing but a name!

10

'Glad sight wherever new with old'

Glad sight wherever new with old
 Is joined through some dear homeborn tie;
 The life of all that we behold
 Depends upon that mystery.
 Vain is the glory of the sky,
 The beauty vain of field and grove
 Unless while with admiring eye
 We gaze, we also learn to love.

*Sonnet**On the Projected Kendal and
Windermere Railway*

Is then no nook of English ground secure
 From rash assault? Schemes of retirement sown
 In youth, and mid the busy world kept pure
 As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
 Must perish;—how can this blight endure?
 And must he too the ruthless change bemoan
 Who scorns a false utilitarian lure
 Mid his paternal fields at random thrown?
 Baffle the threat, bright Scene, from Orrest-head^o
 Given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance:
 Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
 Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,
 Speak, passing winds: ye torrents, with your strong
 And constant voice, protest against the wrong.

'Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old'

Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old,
 Your patriot sons, to stem invasive war,
 Intrenched your brows; ye gloried in each scar:
 Now, for your shame, a Power, the thirst of Gold,
 That rules o'er Britain like a baneful star,
 Wills that your peace, your beauty, shall be sold,
 And clear way made for her triumphal car
 Through the beloved retreats your arms enfold!
 Heard YE that Whistle? As her long-linked Train
 Swept onwards, did the vision cross your view? 10
 Yes, ye were startled;—and, in balance true,
 Weighing the mischief with the promised gain,
 Mountains, and Vales, and Floods, I call on you
 To share the passion of a just disdain.

At Furness Abbey

Well have yon Railway Labourers to THIS ground
 Withdrawn for noon time rest. They sit, they walk
 Among the Ruins, but no idle talk
 Is heard; to grave demeanour all are bound;
 And from one voice a Hymn with tuneful sound
 Hallows once more the long-deserted Quire
 And thrills the old sepulchral earth, around.
 Others look up, and with fixed eyes admire
 That wide-spanned arch, wondering how it was raised,
 To keep, so high in air, its strength and grace: 10
 All seem to feel the spirit of the place,
 And by the general reverence God is praised:
 Profane Despoilers, stand ye not reprov'd,
 While thus these simple-hearted men are mov'd!

June 21st, 1845.

'I know an aged Man constrained to dwell'

I know an aged Man constrained to dwell
 In a large house of public charity,
 Where he abides, as in a Prisoner's cell,
 With numbers near, alas! no company.

When he could creep about, at will, though poor
 And forced to live on alms, this old Man fed
 A Redbreast, one that to his cottage door
 Came not, but in a lane partook his bread.

There, at the root of one particular tree,
 An easy seat this worn-out Labourer found
 While Robin pecked the crumbs upon his knee
 Laid one by one, or scattered on the ground.

10

Dear intercourse was theirs, day after day;
 What signs of mutual gladness when they met!
 Think of their common peace, their simple play,
 The parting moment and its fond regret.

Months passed in love that failed not to fulfil,
 In spite of season's change, its own demand,
 By fluttering pinions here and busy bill;
 There by caresses from a tremulous hand.

20

Thus in the chosen spot a tie so strong
 Was formed between the solitary pair,
 That when his fate had housed him 'mid a throng
 The Captive shunned all converse proffered there.

Wife, children, kindred, they were dead and gone;
 But, if no evil hap his wishes crossed,
 One living Stay was left, and in that one
 Some recompense for all that he had lost.

O that the good old Man had power to prove,
 By message sent through air or visible token,
 That still he loves the Bird, and still must love;
 That friendship lasts though fellowship is broken!

30

APPENDIX
WORDSWORTH BEFORE *LYRICAL BALLADS*

(1)

In the closing section of *The Prelude* Wordsworth invites Coleridge to cast his mind back to the summer when the two of them ‘wanton’d in wild poesy’ on ‘Quantock’s grassy hills’ and, ‘in delicious words, with happy heart’, told the stories of the Ancient Mariner and the Idiot Boy. It was fitting that this account of the ‘Growth of a Poet’s Mind’ should end with memories of that happy time, for the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 marked the real beginning of Wordsworth’s career. When, nearly twenty years later, Coleridge referred in *Biographia Literaria* to ‘the plan of the “Lyrical Ballads”’, he perhaps made the publication sound more carefully considered than it was, but the emphasis of his discussion reflected what was by then a widely acknowledged view—that the slim volume of 1798 had signalled the appearance of an original and clearly important poet. Nor was it just that sales and reviews gave substance to the idea of being ‘a Poet’. The middle-aged Wordsworth clearly felt that with the *Lyrical Ballads* he had ended his poetic apprenticeship: ‘nor was it until my 28th year, though I wrote much, that I could compose verses which were not in point of workmanship very deficient and faulty’.¹

The years before *Lyrical Ballads*, however, provided what he called in ‘Tintern Abbey’ ‘life and food | For future years’. Childhood amongst the lakes and mountains; the early loss of both parents; Cambridge followed by a walking tour to the Alps; fathering a child on Annette Vallon and commitment to the French cause; return to England and radical politics; alienation and rural retirement; reunion with Dorothy Wordsworth and intimacy with Coleridge—all these events and experiences were profoundly important and Wordsworth fed off them for the rest of his creative life. They added up to shape the poet of ‘Tintern Abbey’, but how? In what sequence, if any, of cause and effect? In one passage of *The Prelude* which struggles to make sense of the most conflicted period of his life in the mid-1790s, Wordsworth suggests that it may take another work, ‘some dramatic story’, to convey ‘What then I learned, or think I learned, of truth, | And the errors into which I was betrayed’.² It is a very revealing moment of concession. Even as the attempt ‘to analyse a soul’ was lengthening to thirteen books of blank verse,³ the analyst sensed that the task would need to be done again, perhaps in

¹ W to unknown correspondent, 21 October 1823.

² *The Prelude*, X, 879–82.

³ *Ibid.* II, 233.

another genre, perhaps even, in fact, that it could never be 'done'. Wordsworth's lyric and narrative poetry is the fruit of creative brooding over these formative years; *The Excursion*, the depiction of the Solitary in particular, is more obviously a revisiting of the ground.

The poetry and prose that dates from 1798, from the conception of *The Recluse*, and from Wordsworth's deliberate and decisive return to his native mountains at the end of 1799, feeds retrospectively on Wordsworth's formative years. But there is another record of Wordsworth's intellectual and poetic development up to the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*—the contemporaneous one. It is quite a substantial body of verse, but very little of it was published at or anywhere near the time of writing; none of it is first rate *as poetry*; much of it reveals a vigorous talent with language, without, however, suggesting that had Wordsworth died when Keats did, at age 26, he would have been anything more than a footnote to the literary history of the 1790s. This material is nonetheless of great interest because it represents Wordsworth's contemporaneous response to events, both public and private, to which he was later to give another, retrospective response, as he looked back over his formative years. No one should make first acquaintance with Wordsworth through the work of his early years, but any one who seeks to understand *The Prelude's* complex engagement with them will want to know more about his life and writing before 1798. The following brief account aims to give an overview.

(2)

Wordsworth was very fortunate in his schooling. Hawkshead Grammar School had a good library and he was encouraged to write verse—his earliest surviving composition, dating from his fourteenth year, is 'Lines Written as a School Exercise at Hawkshead'. Translation and imitation of Virgil, Horace, and Catullus provided exercise in solving problems of diction, rhythm, and tone. The two most important poems of Wordsworth's schooldays and undergraduate years, however, are *The Vale of Esthwaite* and *An Evening Walk*. The former, a long but fragmentary poem in octosyllabic couplets, celebrates the area around Hawkshead, and is notable for being Wordsworth's first ambitious attempt to present in verse aspects of his own immediate experience. The following lines recall the traumatic events around the death of his father and contrast strikingly with the later recollection in the different verse form of *Prelude*, XI, 345–89:

No spot but claims the tender tear
By joy or grief to memory dear.
One Evening when the wintry blast
Through the sharp Hawthorn whistling pass'd
And the poor flocks all pinch'd with cold
Sad drooping sought the mountain fold,

Long Long upon yon steepy rock
 Alone I bore the bitter shock;
 Long Long my swimming eyes did roam
 For little Horse to bear me home,
 To bear me, what avails my tear,
 To sorrow o'er a Father's bier.—
 Flow on, in vain thou hast not flow'd
 But eas'd me of a heavy load,
 For much it gives my soul relief
 To pay the mighty debt of Grief
 With sighs repeated o'er and o'er:
 I mourn because I mourn'd no more.⁴

An Evening Walk also celebrates the sights and sounds of the Lake District in nearly 450 lines of rhyming couplets, which demonstrate not only Wordsworth's virtuosity in deploying the standard verse form of the loco-descriptive tradition, but also through frequent allusion his immersion in the poetry of it. The following are characteristic lines. The quotation is taken from *An Evening Walk*, ed. James Averill (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 1984), 66.

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
 Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
 Where the duck dabbles mid the rustling sedge,
 And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
 Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
 Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
 And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
 Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.
 While by the scene compos'd the breast subsides,
 Nought wakens or disturbs its tranquil tides;
 Nought but the char that for the may-fly leaps,
 And breaks the mirror of the circling deeps;
 Or clock, that blind against the wanderer born
 Drops at his feet, and stills his droning horn.

In the Fenwick Note to *An Evening Walk* Wordsworth emphasized that the poem rested on personal experience: 'There is not an image in it which I have not observed.' His next substantial composition, *Descriptive Sketches*, similarly drew on his own recent experience of walking across and then settling in France, but in this poem, despite its title, the descriptive shades into the discursive didactic, as Wordsworth's meditation upon the politics of Europe since the French

⁴ From *Early Poems and Fragments, 1785-1797*, ed. Carol Landon and Jared Curtis (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 446; punctuation mine.

Revolution colours his recollection of crossing France and the Alps. It was published simultaneously with *An Evening Walk*, as a good-looking quarto, in January 1793. For the Cornell Series it has been edited by Eric Birdsall (1984).

(3)

War was declared between Britain and France in February 1793. What Wordsworth was later to call the 'ravage of this most unnatural strife' tore at him the more fiercely not only because he had left behind in France Annette Vallon and their newly born child, but also because, though he was a convert to the fundamental ideals of the French Revolution, Wordsworth was nonetheless rooted in English landscape, English poetry, and what he and 'all ingenuous youth' had believed were English concepts of Liberty.⁵ The torment of impotence and alienation he now suffered was to be recalled powerfully in Book Ten of *The Prelude*, but it also found expression—though not published expression—in his writings from the mid-1790s, the prose *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and the *Salisbury Plain* poems.

The catalyst for Wordsworth's *Letter* was an encomium on the British Constitution made by Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, in the course of a protest against the execution of the French King in January 1793. Writing as 'a Republican' Wordsworth tears into Watson (actually a clergyman of rather liberal views), but his target is also the Burke of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Witheringly surveying the British scene, with its aristocratic excesses licensed by the system of monarchy, its corrupt judiciary, and its failure to succour the needy, Wordsworth repeatedly urges the bishop as 'a philosopher' to take a larger view of Mankind's potential. The following passage is representative of both the argument and the tone of the whole:

You say, 'I fly with terror and abhorrence from the altar of liberty when I see it stained with the blood of the aged, of the innocent, of the defenceless sex; of the ministers of religion, and of the faithful adherents of the fallen monarch.' What! have you so little knowledge of the nature of man as to be ignorant, that a time of revolution is not the season of true Liberty. Alas! the obstinacy & perversion of men is such that she is too often obliged to borrow the very arms of despotism to overthrow him, and in order to reign in peace must establish herself by violence. She deplores such stern necessity, but the safety of the people, her supreme law, is her consolation. This apparent contradiction between the principles of liberty and the march of revolutions, this spirit of jealousy, of severity, of disquietude, of vexation, indispensable from a state of war between the oppressors and the oppressed, must of necessity confuse the ideas of morality and contract the benign exertion of the best affections of the human heart. Political virtues are developed at the expence of moral ones; and the sweet emotions

⁵ *The Prelude*, X, ll. 25, 232.

of compassion, evidently dangerous where traitors are to be punished, are too often altogether smothered. But is this a sufficient reason to reprobate a convulsion from which is to spring a fairer order of things? It is the province of education to rectify the erroneous notions which a habit of oppression, and even of resistance, may have created, and to soften this ferocity of character proceeding from a necessary suspension of the mild and social virtues; it belongs to her to create a race of men who, truly free, will look upon their fathers as only enfranchised.⁶

Why the *Letter* remained unpublished is not known, but one obvious reason is that publication of such a seditious utterance would most likely have landed its author in the dock on a charge of treason.

Wordsworth's sense of anger and moral outrage erupted again within the year in a poem called *Salisbury Plain* or, alternatively, *A Night on Salisbury Plain*. Reflecting his own recent experience of encountering Stonehenge while traversing the plain on foot—an event which *The Prelude*, XII, 312–53 suggests may have bordered on the hallucinatory—the poem brings into conjunction the long past and the present, to present the proposition as starkly as possible that the plight of the poor in contemporary Britain is little worse than it was when the Druids presided over human sacrifice on Salisbury Plain. The poem concludes with a clarion call:

Heroes of Truth pursue your march, uptear
Th'Opressor's dungeon from its deepest base;
High o'er the towers of Pride undaunted rear
Resistless in your might the herculean mace
Of Reason; let foul Error's monster race
Dragged from their dens start at the light with pain
And die; pursue your toils, till not a trace
Be left on earth of Superstition's reign,
Save that eternal pile which frowns on Sarum's plain.⁷

Much of *Salisbury Plain* is stridently hortatory, but the heart of the poem is a tale, told by a vagrant woman to another poor wretch as they shelter from the elements. A real-life story, 'faithfully taken from the report made to me of her own case by a friend', as Wordsworth later claimed in the Fenwick Notes, it became 'The Female Vagrant' (see above pp. 4–11) in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). Clearly sensing that in a poem of social protest one stanza capturing actual experience was more effective than ten of denunciation or exhortation, Wordsworth developed the interaction of the two sufferers when he reworked

⁶ *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I, 18–107, which also contains full scholarly apparatus of the text.

⁷ *Salisbury Plain*, in *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), including an account of the composition of all versions.

the poem in 1795 into *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*. The 'object' of the new version, he explained in a letter of 20 November 1795, was 'partly to expose the vices of the penal law and the calamities of war as they affect individuals', and it does so more elaborately than the earlier poem by counter-pointing the passive suffering of the Female Vagrant, war's victim, with that of the Sailor, driven to rob and murder. He is war's victim too, denied his reward for active service, press-ganged and then cast aside, but as the plot unfolds, we learn, as he does, how the deed he committed in desperation destroyed the life of his wife and children. With nothing left to live for, he welcomes the death sentence imposed by those whom the poet denounces as bearing the 'violated name' of 'Justice'.

As he recalled in Chapter Four of *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge was greatly impressed by the poem; Charles Lamb hurried through it 'not without delight'; and in 1796 and again in 1798 publication seemed likely. In fact the poem did not appear until the 1842 volume *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years*, and then only in a much-revised form entitled 'Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents Upon Salisbury Plain'.

(4)

Contempt for contemporary mores, particularly those of the wealthy and powerful, drove Wordsworth to join his friend Francis Wrangham in an attempt at modernizing Juvenal's Eighth Satire,⁸ but high-toned denunciation was not the way ahead for a young man struggling to make sense of both his own and his country's current condition. *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, on the other hand, though limited and in some ways regressive, did open up possibilities for artistic development. The poem is peopled by figures—the Sailor, his wife, and the Female Vagrant—who voice their own experience of suffering and loss, out of which the poem as a whole articulates a generally applicable statement about contemporary society. Individual experience, though, is its foundation, the dramatic interaction of victims telling their stories. With the gift of hindsight one can see that it was inevitable that Wordsworth's next large-scale work would be a play.

The Borderers, a five-act tragedy, written 1796–7, is a striking hybrid. Set in the English–Scottish borders in the thirteenth century, it reads at times, as Kenneth Johnston has wittily observed, 'as if Hamlet had stumbled into the plot of *Othello*, in a political situation out of *Macbeth*'s Scotland, all set down on the blasted heath from *King Lear*'.⁹ It draws on Schiller's *Robbers*—which Wordsworth knew in translation—and on Godwin's novel *Caleb Williams* (1794). Shaped on the one hand by at least two years of anguished soul-

⁸ Text and commentary in *Early Poems and Fragments, 1785–1797*, ed. Carol Landon and Jared Curtis (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 786–826.

⁹ Kenneth Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy* (New York: Norton, 1998), 498.

searching 1794–6 and on the other by Wordsworth's serious reading in political literature over that period, the drama is clearly a play of ideas and the fact that Wordsworth wrote a longish prose analysis of the motivation of the main villain character, Rivers, reinforces one's sense that *The Borderers* was conceived within the discourse of moral philosophy.

It is nonetheless a play and if it engages one's attention it is because of the urgency with which the characters express their sense of their own selves and situation. One of the band of borderers, Rivers, believes he has seen through the sham of codes of morality and so has stepped into freedom as a new kind of being. He is an ideologue, who claims to want to bring about the revolution in human affairs that would result from sweeping away superstition and humbug. Having deceitfully enticed Mortimer into crime, he seeks to assure him that he is partaker in a new order:

Today you have thrown off a tyranny
That lives but by the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of moralists and saints and lawgivers.
You have obeyed the only law that wisdom
Can ever recognize: the immediate law
Flashed from the light of circumstances
Upon an independent intellect.¹⁰

Quoting a few lines is hardly sufficient to characterize a five-act play, but this passage will serve to make two important points. The first is that, uttered from the mouth of an evidently damaged and incomplete man, the doctrine comes across as both alluring and wicked. When Rivers's words were quoted nearly ten years later at *Prelude*, X, 829 the superficiality of the allure was signalled even more clearly, for now Wordsworth was declaring unequivocally his judgement on the post-Revolutionary mid-1790s and on his own immersion in contemporary ideological disputation:

This was the time when, all things tending fast
To depravation, the Philosophy
The promised to abstract the hopes of man
Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth
For ever in a purer element
Found ready welcome. Tempting region that
For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,
Where passions had the privilege to work,
And never hear the sound of their own names.¹¹

¹⁰ *The Borderers*, ed. Robert Osborn (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1982), 210.

¹¹ *The Prelude*, X, 805–13.

The second point is simply that Rivers speaks blank verse. Of course he does: this is a Shakespearean play. But that much of the verse of *The Borderers* sounds like skilful pastiche should not obscure the importance of the fact that at this moment Wordsworth was trying out blank verse at length. He had already published a sonnet and long poems in rhyming couplets. In the Salisbury Plain poems he had demonstrated mastery of the Spenserian stanza. Blank verse, though, was a challenge of a different order. It was not just that, 'in blank verse, the language suffered more distortion to keep it out of prose than any inconvenience to be apprehended from the shackles and circumspection of rhyme'—an observation of Dr Johnson's which Wordsworth took the trouble to copy out—but that it was the form excelled in by the two greatest poets of the language: Shakespeare and Milton. Not a line of eighteenth-century blank verse but showed the impress of these two giants and *The Borderers* was no exception. In Wordsworth's next ambitious composition, however, the verse sounds neither Shakespearean nor Miltonic. With *The Ruined Cottage* the cadence of Wordsworth's most impressive medium from 'Tintern Abbey' to *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* emerged.

(5)

By the time the Covent Garden management turned down *The Borderers* in December 1797 (it was eventually revised and published in *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years* in 1842), Wordsworth was already at work on a quite different project. Whereas the tragedy exploits suspense, confusion, and plot complication, the narrative poem *The Ruined Cottage* works through simple, large effects and in this it anticipates those poems in *Lyrical Ballads* in which 'the feeling . . . developed gives importance to the action and the situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling'.¹²

Action and situation in *The Ruined Cottage* are, of course, significant. Like the Salisbury Plain poems, this one deals with human suffering, manifesting specifically the same concern with the 'calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject'.¹³ Living in Dorset from 1795 to 1797 Wordsworth had seen at first hand how close to the margin of survival was the life lived by most of the peasantry—'the country people here are wretchedly poor', he reported soon after settling there—and in *The Ruined Cottage* he embodies that remark in a story whose impact is all the greater because it is made clear that it is not exceptional but commonplace. Like many others of the labouring class, Robert and Margaret, an industrious and God-fearing couple, and their

¹² Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). See above, p. 59. There is no need to quote a representative passage here because the earliest completed version of the poem is printed above, pp. 147–60.

¹³ 'Advertisement' to *Guilt and Sorrow* in 1842.

family are doomed once natural disasters, bad weather, and poor harvest are intensified by the onset of war.

The Ruined Cottage, however, is more than a reprise of the social protest of the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and the Salisbury Plain poems. From its earliest stage the poem gave voice to three figures, the Poet, the Pedlar, and Margaret, but as it grew over 1797–8 what mattered most to the poet, to judge from the complexity of the compositional history, was developing the significance of their interplay. Margaret—a fictional character in a story told by another fictional character—traumatized, cannot understand what assails her. As he narrates her story, the Pedlar—the other fictional character—records both his initial and his maturing response to the facts of it. And the Poet—who is of course both fictional and non-fictional—articulates his response both to the facts of the tragedy and to them being put into poetry.¹⁴ This is a poem in which the Poet asks the narrator (and actually himself, of course) what good is poetry? What, if anything, can storytelling in verse do for human beings, whose one common experience is suffering?

In June 1797 Coleridge joined the Wordsworths at Racedown and, as Dorothy reported, ‘The first thing that was read after he came was William’s new poem, *The Ruined Cottage*, with which he was much delighted.’ The conversation about poetry and philosophy and religion that began that day determined the shape of Wordsworth’s career. It convinced him then that he and Coleridge were two poets who ‘by different roads at length have gained | The self-same bourne’,¹⁵ but also that the arrival at the one bourne was the starting-point for a further journey. When he looked back some years later at the close of *The Prelude* to that *annus mirabilis*, 1797–8, Wordsworth did so with some confidence, knowing that *Lyrical Ballads* was now in its third edition. He had been right to think it his turning-point year. And that is why this selection begins with the first poem of Wordsworth’s in the slim volume of 1798.

¹⁴ All the stages of the poem’s development are represented in *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar*, ed. James Butler (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1979).

¹⁵ *The Prelude*, II, 468–9.

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NOTES

Notes have been kept to a minimum. Date of composition and publication are always included, as are many of the notes appended to the poems by Wordsworth himself. I have quoted generously from the notes Wordsworth composed (but did not publish) late in his life, the Fenwick Notes—so named after his friend Isabella Fenwick. I have given information only where it is essential for understanding the meaning of a passage, but have been more liberal with references to the responses of Wordsworth's friends.

The notes have been kept as uncluttered as possible by limiting references to letters, diary, and notebook entries simply to date or entry number. Full citation of the standard editions used can be found in the List of Abbreviations. A statement of the date of publication, e.g. 1807, always refers to one of Wordsworth's principal volumes of poetry, which are:

- 1793(i) *An Evening Walk*
- 1793(ii) *Descriptive Sketches*
- 1798 *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* (1 vol)
- 1800 *Lyrical Ballads, with Other Poems* (2 vols)
- 1807 *Poems, in Two Volumes*
- 1814 *The Excursion*
- 1815 *Poems* (2 vols, Wordsworth's first Collected Edition)
- 1820 *The Miscellaneous Poems of William Wordsworth* (4 vols)
- 1820 *The River Duddon . . . and Other Poems* (1 vol)
- 1822 *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1 vol)
- 1822 *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent. 1820* (1 vol)
- 1827 *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (5 vols)
- 1835 *Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems* (1 vol)
- 1836 *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (6 vols)
- 1842 *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years* (1 vol)
- 1845 *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (1 vol)
- 1849–50 *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (6 vols)

The following notes frequently refer the reader elsewhere for information which it is not practical to include in the annotation to a single-volume edition such as this one. In order to maximize their usefulness to as wide a range of readers as possible, the notes refer to the two standard scholarly editions of Wordsworth's poetry. The Cornell Wordsworth, general editor Stephen M. Parrish (24 vols; 1975–2007) has superseded the Oxford *Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (5 vols; 1941–9), but as the Cornell edition is generally found only in research libraries, I have thought it useful sometimes to cite the earlier Oxford edition

as well. The De Selincourt–Darbishire edition is cited as *PW* followed by volume number. The Cornell volumes mentioned sufficiently often to warrant abbreviated citation forms are as follows. Occasional reference to other volumes in the Cornell series will carry full citation in the note.

Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797–1800, ed. James Butler and Karen Green (1992): cited as Butler and Green.

Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800–1807 (1983): cited as Curtis, *P2V*.
The Excursion, ed. Sally Bushell, James A. Butler, and Michael C. Jaye (2007): cited as *Excursion 2007*.

Shorter Poems, 1807–1820, ed. Carl H. Ketcham (1989): cited as *Shorter Poems*.

Last Poems, 1821–1850, ed. Jared Curtis (1999): cited as *Last Poems*.

Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820–1845, ed. Geoffrey Jackson (2004): cited as *Sonnet Series*.

The Thirteen-Book Prelude, ed. Mark L. Reed (2 vols; 1991). Cited as Reed, *Prelude*.

All quotation from the Fenwick Notes (cited as IF notes) has been taken from the standard edition, Jared Curtis (ed.), *The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth* (1993; rev electronic edn, 2007). The same material, though differing occasionally in presentation of accidentals, will generally also be found in the two standard editions of the poetry mentioned above.

THE POEMS

FROM *LYRICAL BALLADS* (1798)

Lyrical Ballads was the result of protracted and somewhat confused negotiations with the publisher Joseph Cottle over the summer of 1798. For details see Butler and Green, esp. pp. 10–15. The anonymous volume was published in October 1798, in an edition of 500 copies. Containing 19 poems by Wordsworth and 4 by Coleridge, it opened with ‘The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere’ and concluded with ‘Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey’. The poems were prefaced by the following ‘Advertisement’:

It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The evidence of this fact is to be sought, not in the writings of Critics, but in those of Poets themselves.

The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for

poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that such readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way of their gratification; but that, while they are perusing this book, they should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents; and if the answer be favorable to the author's wishes, that they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed: it must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. It is apprehended, that the more conversant the reader is with our elder writers, and with those in modern times who have been the most successful in painting manners and passions, the fewer complaints of this kind will he have to make.

An accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself; but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire. Of the other poems in the collection, it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends. The poem of the Thorn, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story. The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere was professedly written in imitation of the style, as well as of the spirit of the elder poets; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these three last centuries. The lines entitled *Expostulation and Reply*, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy.

Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree

Composed April-June 1797. Published 1798. The tree, W recalled in the IF note, was on 'my favourite walk in the evening during the latter part of my

school-time'. For an account of the disappointed man, Revd William Braithwaite, see *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, 256-64, but note Woof's important caution (p. 264) against over-literal identification of this and other figures with real people. C clearly alludes to the poem in a letter c.17 July 1797: 'I am as much a Pangloss as ever—only less *contemptuous*, than I used to be, when I argue how unwise it is to feel contempt for any thing—.'

ll. 32-3. See DW journal entry 26 Feb. 1798: 'We lay sidelong upon the turf, and gazed on the landscape till it melted into more than natural loveliness' (*Journals*, 147).

The Female Vagrant

Composed 1793-4. Published 1798. The first version of this poem formed part of the longer, unpublished *Salisbury Plain*. For discussion and text see *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (1975). In the IF note to *Guilt and Sorrow*, W says of the Female Vagrant, 'All that relates to her sufferings as a sailor's wife in America, and her condition of mind during her voyage home, were faithfully taken from the report made to me of her own case by a friend who had been subjected to the same trials and affected in the same way.'

l. 74. artist's trade: work as a skilled manual worker.

l. 117. devoted: doomed.

ll. 118 ff. This stanza was omitted from the 1802 printing of *Lyrical Ballads* on. Its attack on the soldiery, while consonant with W's sentiments in the early 1790s, was out of keeping with those of the early 1800s, when, conscious of the danger to his country posed by the threatened French invasion, W had published patriotic sonnets and was bearing arms with the local militia.

Goody Blake and Harry Gill

Composed 7-13 March 1798. Published 1798. For the incident W drew on Erasmus Darwin's *Zoönomia; or, the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-6), which he had borrowed from Cottle, his publisher friend, in March 1798. See Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads 1798* (1976), 234-40 for quotation from Darwin and discussion. W was aware, of course, at first hand of the distress of the peasantry. See DW's letter of 30 Nov. 1795: 'The peasants are miserably poor; their cottages are shapeless structures (I may almost say) of wood and clay—indeed they are not at all beyond what might be expected in savage life.'

Lines Written at a Small Distance from my House

Composed 1-10 March 1798. Published 1798. From 1845 entitled 'To My Sister'. W noted: 'Composed in front of Alfoxden House. My little boy messenger on this occasion was the son of Basil Montagu' (IF note). He was also called Basil in fact, not Edward, and appears again in 'Anecdote for

Fathers'. This poem, no less than the more complex 'Tintern Abbey' published in the same volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, expresses some of the fundamental convictions on which the whole of W's poetry is based.

Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman

Composed April–May 1798. Published 1798. Greatly revised in later editions. W noted: 'This old man had been huntsman to the Squires of Alfoxden . . . The old man's cottage stood upon the common a little way from the entrance to Alfoxden Park . . . It is unnecessary to add, the fact was as mentioned in the poem, and I have, after an interval of 45 years, the image of the old man as fresh before my eyes as if I had seen him yesterday. The expression when the hounds were out, "I dearly love their voice" was word for word from his own lips' (IF note). Simon Lee followed the hounds on foot. For speculation on the significance of the 'hall of Ivor' and the poem's setting in Cardiganshire, in Wales, see Butler and Green, 346.

Anecdote for Fathers

Composed April–May 1798. Published 1798. For the fuller context of the poem see note to 'The Tables Turned'. On 7 March 1796 W reported amusingly of little Basil Montagu, the child of the poem: 'Basil is quite well quant au physique mais pour le moral il-y-a bien à craindre. Among other things he lies like a little devil.'

We Are Seven

Composed April–May 1798. Published 1798. W noted:

The little Girl who is the heroine I met within the area of Goodrich Castle in the year 1793. Having left the Isle of Wight & crost Salisbury Plain . . . I proceeded by Bristol up the Wye, and so on to N. Wales to the Vale of Clwydd . . . I composed it while walking in the grove of Alfoxden. My friends will not deem it too trifling to relate that while walking to and fro I composed the last stanza first, having begun with the last line. When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my Sister, and said, 'A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task was finished.' I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza thus:

A little child, dear brother Jem,—

I objected to the rhyme, dear brother Jem, as being ludicrous, but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching in our friend James Tobin's name, who was familiarly called Jem. (IF note)

The whole note, too long to be printed here, is of great importance, for in it W recalls the circumstances in which *Lyrical Ballads* was conceived, and the composition of 'The Ancient Mariner'. See also W's note to *Ode* ('There was a time') for remarks on a child's conception of death.

Lines Written in Early Spring

Composed c.12 April 1798. Published 1798. W's note, composed more than forty years after the poem, indicates his astonishing power of recall for such moments as are the basis of this poem:

Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the *Comb*, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a chosen resort of mine. The brook fell down a sloping rock so as to make a waterfall considerable for that country, and, across the pool below, had fallen a tree, an ash if I rightly remember, from which rose perpendicularly boughs in search of light intercepted by the deep shade above. The boughs bore leaves of green that for want of sunshine had faded into almost lily-white: and, from the underside of this natural sylvan bridge depended long & beautiful tresses of ivy which waved gently in the breeze that might poetically speaking be called the breath of the water-fall. This motion varied of course in proportion to the power of water in the brook. (IF note)

'Alford' in the IF note is mis-written for 'Holford'.

The Thorn

Composed c.19 March 1798. Published 1798. W noted that the poem

Arose out of my observing, on the ridge of Quantock Hill, on a stormy day, a thorn which I had often passed in calm and bright weather without noticing it. I said to myself, 'Cannot I by some invention do as much to make this thorn permanently an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment.' I began the poem accordingly and composed it with great rapidity. (IF note)

For form and subject W was indebted to William Taylor's translation of Gottfried Bürger's *Des Pfarrers Tochter von Taubenhain* and possibly to a version of the Scottish ballad 'The Cruel Mother' also. See Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment*, 217–32 and 277–88 for discussion of Bürger's great popularity and influence and for a text of Taylor's translations. See further Butler and Green, 352.

In the *Advertisement to Lyrical Ballads* 1798 W pointed out that "'The Thorn" is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story'. Robert Southey, a friend who ought to have understood the aim

of the poem, described 'The Thorn' as a failure—'he who personates tiresome loquacity, becomes tiresome himself'—in the *Critical Review*, October 1798 and for the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* only W further defended his narrative method and the poem's purpose:

This Poem ought to have been preceded by an introductory Poem, which I have been prevented from writing by never having felt myself in a mood when it was probable that I should write it well.—The character which I have here introduced speaking is sufficiently common. The Reader will perhaps have a general notion of it, if he has ever known a man, a Captain of a small trading vessel for example, who being past the middle age of life, had retired upon an annuity or small independent income to some village or country town of which he was not a native, or in which he had not been accustomed to live. Such men having little to do become credulous and talkative from indolence; and from the same cause, and other predisposing causes by which it is probable that such men may have been affected, they are prone to superstition. On which account it appeared to me proper to select a character like this to exhibit some of the general laws by which superstition acts upon the mind. Superstitious men are almost always men of slow faculties and deep feelings; their minds are not loose but adhesive; they have a reasonable share of imagination, by which word I mean the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements; but they are utterly destitute of fancy, the power by which pleasure and surprize are excited by sudden varieties of situation and by accumulated imagery.

It was my wish in this poem to shew the manner in which such men cleave to the same ideas; and to follow the turns of passion, always different, yet not palpably different, by which their conversation is swayed. I had two objects to attain; first, to represent a picture which should not be unimpressive yet consistent with the character that should describe it, secondly, while I adhered to the style in which such persons describe, to take care that words, which in their minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey passion to Readers who are not accustomed to sympathize with men feeling in that manner or using such language. It seemed to me that this might be done by calling in the assistance of Lyrical and rapid Metre. It was necessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly; yet I hoped, that, by the aid of the metre, to those who should at all enter into the spirit of the Poem, it would appear to move quickly. The Reader will have the kindness to excuse this note as I am sensible that an introductory Poem is necessary to give this Poem its full effect.

Upon this occasion I will request permission to add a few words closely connected with THE THORN and many other Poems in these Volumes. There is a numerous class of readers who imagine that the same words cannot be repeated without tautology: this is a great error: virtual tautology is much oftener produced by using different words when the meaning is exactly

the same. Words, a Poet's words more particularly, ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling and not measured by the space which they occupy upon paper. For the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings: now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language. During such efforts there will be a craving in the mind, and as long as it is unsatisfied the Speaker will cling to the same words, or words of the same character. There are also various other reasons why repetition and apparent tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind. Among the chief of these reasons is the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion. And further, from a spirit of fondness, exultation, and gratitude, the mind luxuriates in the repetition of words which appear successfully to communicate its feelings. The truth of these remarks might be shewn by innumerable passages from the Bible and from the impassioned poetry of every nation.

'Awake, awake Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song:
Arise Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou Son of Abinoam.
At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he
bowed, he fell; where he bowed there he fell down dead.
Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the
Wheels of his Chariot?'

Judges, Chap. 5th. Verses 12th, 27th, and part of 28th.

See also the whole of that tumultuous and wonderful Poem.

The Last of the Flock

Composed April-May 1798. Published 1798. According to W's IF note, 'The incident occurred in the village of Holford, close by Alfoxden,' but not to W, as a letter of c.24 Sept. 1836 makes clear: 'But for my own part, notwithstanding what has here been said in verse, I never in my whole life saw a man weep *alone* in the roads; but a friend of mine *did* see this poor man weeping *alone*, with the Lamb, the last of his flock, in his arms.'

'The Last of the Flock', 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill', and 'Simon Lee' are not merely embodiments of the literary theory outlined in the *Advertisement to Lyrical Ballads* (1798), but examples of the growing distresses afflicting the rural poor in the years after the outbreak of war in 1793. Harvests failed, prices rose, and an increase in vagrancy led to intensified demands for a reform of the Poor Laws. Many of the *Lyrical Ballads* sustain the social protest, based on observation, which is expressed most stridently in 'Salisbury Plain' and W's *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (see *Prose*, i. 29-66). 'The Last of the Flock' anticipates 'Michael' in dramatizing W's conviction that the dignity of the poor depends on their being able to maintain an independent life (see notes to 'Michael').

The Idiot Boy

Composed between early March and *c.*16 May 1798. Published 1798. It is now clear from evidence of composition that both W and C tended in later life to impute to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) a greater ideological coherence than it, in fact, possessed. There is no reason, however, to doubt that this poem was composed under the intention that W should choose ‘subjects . . . from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such, as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves’ (*Biographia Literaria*, ch. xiv).

In a very important letter to John Wilson of 7 June 1802, W defended the language and subject-matter of *Lyrical Ballads* and mentioned in particular ‘The Idiot Boy’. Declaring that he had written it ‘with exceeding delight and pleasure’, W added: ‘I have indeed often looked upon the conduct of fathers and mothers of the lower classes of society towards Idiots as the great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love.’ The poem’s composition is recalled when the poet looks back to the *annus mirabilis* in *The Prelude*, XIII, 399–402, and ability to enjoy ‘The Idiot Boy’ remained for him a touchstone of a reader’s sympathy with his work. See Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (1998), 121–2.

Expostulation and Reply

Composed *c.*23 May 1798. Published 1798. In the *Advertisement* to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) W says that this and the following poem ‘arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy’. This is usually taken to refer to William Hazlitt (1778–1830), who records in his essay *My First Acquaintance with Poets* that, while visiting Alfoxden in May/June 1798, he ‘got into a metaphysical argument with Wordsworth . . . in which we neither of us succeeded in making ourselves perfectly clear and intelligible’. By 1798 W’s antipathy to systematic exposition of moral philosophy was fully developed (see especially *Prelude*, X–XII) and he had begun an *Essay on Morals* in which he declares: ‘I know no book or system of moral philosophy written with sufficient power to melt into our affections, to incorporate itself with the blood and vital juices of our minds, and thence to have any influence worth our notice’ (*Prose*, I, 99–107).

ll. 13–15. The scene is in the Lake District and not Somerset. For Matthew see the note to ‘If Nature, for a favorite Child’.

The Tables Turned

Composed *c.*23 May 1798. Published 1798. See note to previous poem. This poem is so central that reference from it could be made to almost all of W’s mature work. In 1797–8 the Ws and C were concerned not only with

questions of perception, which is obvious from C's 'conversation poems', from 'Tintern Abbey' and the description of the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage*, but especially with the question of how best to educate a young mind. The Ws were looking after Basil Montagu and were bringing him up, as DW explained in a letter of 19 March 1797, in a system

so simple that in this age of systems you will hardly be likely to follow it. We teach him nothing at present but what he learns from the evidence of his senses. He has an insatiable curiosity which we are always careful to satisfy to the best of our ability. It is directed to everything he sees, the sky, the fields, trees, shrubs, corn, the making of tools, carts, etc.

For an extended later statement of W's unshaken faith in Nature as wise teacher see his 'Reply to "Mathetes"' (1809–10), *Prose*, II, 1–41. In 1797 it was suggested that W should oversee Thomas Wedgwood's scheme for educating a genius through strict control of sensory experience. For an account of this bizarre suggestion see Moorman, I, 332–7 and W's attack on infant prodigies in *The Prelude*, V, 290–449.

Old Man Travelling

Composed between late 1796 and early June 1797. Published 1798. From 1800 the title became 'Animal Tranquillity and Decay, a Sketch', the last two words being dropped in 1845. Lines 15–20 were omitted after *Lyrical Ballads* (1805). Surviving MSS corroborate W's note: 'If I recollect right these verses were an overflowing from the old Cumberland Beggar' (IF note).

Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

Composed 11–13 July 1798. Published 1798. W noted:

No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of 4 or 5 days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. (IF note)

In the 1800 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* W added the note: 'I have not ventured to call this Poem an Ode; but it was written with a hope that in the transitions, and in the impassioned music of the versification would be found the principal requisites of that species of composition.' W is echoing C's 1796 dedication to his 'Ode on the Departing Year' where he writes of 'that impetuosity of Transition, and that Precipitation of Fancy and Feeling, which are the *essential* excellencies of the sublimer Ode'. For further annotation see Butler and Green, 357–9, and a later, very important article, Charles J. Rzepka, 'Pictures of the Mind: Iron and Charcoal, "Ouzy" Tides and "Vagrant Dwellers" at Tintern, 1798', *Studies in Romanticism* 42 (2003), 155–85.

l. 1. W visited Tintern in August 1793 and returned 10–13 July 1798.

l. 18. Moorman, I, 402, points out that William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye... Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (1782), observes: 'Many of the furnaces, on the banks of the river consume charcoal, which is manufactured on the spot; and the smoke, which is frequently seen issuing from the sides of the hills; and spreading its thin veil over a part of them, beautifully breaks their lines, and unites them with the sky' (p. 12).

l. 25. Heather Glenn suggests that W is referring 'to the Molyneux problem, that fundamental problem of eighteenth-century perceptual theory'—what would a blind person "see" were sight suddenly to be restored? *Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads* (1983), 253–4.

l. 49. C's *Notebooks* entry 921 meditates on the meaning of this line.

ll. 64–6. Not a new idea for W. While in the Alps in 1790 he had rejoiced that 'At this moment when many of these landscapes are floating before my mind, I feel a high enjoyment in reflecting that scarce a day of my life will pass in which I shall not derive some happiness from these images' (letters 6 and 16, September 1790).

ll. 67–84. See *The Prelude*, XI, 186–94.

ll. 74–5. See *The Prelude*, I–II, for description of these pleasures.

l. 97. 'Interfused' is used in a similar context in C's *Religious Musings* (1796), 423.

l. 107. W notes the borrowing from Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742–5), VI, 427, 'And half create the wondrous world they see'.

l. 129. In a poem of such joyous confidence the reference in 'evil tongues' to the Milton of *Paradise Lost*, VII, 25–6 may seem odd. But see the description of the poet amidst 'this time of dereliction and dismay' which closes *The Prelude*, II, 435–66.

FROM LYRICAL BALLADS (1800)

Lyrical Ballads (1800) is generally referred to as the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. Strictly speaking the two volumes are a second edition of volume I and a first edition of volume II. The ordering of volume I has changed, with 'The Ancient Mariner' becoming the penultimate poem before 'Tintern Abbey'. Volume II consists entirely of new poetry by Wordsworth and both volumes carry his name on the title-page. Volume I opens with a prose Preface. The collection was published in January 1801, with print runs of 750 for volume I and 1,000 for volume II. The Latin title-page motto, drawn most probably from John Selden's forward to Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, is translated, 'How utterly unsuited to your taste, Papinianus.' Its significance remains not entirely clear—see Butler and Green's highly detailed note on the topic, p. 377.

Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800 and 1802)

For the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800—enlarged to two volumes and unlike the one volume of 1798 announcing the name of the poet—W wrote his first sustained critical essay. Lamb thought it a mistake to print the Preface together with the poems, as its dogmas ‘associate a *diminishing idea* with the Poems which follow, as having been written for *Experiment* on the public taste, more than having sprung (as they must have done) from living and daily circumstances’ (30 Jan. 1801), but W did not adopt his idea of publishing a separate critical treatise and for the next edition of 1802 he both revised the Preface and added an Appendix enlarging on his ideas about Poetic Diction.

The two Prefaces, 1800 and 1802, ought to be read as independent statements and ideally should be printed separately in full. Since space considerations prevent the ideal, in this text the major additions of 1802 have been enclosed in square brackets, much the most important being the passage between p. 63 and p. 70. On the significance of the changes W made between 1800 and 1802 see W. J. B. Owen, *Wordsworth as Critic* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), esp. 57–109.

‘Wordsworth’s Preface is half a child of my own Brain’ was C’s description of the 1800 Preface in a letter of 29 July 1802, and undoubtedly it does reflect the intellectual intimacy which gave birth to the great poetry of 1797–8. The additions to 1802, however, indicate the growing self-confidence of the poet who had completed the first version of his autobiography and declared his poetic aims at the end of *Home at Grasmere*. In the letter just cited C declared that ‘I am far from going all lengths with Wordsworth. . . . On the contrary, I rather suspect that somewhere or other there is a radical Difference in our theoretical opinions respecting Poetry—this I shall endeavour to go to the Bottom of.’ Much of *Biographia Literaria* (1817) consists of that endeavour, by which time W had added to his own corpus of aesthetic theorizing—and to C’s confusion—with a prefatory essay to his *Poems* (1815). See below pp. 601–13.

Appendix to the Preface (1802)

See Preface, p. 60—‘of what is usually called poetic diction’.

Hart-Leap Well

Composed early 1800. Published 1800. W noted:

The first eight stanzas were composed extempore one winter evening in the cottage; when, after having tired myself with labouring at an awkward passage in ‘The Brothers’, I started with a sudden impulse to this to get rid of the other, and finished it in a day or two. My sister and I had past the place a few weeks before in our wild winter journey from Sockburn on the banks of the Tees to Grasmere. A peasant whom we met near the spot

told us the story so far as concerned the name of the well, and the hart, and pointed out the stones. (IF note)

W and DW saw the spot 17 December 1799. See also the account in *Home at Grasmere*, 236–56. Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment*, 232, points to the poem's formal origins in Bürger's *Der milde Jäger*.

l. 97. See *Othello*, I.iii.135. For W's exploitation of narrative *not* garnished with event see, e.g. 'Simon Lee', 'Michael', 11. 16–39, and 'The Idiot Boy'.

l. 98. Textual evidence suggests that 'curl' may be a mis-writing of 'curb'. From 1802 it read 'freeze'. See Butler and Green, 136 and 378.

The Brothers

Composed early 1800. Published 1800. As so many of W's poems, this originates in a story told to W in an encounter while wandering. In November–December W, C, and, until 5 November, John Wordsworth, toured the Lake District. On 12 November in Ennerdale they heard the story of Jerome Bowman who died after breaking his leg near Scale Force and of his son, who 'broke his neck . . . by falling off a Crag—supposed to have layed down & slept—but walked in his sleep, & so came to this crag, & fell off—This was at Proud Knot on the mountain called Pillar up Ennerdale—his Pike staff stuck midway & stayed there till it rotted away' (C's *Notebooks* entry 541). For the imaginative hold such stories always had on W see *The Prelude*, VIII, *passim*: 'But images of danger and distress | And suffering, these took deepest hold on me | Man suffering among awful powers and forms' (211–13). W intended in this and other poems to renew the genre of the Pastoral by writing about real shepherds, whose virtues he described in a letter to the statesman Charles James Fox, quoted in notes to 'Michael'. W's own notes to the poem in 1800 are quoted verbatim below, as '—W'.

l. 1. 'This Poem was intended to be the concluding poem of a series of pastorals the scene of which was laid among the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland. I mention this to apologise for the abruptness with which the poem begins'—W. For a very important consideration of the importance of Pastoral to W, see Fiona Stafford, 'Plain Living and Ungarnish'd Stories: Wordsworth and the Survival of Pastoral', *Review of English Studies*, NS. 59 (2007), 118–133.

ll. 53–62. 'This description of the calenture is sketch'd from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose by Mr. Gilbert, author of the Hurricane'—W. *The Hurricane* (1796), by William Gilbert (1760–1825).

ll. 137–43. 'The impressive circumstance here described, actually took place some years ago in this country, upon an eminence called Kidstow Pike, one of the highest of the mountains that surround Hawes-water. The summit of the pike was stricken by lightning; and every trace of one of the fountains disappeared, while the other continued to flow as before'—W.

ll. 180-1. 'There is not anything more worthy of remark in the manners of the inhabitants of these mountains, than the tranquillity, I might say indifference, with which they think and talk upon the subject of death. Some of the country church-yards, as here described, do not contain a single tombstone, and most of them have a very small number'—W.

ll. 305-7. 'The Great Gavel, so called I imagine, from its resemblance to the Gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale and Borrowdale. The Leeza is a River which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale: on issuing from the Lake it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont'—W.

'Strange fits of passion I have known'

This and the two following poems were composed late 1798 and published 1800. Much profitless speculation has attempted to identify the original girl in these 'Lucy' poems and to unravel W's psyche. For a review of it, see Butler and Green, 383-4. In fairness it must be said, however, that C started it, in a letter of 6 April 1799: 'Some months ago Wordsworth transmitted to me a most sublime Epitaph ["A slumber . . ."] whether it had any reality, I cannot say.—Most probably in some gloomier moment he had fancied the moment in which his Sister might die.'

Song 'She dwelt among th' untrodden ways'

See previous note.

'A slumber did my spirit seal'

See previous note.

The Oak and the Broom

Composed 1800, by 4 August. Published 1800. W noted: 'Suggested upon the mountain pathway that leads from Upper Rydal to Grasmere. The ponderous block of stone, which is mentioned in the poem, remains I believe to this day, a good way up Nab-Scar. Broom grows under it and in many places on the side of the precipice' (IF note). Moorman, I, 480 suggests that W had in mind John Langhorne's *Fables of Flora* (1771), which contains poems with such titles as 'The Sunflower and the Ivy', 'The Violet and the Pansy', 'The Wilding and the Broom'. W valued Langhorne (1735-79), like himself a native of the Lakes, as one who, in *The Country Justice*, had 'fairly brought the Muse into the Company of common life' (letter 15 Jan. 1837).

Lucy Gray

Composed between 6 October 1798 and 23 February 1799. Published 1800. W noted that the poem

was founded on a circumstance told me by my Sister, of a little girl who not far from Halifax in Yorkshire was bewildered in a snow-storm. Her footsteps were traced by her parents to the middle of the lock of a canal, and no other vestige of her, backward or forward, could be traced. The body however was found in the canal. The way in which the incident was treated & the spiritualising of the character might furnish hints for contrasting the imaginative influences which I have endeavoured to throw over common life with Crabbe's matter-of-fact style of treating subjects of the same kind. (IF note)

l. 20 In 1816 Crabb Robinson recorded W's explanation that 'He removed from his poem [*Lucy Gray*] all that pertained to art, and it being his object to exhibit poetically entire *solitude*, he represents his child as observing the day-moon which no town or village girl would ever notice' (*Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and their Writers*, ed. Edith J. Morley, 3 vols (1938), I, 190).

The Idle Shepherd-Boys

Composed and published 1800. In the IF note W recalled triumphantly:

When Coleridge & Southey were walking together upon the Fells, Southey observed that, if I wished to be considered a faithful painter of rural manners, I ought not to have said that my Shepherd-Boys trimmed their rushen hats as described in the poem. Just as the words had passed his lips two boys appeared with the very plant entwined round their hats.

Dungeon-Gill Force is in Langdale. W's note in 1800 explained: 'Gill in the dialect of Cumberland and Westmoreland is a short and for the most part a steep narrow valley, with a stream running through it. Force is the word universally employed in these dialects for Waterfall.'

Poor Susan

Composed late 1798. Published 1800. The last stanza was dropped from 1802. The poem, W recalled 'arose out of my observation of the affecting music of these birds hanging in this way in the London Streets during the freshness & stillness of the Spring morning' (IF note). The streets mentioned are all in the City, the financial and mercantile heart of London. Is Susan a servant girl, as Charles Lamb insisted she must be, or an unfortunate, perhaps a prostitute, as many twentieth-century critics have maintained? See Peter Manning's authoritative 'Placing Poor Susan: Wordsworth and the New Historicism', *Reading Romantics: Text and Context* (1990), 300–20.

Lines written on a Tablet in a School

Composed late 1798. Published 1800. Titled ‘Matthew’ from 1836–7. W noted:

Such a tablet as is here spoken of continued to be preserved in Hawkshead School, though the inscriptions were not brought down to our time. This and other poems connected with Matthew would not gain by a literal detail of facts. Like the Wanderer in the Excursion, this Schoolmaster was made up of several both of his class & men of other occupations. (IF note)

W’s caution against over-literalness is important, but T. W. Thompson’s attempt in *Wordsworth’s Hawkshead* to identify possible originals for Matthew gives a fascinating glimpse into the world of the schoolboy Wordsworth. See pp. 151–66.

The Two April Mornings

Composed late 1798. Published 1800. See note to poem above.

l. 30 The river Derwent flows through Cockermouth, W’s birthplace in the north of the Lake District.

The Fountain

Composed late 1798. Published 1800.

Nutting

Composed October–December 1798. Published 1800. The textual history of ‘Nutting’ before its publication is too complicated to go into here. See Reed, I, 331–2, and Butler and Green, 218 and 391–2. W recalled that the poem was ‘intended as part of a poem on my own life, but struck out as not being wanted there’ (IF note). It belongs with W’s other recollections of childhood pleasures. ‘Like most of my schoolfellows’, W remarked, ‘I was an impassioned nutter. . . . These verses arose out of the remembrance of feelings I had often had when a boy.’ DW sent a text to C in a letter of 14 or 21 Dec. 1798 in which she also sent *The Prelude* descriptions of skating and stealing the boat. For other versions of the poem found in MSS in use at this time, see Butler and Green, 302–7.

l. 9. *my frugal Dame* was Ann Tyson, with whom W lodged whilst at Hawkshead School. See *Wordsworth’s Hawkshead*, Part One, ‘Hugh and Ann Tyson and their Boarders’, and for a map of the area where W went nutting, see David McCracken, *Wordsworth and the Lake District* (1984), 225, 229.

‘Three years she grew in sun and shower’

Composed October–December 1798. Published 1800.

The Old Cumberland Beggar

Composed January–March 1798. Published 1800. Originally a ‘Description of a Beggar’ (see Reed, I, 27 and 342–3 and for a text, Butler and Green, 273), the poem developed to voice some of W’s lifelong convictions. In the Postscript to *Yarrow Revisited* (1835) (printed above pp. 688–96) he attacked the degrading effects of the amended Poor Laws and continued the theme in the 1843 IF note to this poem, composed, he says, when ‘The political economists were . . . beginning their war upon mendicity in all its forms, and by implication, if not directly, on Almsgiving also.’ The best way of dealing with the poor was a very live issue in the 1790s, as the war and agricultural failures led to a great increase in vagrancy. See Gary Harrison, *Wordsworth’s Vagrant Muse: Poetry, Poverty and Power* (1994). W remained opposed to sweeping the poor out of sight—see ‘I know an aged Man’, above p. 702. See also the letter to Fox cited in note to ‘Michael’.

A Poet’s Epitaph

Composed October–December 1798. Published 1800. W recalled that the poem was composed as he walked on the ramparts of Goslar during one of the coldest winters of the century (IF note). Terms for branches of knowledge have changed and may confuse today’s reader: ‘Doctor’ (l. 11) is a clergyman or theologian; the ‘cushion’ (l. 12) is a reference to the fittings of a pulpit; ‘Philosopher’ (l. 18) is a scientist; ‘Moralist’ (l. 25) is a moral philosopher. The poem sweeps broadly and must not be taken too seriously (Charles Lamb objected to the coarseness of some of the satire in a letter of 30 Jan. 1801), but with it should be read the passage from the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* beginning, ‘Aristotle, I have been told, hath said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth’ (see p. 65).

Poems on the Naming of Places

The following five poems were composed between December 1799 and October 1800 and grouped together under one title in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). In 1800 the following Advertisement introduced the sequence:

By Persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little Incidents will have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such Incidents or renew the gratification of such Feelings, Names have been given to Places by the Author and some of his Friends—and the following Poems written in consequence.

‘It was an April Morning: fresh and clear’

W recalled: ‘This poem was suggested on the banks of the brook that runs through Easedale, which is, in some parts of its course, as wild & beautiful as

brook can be. I have composed thousands of verses by the side of it' (IF note). Easedale is immediately to the west of Grasmere village.

l. 11. *various*. W's italics draw attention to his consciously literary use of the word, which means progressively changing.

l. 39. Emma is DW.

To Joanna

Joanna Hutchinson (1780–1843), sister of Mary whom W was to marry 4 October 1802. The fact that Joanna did not live her early life 'Amid the smoke of cities' emphasizes that these poems are exercises of the imagination and not merely recitals of fact. For a MS note by W see *PW* II, 487 and Butler and Green, 398. In the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* W appended the following note:

In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several Inscriptions upon the native rock which from the wasting of Time and the rudeness of the Workmanship had been mistaken for Runic. They are without doubt Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which flowing through the Lakes of Grasmere and Rydale falls into Wyndermere. On Helm-Crag, that impressive single Mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a Rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an Old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those fissures or Caverns, which in the language of the Country are called Dungeons. The other Mountains either immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere, or belong to the same Cluster.

'There is an Eminence,—of these our hills'

W pointed out that 'It is not accurate that the eminence here alluded to could be seen from our orchard-seat. It rises above the road by the side of Grasmere lake, towards Keswick, and its name is Stone-Arthur' (IF note).

l. 14. See W's other tributes to DW in *The Prelude*, VI, 207–18; X, 908–20; XIII, 211–36.

'A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags'

W's IF note and C's *Notebooks* entry 761 establish that the incident took place with DW and C on the eastern shore of Grasmere, on or shortly before 23 July 1800.

l. 16. *wreck*. Northern form of 'wrack'.

l. 36. *Osmunda named*. Royal moonwort, *Osmunda regalis*.

l. 38. *Naiad*. Naiad, goddess of river or spring.

To M.H.

Mary Hutchinson, whom W married on 4 October 1802. W's IF note places the scene in the Upper Park at Rydal Hall, just south of Grasmere. Other

parts of the Park were well known to the 'travellers' of l. 16, for Rydal Falls was a noted halting place for searchers after the picturesque.

Michael

Composed October-December 1800. Published 1800. In the first edition 'By a shameful negligence of the printer' (W letter 9 April 1801) lines 202-16 of the text were omitted. Very important related verse published Butler and Green, 319-36, and *The Prelude*, VIII, 222-311. W noted:

The Sheepfold, on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character & circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Town-End, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house but to another on the same side of the valley more to the north. (IF note)

The poem was very important to W. In a long letter of 14 Jan. 1801 to Charles James Fox, the statesman, accompanying a copy of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), W singled out 'The Brothers' and 'Michael' for special mention:

The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty. But if they are proprietors of small estates, which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections will acquire among such men is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired labourers, farmers, and the manufacturing Poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written which makes them objects of memory when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn. . . . You have felt that the most sacred of all property is the property of the Poor. The two poems I have mentioned were written with a view to shew that men who do not wear fine cloaths can feel deeply.

W's letter to his old friend Thomas Poole of 9 April 1801 also describes his intentions in the poem: 'I have attempted to give a picture of a man, of strong mind and lively sensibility, agitated by two of the most powerful affections of the human heart; the parental affection, and the love of property, *landed* property, including the feelings of inheritance, home, and personal and family independence.'

1. 2. *Green-head Gill* is a mountain stream to the north east of Grasmere. It runs through the area still known as Forest-side (l. 40). Dunmal-Raise (l. 141) is the pass north towards Keswick; Easedale (l. 141) runs westwards out of Grasmere.

l. 179. W's note 1800: 'Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.'

l. 268. 'The story alluded to here is well known in the country. The chapel is called Ings Chapel; and is on the right hand side of the road leading from Kendal to Ambleside'—W's note 1800. Robert (not Richard) Bateman, a successful merchant, provided the money for the rebuilding of the Chapel of his birthplace. See *Prose*, II, 266, textual apparatus and 430-1. DW describes the marble floor sent by Bateman in her October 1802 journal entry (*Journals*, 132).

l. 334. W's 1800 note:

It may be proper to inform some readers, that a sheep-fold in these mountains is an unroofed building of stone walls, with different divisions. It is generally placed by the side of a brook, for the convenience of washing the sheep; but it is also useful as a shelter for them, and as a place to drive them into, to enable the shepherds conveniently to single out one or more for any particular purpose.

OTHER POEMS 1798-1800

The Ruined Cottage

Early composition April 1797-March 1798. Revised and substantially developed over the years 1799-1804, by which time the poem had become known as *The Pedlar*. Published with further revision as Book One of *The Excursion* (1814), text above pp. 551-76. The history of composition of *The Ruined Cottage* and *The Pedlar* is far too complex for discussion in this note. See James Butler (ed.), *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar* (Ithaca, 1979) and Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Music of Humanity* (1969). A brief outline is, however, necessary. *The Ruined Cottage* began as a narrative account of the sufferings and death of Margaret. In 1798 the narrative was framed by the introduction of the Pedlar, a philosophical wanderer whose origins and powers soon engrossed W, so much so that DW could write, 5 March 1798, that 'The Pedlar's character now makes a very, perhaps the *most* considerable part of the poem.' This, the MS B version, is the text printed here (a few words are missing from the MS and have been supplied in square brackets from MS D). In the next revision of the poem, passages on the Pedlar's education as a favoured child of Nature were excised (used later in *The Prelude's* account of W's own childhood), but a very important passage was added to conclude the poem, in which the Pedlar instructs the Poet how most wisely to respond to the history of Margaret's sufferings and death. In a later MS W attempted to reunite the poem's two interests, the sufferings of Margaret and the Pedlar's instruction in how to read them and it is in that form that the poem is absorbed into the larger whole of *The Excursion* (1814). Even after publication in 1814 revision did not end. Changes to Book One of

The Excursion in 1845 altered the poem's conclusion by emphasizing the steadfastness of Margaret's Christian faith.

l. 104. In the IF note to *The Excursion* W compared Southey's passion for books with his own for *wandering* and said

had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days. At all events I am here called upon freely to acknowledge that the character I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances.

The whole of the very important IF note should be consulted.

l. 158. 'All that relates to Margaret & the ruined cottage etc., was taken from observations made in the South West of England' (IF note). Early on in their life in the south-west *DW* reported that 'The peasants are miserably poor' (30 Nov. 1795).

l. 291. An important statement of narrative intent. W was to use the phrase 'moving accident' from *Othello*, I.iii.135 again for similar purposes in *Hart-Leap Well*, 97.

l. 323. *purse of gold*. a bounty to encourage men to enlist.

ll. 388–94. See *DW*'s Alfoxden Journal, 4 Feb. 1798: 'The moss rubbed from the pailings by the sheep, that leave locks of wool, and the red marks with which they are spotted, upon the wood' (*Journals*, 144).

ll. 495–7. Butler, op. cit. 70, points out that Bridport, near the W's home at Racedown, was a centre for the manufacture of twine for fishing nets. He explains how the spinner walked to and from the spinning wheel with the flax tied round her waist.

A Night-Piece

Composed January–March 1798. Published 1815. This text follows Butler and Green, 276–7. Wordsworth noted: 'Composed on the road between Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, extempore' (IF note). *DW*'s *Journal*, 25 Jan. 1798 records the occasion:

The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon, which, though her dim shape was seen, did not throw forth so strong a light as to chequer the earth with shadows. At once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder, and left her in the centre of a black-blue vault. She sailed along, followed by multitudes of stars, small, and bright, and sharp. Their brightness seemed concentrated, (half-moon). (*Journals*, 142)

The Two-Part Prelude

Composed 1798–9. Not titled or published by W. The poem originated in lines about childhood pleasures drafted over the winter of 1798 and by the

end of the following year the two books of what C called W's 'divine Self-biography' (*Notebooks* entry 4 Jan. 1804) had been entered into fair copy. Although the status of the poem at the turn of 1799-1800 is clear—it was a prelude to serious engagement with the *Recluse* project—it is not clear whether W ever did regard it, even for a short time, as a finished work. For full details and text of important early work, see *The Prelude, 1798-1799*, ed. Stephen Parrish (1977). Passages from this poem were relocated for the thirteen-book version of 1805, notably the drowned man lines (I, 258-79), which were moved to V, 450-73, and the Spots of Time (I, 288-374) which were moved to XI, 257-388.

First Part

ll. 7-8. The garden of the Wordsworth family home at Cockermouth (on the northern rim of the Lake District) runs down to the River Derwent. In 'sweet birthplace' W alludes to C's 'Frost at Midnight', l. 28. For details of all the places referred to in the poem, see David McCracken, *Wordsworth and the Lake District: A Guide to the Poems and their Places* (1984).

l. 24. Skiddaw is a mountain to the east of Cockermouth.

l. 34. *springs*. Snares.

ll. 81-129. This episode took place on Ullswater, at Patterdale at the lake's south-western tip. Grevel Lindop's identification is now generally accepted that the 'craggy ridge' (l. 100) is Stybarrow Crag and the 'huge Cliff' (l. 108) is Glenridding Dod. See Lindop's *A Literary Guide to the Lake District* (1993), 317-18.

l. 135. *vulgar*. Commonplace, without its current pejorative overtones. See also l. 413, *vulgar joy*.

l. 182. *diurnal*. Daily. As late as 9 January 1830 DW could write of her brother that 'He is still the crack skater on Rydal Lake.'

l. 194. *characters*. Signs, letters of the alphabet.

l. 215. Loo and whist are card games.

l. 233. *Bothnic main*. The Baltic.

l. 254. *argument*. Theme. See *Paradise Lost*, I, 24: 'this great argument'.

l. 261. W entered the Grammar School at Hawkshead in May 1779. The village adjoins Esthwaite lake. For details of this, W's crucially formative environment, see *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*.

l. 277. *the dead man*. James Jackson, drowned 18 June 1779.

l. 287. W is drawing on the language of John Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. The archetype is the original sensory experience; the forms are the sum of the original archetype and the subsequent feelings and experiences associated with it.

l. 316. *beacon*. Stone signal-beacon on a hill above Penrith built in 1719.

l. 335. W's two brothers at Hawkshead school at this time were Richard (b. 1768) and John (b. 1772). W waited for the horses in December 1783. His father died on the 30th of the month.

l. 462. *sweet sensations*. Echo of C's 'Fears in Solitude', l. 187.

Second Part

l. 37. *assembly-room*. Built 1790. W left Hawkshead for Cambridge in 1787.

l. 81. *Sabine fare*. Plain, frugal. Allusion to Horace's supposed way of life on his Sabine farm.

l. 95. *fountain*. Spring.

l. 109. *abbey*. The ruined Furness Abbey, on the south-western edge of the Lake District.

l. 161. As the sun becomes unseen behind the western hills, its rays tincture the tops of the eastern hills.

ll. 179–88. Reference to the White Lion inn at Bowness and the still surviving house built on Belle Isle in the late 1770s and early 1780s.

l. 208. The minstrel was Robert Greenwood, who became Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. See *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, 78–80.

ll. 257–9. The image is of classifying a collection of objects or specimens in a cabinet.

l. 344. W draws attention to an echo of *Paradise Lost*, IX, 249.

ll. 379–83. School began at 6.00 a.m. in summer and 7.00 in winter. The friend was John Fleming. See *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, 126–9.

l. 411. *plastic*. Creative, shaping.

ll. 479–96. See C's letter of c.10 Sept. 1799 in which he urgently entreats W to write a poem 'in blank verse, addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind'. For an account of the social-political climate in what were for many certainly 'these times of fear', see John Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (2006) and Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (1979).

l. 497. A further allusion to C's 'Frost at Midnight', ll. 51–2.

Home at Grasmere

Earliest composition 1800. Not published in W's lifetime, other than ll. 959–1048, which appeared in the Preface to *The Excursion* (1814). Revised version of whole poem published 1888 as *The Recluse*. It is very difficult to date the poem securely. See Beth Darlington (ed.), *Home at Grasmere, Part first, Book First of the Recluse* (1977), and Jonathan Wordsworth, 'On Man, On Nature, and On Human Life', *Review of English Studies* NS 31 (1980), 2–28. On MS and other evidence the composition of *Home at Grasmere* has been assigned to 1800–6. The text printed here is the earliest complete one, MS B.

In 1798, at the height of the intimacy of the two poets, C suggested that W was uniquely fitted to write a philosophical poem. The project, with the title *The Recluse*, was eagerly embraced by W (see letters of 6 and 11 March 1798) and verse such as ‘The Old Cumberland Beggar’ and ‘The Ruined Cottage’ was probably thought to fall within the scope of the plan. Preparatory self-examination produced the *Two-Part Prelude* of 1799 and composition towards *The Recluse* after W had made his home in Grasmere from the end of 1799 became *Home at Grasmere*. The grand design, however, was not to be fulfilled. Only *The Excursion* (1814) was published, bearing the subtitle ‘Being a Portion of *The Recluse*’, and a Preface in which W revealed his ambitions for the whole.

It is probable that a version of ll. 959–1048 was originally composed as a separate effusion between 1800 and 1802. In the 1814 Preface to *The Excursion* W printed the lines ‘as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem [*The Recluse*]’. The significance of the *Prospectus* is ably discussed by M. H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971), 17–70; 463–79, and Jonathan Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Borders of Vision* (1982), 98–148; 387–90. Henry Crabb Robinson reported that the Preface to the *Excursion* ‘disturbed [Blake’s] mind. . . He told me. . . that it caused him a bowel complaint which nearly killed him.’ See *WL*, IV, 439.

l. 1. The Wordsworths arrived at Dove Cottage, Grasmere, on 20 December 1799, after the journey across Yorkshire referred to in ll. 218–56. ‘Emma’ in the poem is DW.

ll. 171–9. W and DW were separated in childhood after the deaths of their parents. They were reunited in 1794 and from 1795, when they lived in Dorset, remained together. On 25 June 1832 W referred to C and DW as ‘the two Beings to whom my intellect is most indebted’.

l. 257. See note to ‘Hart-Leap Well’, pp. 723–4.

l. 739. Helvellyn stands to the north-east of Grasmere.

l. 864. John Wordsworth stayed with W and DW January to September 1800. For notes on him see pp. 737, 754, 756–7.

ll. 869–70. W refers to Mary Hutchinson, his future wife, her sisters Sara and Joanna and to C.

l. 963. ‘numerous verse’. See *Paradise Lost*, V, 150, ‘in prose or numerous verse’. At *Prelude* I, 57 and 60 W glosses ‘measured strains’ as ‘poetic numbers’, a now obsolete use of ‘numbers’.

ll. 974–6. See Milton’s invocation to Urania, *Paradise Lost*, VII, 30–1. For this whole passage (which alludes to *Paradise Lost* repeatedly) see also W’s discussion of possible themes for his life’s work in *The Prelude*, I, 169–234. Its climax expresses W’s ‘last and favorite aspiration’, ‘some philosophic song | Of truth that cherishes our daily life | With meditations passionate from deep | Recesses in man’s heart’.

FROM POEMS, IN TWO VOLUMES (1807)

W began to think about publishing a single volume of his recent lyrics as early as June 1806. Expanded into two volumes, the collection was published, in an edition of 1000 copies, on or around 28 April 1807. The history of how the publication came into being is extremely complicated. For details see Curtis's indispensable exposition in *P2V*. A very important innovation in this publication was the subdivision of the volumes into categories, such as 'Poems, Composed During a Tour, Chiefly on Foot', 'Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty', 'Moods of My Own Mind', a first stage in the classification process which was to be elaborated in the collection of 1815. The title-page motto was taken from a poem thought to be by Virgil and is translated, 'Hereafter shall our Muse speak to thee in deeper tones, when the seasons yield me their fruits in peace' (Curtis, *P2V*, 26).

To the Daisy ('In youth')

Composed April-July 1802. Published 1807.

'She was a Phantom of delight'

Composed October 1803-March 1804. Published 1807. W noted that 'The germ of this poem was four lines composed as part of the verses on the Highland Girl ["To a Highland Girl"]. Though beginning in this way, it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious' (IF note). Christopher Wordsworth, *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, 2 vols (1851), II, 306, cites Mr Justice Coleridge's record that W said the poem 'was written on "his dear wife", of whom he spoke in the sweetest manner; a manner full of the warmest love and admiration, yet with delicacy and reserve'.

The Sailor's Mother

Composed 11-12 March 1802. Published 1807. W noted: 'I met this woman near the Wishing-Gate, on the high-road that then led from Grasmere to Ambleside. Her appearance was exactly as here described, & such was her account, nearly to the letter' (IF note). C discusses the poem (and 'Anecdote for Fathers', 'Simon Lee', 'Alice Fell', 'The Beggars') in ch. xviii of *Biographia Literaria* and doubts the suitability of such subjects for metrical treatment. He also remarks that in the stanzas which record the woman's words is 'the only fair instance that I have been able to discover in all of Mr. Wordsworth's writings, of an *actual* adoption, or true imitation, of the *real* and *very* language of *low* and *rustic* life, freed from provincialisms'.

Character of the Happy Warrior

Composed December 1805–early January 1806. Published 1807. W's note in 1807—not reprinted after 1807—reads:

The above Verses were written soon after tidings had been received of the Death of Lord Nelson, which event directed the Author's thoughts to the subject. His respect for the memory of his great fellow-countryman induces him to mention this; though he is well aware that the Verses must suffer from any connection in the Reader's mind with a Name so illustrious.

In the later IF note, which is too long to quote here, W links the life and death of Nelson (d. 21 October 1805) with that of his brother (d. 5–6 February 1805): 'many elements of the character here portrayed were found in my brother John.'

To H.C., Six Years Old

Composed 1802–4. Published 1807. Date of composition uncertain. See Reed, II, 180 n. 55. C describes his son on 14 October 1803 and quotes l. 12:

Hartley is what he always was—a strange strange Boy—'exquisitely mild'! An utter Visionary! like the Moon among thin Clouds, he moves in a circle of Light of his own making—he alone, in a Light of his own. Of all human Beings I never yet saw one so utterly naked of *Self*—he has no Vanity, no Pride, no Resentment, and tho' very passionate, I never yet saw him angry with any body.

There is evidently a close connection between stanzas v–viii of the Intimations Ode ('There was a Time') and this poem.

l. 6. In 1807 W referred the reader in a note to Jonathan Carver, *Travels through the interior parts of North America* (1778), 132–3.

'Among all lovely things my Love had been'

Composed 12 April 1802. Published 1807. DW's account of the writing, *Journals*, 20 April 1802, confirmed by W's letter of 16 April 1802, gives a fascinating glimpse of W's absorption in composition:

when William came to a Well or a Trough which there is in Lord Darlington's Park he began to write that poem of the Glow-worm . . . Interrupted in going through the Town of Staindrop. Finished it about 2 miles & a half beyond Staindrop—he did not feel the jogging of the horse while he was writing but when he had done he felt the effect of it & his fingers were cold with his gloves.

The poem, which W said recorded an incident in 1795, was ridiculed on its appearance in 1807 and not reprinted by W.

'I travelled among unknown Men'

Composed early 1801. Published 1807. Originally intended for the 3rd edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1802). W sent a copy to Mary Hutchinson 29 April 1801, saying that it was to be read after 'She dwelt among th'untrodden ways'.

Ode to Duty

Composed 1804–early 1807. Published 1807. Motto from Seneca added 1836–7 edition. The history of the composition of this poem is too complex for discussion here. Between the first version of 1804 and the published text of 1807 W made many significant changes. See discussion and text in Curtis, *P2V*, 30–2, 104–10. W noted: 'This Ode . . . is on the model of Gray's Ode to Adversity which is copied from Horace's Ode to Fortune' (IF note).

l. 1. See *Paradise Lost*, IX, 652–4. Eve explains:

God so commanded, and left that command
Sole daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
Law to our selves, our reason is our law.

ll. 41–8. Excised after 1807.

l. 46. Echoes Milton's dedication to *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1644), 'empty and over-dignified precepts'.

ll. 49–56. B. R. Schneider, *Wordsworth's Cambridge Education* (1957), 171, suggests that W recalls here Newton's idea, expressed in the scholium at the end of *Principia*, that God preserves and maintains the universe: 'Lest the systems of the fixed Stars should, by their gravity, fall on each other mutually, he hath placed those systems at immense distances one from another.'

ll. 57–64. Glossed by W in 'Reply to "Mathetes"' (1809–10):

in his character of Philosophical Poet, having thought of Morality as implying in its essence voluntary obedience, and producing the effect of order, he transfers, in the transport of imagination, the law of Moral to physical Natures, and, having contemplated, through the medium of that order, all modes of existence as subservient to one spirit, concludes his address to the power of Duty in the following words [this stanza]. (*Prose*, II, 24–5)

l. 61 *lowly wise*. see *Paradise Lost*, VIII, 173–4.

Beggars

Composed 13–14 March 1802. Published 1807. The poem shows the fascinating relationship between DW's *Journal* and W's poems at this time. On 13 March 1802 W finished 'Alice Fell' and, DW says, 'wrote the Poem of the Beggar woman taken from a Woman whom I had seen in May—(now nearly 2 years ago)'. In the evening, however, 'I read to William that account of the little Boys belonging to the tall woman & an unlucky thing it was for he could

not escape from those very words, & so he could not write the poem' (*Journals*, 77). W completed it the next morning. DW's description of the beggar boys on 10 June 1800 is too long to quote here, but it should be consulted. W told Crabb Robinson in March 1808 that he had written the poem as 'a poetical exhibition of the power of physical beauty & the charm of health & vigour in childhood even in a state of the greatest moral depravity' (*The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle*, ed. Edith J. Morley, 2 vols (1927), I, 53).

1. 18. *Weed of glorious feature*. See Spenser, *Muiopotmos, or The Fate of the Butterflie*, l. 213.

To a Sky-Lark

Composed March–July 1802. Published 1807. It seems likely that this poem was amongst a number which C commented on to Southey, 29 July 1802, as being 'very excellent Compositions, but here and there a daring Humbleness of Language and Versification, and a strict adherence to matter of fact, even to prolixity'. In a letter of 24 Oct. 1828 W told Barron Field that 'Coleridge used severely to condemn, and to treat contemptuously' this poem.

Alice Fell

Composed 12–13 March 1802. Published 1807. DW's *Journal* 16 February 1802 records the origin of the poem:

Mr Graham [Robert Grahame, a Glasgow solicitor] said he wished William had been with him the other day—he was riding in a post chaise & he heard a strange cry that he could not understand, the sound continued & he called to the chaise driver to stop. It was a little girl that was crying as if her heart would burst. She had got up behind the chaise & her cloak had been caught by the wheel & was jammed in & it hung there. She was crying after it. Poor thing. Mr. Graham took her into the Chaise & the cloak was released from the wheel but the Child's misery did not cease for her Cloak was torn to rags; it had been a miserable cloak before, but she had no other & it was the greatest sorrow that could befall her. Her name was Alice Fell. She had no parents, & belonged to the next Town. At the next Town Mr G. left money with some respectable people in the Town to buy her a new cloak.

C criticized the poem in *Biographia Literaria*, and W dropped it from the canon from 1820. It was restored, after C's death, in the 1836–7 edition.

Resolution and Independence

Composed May–July 1802. Published 1807. Textual history is complicated: see Curtis *P2V*, 123, 316–23. W noted:

This Old Man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage at Town-End, Grasmere; & the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton Fell from Mr. Clarkson's, at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askam. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the fell. (IF note)

DW's *Journal*, 3 October 1800, describes the meeting. W crossed Barton Fell, at the north-eastern end of Ullswater, on 7 April 1802.

The first version of 'The Leech Gatherer', as the poem was known in the Wordsworth circle, underwent extensive revision, prompted by criticism to which W replied in a letter of 14 June 1802. For a text and discussion see Jared R. Curtis, *Wordsworth's Experiments with Tradition: The Lyric Poems of 1802* (1971), 97–113 and 186–95.

l. 43. Thomas Chatterton (1752–70), author of purportedly fifteenth-century poems of Thomas Rowley, killed himself in despair at poverty and lack of recognition, and became a symbol of the poet whose creative gifts are at once a blessing and a destructive power. This poem follows the metre of Chatterton's 'An Excellent Balade of Charitie'.

ll. 45–6. Robert Burns (1759–96), still a farmer when he wrote some of his finest work. Burns' early death left his wife and children in financial straits, a fact that was certainly in W's mind at this time when his own marriage was approaching.

ll. 64–72. W analysed the play of imagination in these lines in the Preface to *Poems* (1815). See pp. 604–5. On the melancholy and desolation of mountain pools see *Prose*, II, 186–7.

l. 119. See *The Prelude*, VII, 622, where W gazes on the blind beggar 'As if admonished from another world'.

'Nuns fret not at their Convent's narrow room'

Composed c.late 1802. Published 1807. W recalled:

In the cottage of Town End, one afternoon in [1802], my Sister read to me the Sonnets of Milton. I had long been well acquainted with them, but I was particularly struck on that occasion by the dignified simplicity and majestic harmony that runs through most of them—in character so totally different from the Italian, and still more so from Shakespeare's fine Sonnets. I took fire, if I may be allowed to say so, and produced three Sonnets the same afternoon. . . . Of these three, the only one I distinctly remember is 'I grieved for Bonaparte'. (IF note)

In a letter of 20 April 1822 W lamented having written so many Sonnets in moments which 'might easily have been better employed', but, in fact, the form was very important to him. He produced sonnet sequences (e.g. *The River Duddon* (1820), *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822)), wrote many occasional sonnets, especially on national themes, which were eventually gathered into

sequences, and thought deeply about the form (see his letter to Alexander Dyce of c.22 April 1833). In 1838 W's sonnets were collected in a single volume, but more continued to appear.

The foundation for further study remains Lee M. Johnson, *Wordsworth and the Sonnet* (1973), but see also the essay on the topic in Geoffrey Jackson (ed.), *Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820–1845* (2004), 925–31.

l. 6 Furness is the south-western part of the Lake District.

'Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?'

Composed May 1802–March 1804. Published 1807. Crabb Robinson recorded in his diary 3 June 1812 that W said this poem 'expressed the delight he had felt on thinking of the first feelings of men before navigation had so completely made the world known, and while a ship exploring unknown regions was an object of high interest and sympathy' (*Henry Crabb Robinson on Books and Their Writers*, ed. Edith J. Morley, 3 vols (1938), I, 94).

'With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh'

Composed and published as above. W was upset by criticism of this poem when it first appeared and defended it in a letter of 21 May 1807.

l. 8. See Skelton's 'The Bowge of Courte', 36–8.

Composed Upon Westminster Bridge

Composed 31 July 1802–3 September 1802. Published 1807. W noted that the poem was 'composed on the roof of a coach, on my way to France, Sept. 1802' (IF note), but W and DW left on 31 July and returned to London 1 September. (The confusion is increased by the fact that all editions through 1836 date the poem 'Sept. 3 1803'.) It seems likely that W drafted the poem on the outward journey and completed it on 3 September. DW's *Journal* 31 July 1802 records:

we mounted the Dover Coach at Charing Cross. It was a beautiful morning. The City, St. Pauls, with the River & a multitude of little Boats, made a most beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge. The houses were not overhung by their cloud of smoke & they were spread out endlessly, yet the sun shone so brightly with such a pure light that there was even something like the purity of one of nature's own grand Spectacles.

For another poem which celebrates the transfigured city see 'St Paul's', p. 293.

"'Beloved Vale!" I said, "when I shall con"'

Composed May–December 1802. Published 1807. The poem refers to the Vale of Esthwaite, where W passed his schooldays at Hawkshead.

'The world is too much with us'

Composed May 1802–March 1804. Published 1807. Lines 11–14 allude to Spenser's 'Colin Clouts come home again', 244–5, 283, and *Paradise Lost*, III, 603–4.

'It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free'

Composed 'on the beach near Calais' (IF note), August 1802. Published 1807. The 'Dear Child' is Caroline, daughter (b. 1792) of W and Annette Vallon. 'Abraham's bosom' (see Luke 16: 22), the repose of the happy after death, suggests that W is thinking of the child's transition from 'God, who is our home' to this world in the terms developed in 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality'. W had taken advantage of the short-lived Truce of Amiens, to go to France to settle financial and other matters with his former lover, before his marriage to Mary Hutchinson on 4 October 1802.

Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais

Composed August 1802. Published 1807. DW's *Journal* entry for the month includes: 'we had delightful walks after the heat of the day was passed away—seeing far off in the west the Coast of England like a cloud crested with Dover Castle, which was but like the summit of the cloud—the Evening star & the glory of the sky' (*Journals*, 124).

Calais, August, 1802

Composed August 1802. Published *Morning Post* 13 and 29 January 1803 and 1807. The Peace of Amiens established in March 1802 brought a brief respite to the war. In August Napoleon became First Consul for life, with the right to appoint his successor. Politicians crossed the Channel to meet him. The curious, among them Hazlitt, went in thousands to Paris to see the new Republic and the Louvre, enriched by the spoils of the Italian campaign.

To a Friend, Composed near Calais

Composed early August 1802. Published 1807. Titled 'Composed near Calais . . .' from 1840. In 1790 W walked through France to Switzerland, as he describes in *The Prelude*, VI, 338 ff. *Descriptive Sketches* (1793) is also a memorial of the tour. W's companion, 'A fellow student . . . he too | A mountaineer', was Robert Jones (1769–1835), whom W was to describe in a note to this poem in 1836 as 'one of my earliest and dearest friends'. They landed in France on 13 July 1790, the eve of the Fête de la Fédération, marking the King's acceptance of the new constitution. In *The Prelude*, VI, 352–4, W describes the time as 'when Europe was rejoiced, | France standing

on the top of golden hours, | And human nature seeming born again'. Between 1790 and 1802 had come the Terror, the French wars of conquest, and the rise of Napoleon.

'I grieved for Buonaparte'

Composed 21 May 1802. Published *Morning Post* 16 September 1802, 29 January 1803, and 1807. See note to 'Nuns fret not' above. Napoleon Buonaparte (1769-1821), General-in-chief of French army 1796-9, First Consul of the Republic 1799, proclaimed himself Emperor 1804, not finally defeated until 1815 at Waterloo.

Calais, August 15th, 1802

Composed 15 August 1802. Published *Morning Post* 26 February 1803 and 1807. Napoleon became Consul for life on 2 August 1802.

I. 9 *Another time*. Refers to the 1790 pedestrian tour, noted above.

On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic

Composed perhaps May 1802-early 1803; more likely January 1807. For latter date see Alan G. Hill's argument in *Review of English Studies* 30 (1979), 441-5. Published 1807. Napoleon entered Venice 16 May 1797 and declared the Republic, which had reached the climax of its power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, at an end.

II. 7-8. Each Ascension Day the Doge of Venice dropped a ring into the Adriatic, symbolizing the wedding of the city and the sea.

To Toussaint L'Ouverture

Composed August 1802. Published *Morning Post* 2 February 1803 and 1807. François Dominique Toussaint, surnamed L'Ouverture, the son of a slave, led a group of freed black slaves in the foundation of a Black Republic on Haiti. For resistance to Napoleon's edict re-establishing slavery, he was kidnapped and imprisoned in Paris in June 1802, where he died in April 1803.

I. 14. *unconquerable mind*. A direct quotation from Gray's 'The Progress of Poesy', l. 65.

September 1st, 1802

Composed 29 August-1 September 1802. Published as 'The Banished Negroes' in *Morning Post* 11 February 1803 and with the above title in 1807. From the edition of 1827 on W printed as headnote: 'Among the capricious acts of Tyranny that disgraced those times, was the chasing of all Negroes from France by decree of the Government: we had a Fellow-passenger who was one of the expelled.'

Composed in the Valley, near Dover

Composed 30 August 1802. Published 1807. This poem was in DW's mind as she made up her *Journal of a Tour of the Continent* (1820):

When within a mile of Dover, saw crowds of people at a Cricket-Match, the numerous combatants dressed in 'white-sleeved shirts', and it was in the very same field where, when we 'trod the grass of England' once again, twenty years ago, we had seen an Assemblage of Youths engaged in the same sport, so very like the present that all might have been the same! (entry for 10 July 1820, *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2 vols (1941), II, 8)

September, 1802

Composed c.30 August 1802. Published 1807. DW's *Journal* 30 August 1802 records: 'We both bathed & sate upon the Dover Cliffs & looked upon France with many a melancholy & tender thought. We could see the shores almost as plain as if it were but an English Lake.'

Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland

Composed end October 1806–January 1807. Napoleon subjugated Switzerland in 1798 and sent in a further army in 1802. In a long letter of 4 December 1821 denying that his current political views are an apostasy of earlier ones, W declares, 'I abandoned France, and her Rulers, when they abandoned the struggle for Liberty, gave themselves up to Tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world... after Buonaparte had violated the Independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and the Nation that could submit to be the Instrument of such an outrage.'

Written in London, September, 1802

Composed September 1802. Published 1807. In the IF note W explained the tone of this and the next poem:

written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say the desolation, that the revolution had produced in France. This must be borne in mind, or else the reader may think that in this & the succeeding sonnets I have exaggerated the mischief engendered & fostered among us by undisturbed wealth.

This is a striking comment, coming as it does from the 73-year-old W, usually regarded as a dyed-in-the-wool Tory having no connection with the youthful author of the radical *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and imitator of 'Juvenal Satire VIII'.

l. 9. Allusion to Milton's sonnet 'On the Lord General Fairfax at the Siege of Colchester', 13–14.

London, 1802

Composed September 1802. Published 1807. See note above. Milton was the supreme example to W: a poet of austere and principled life and art. In November 1802 he wrote in a letter:

Milton's Sonnets . . . I think manly and dignified compositions, distinguished by simplicity and unity of object and aim, and undisfigured by false or vicious ornaments. They are in several places incorrect, and sometimes uncouth in language, and, perhaps, in some, inharmonious; yet, upon the whole, I think the music exceedingly well suited to its end, that is, it has an energetic and varied flow of sound crowding into narrow room more of the combined effect of rhyme and blank verse than can be done by any other kind of verse I know of.

'Great Men have been among us'

Composed May–December 1802. Published 1807. In this roll call of English Republicans W refers to Algernon Sidney (1622–83), author of *Discourse concerning Civil Government*; Andrew Marvell (1621–78); James Harrington (1611–77), author of *Commonwealth of Oceana*; and Sir Henry Vane the younger (1613–62). A MS reading makes it clear that Milton's friend alluded to in l. 4 is Cyriack Skinner (1627–1700).

'It is not to be thought of that the Flood'

Composed May–December 1802. Published *Morning Post* 16 April 1803 and 1807.

l. 4. W's quotation marks draw attention to a borrowing from Samuel Daniel's *Civil Wars*, II, 7.

'When I have borne in memory what has tamed'

Composed May–December 1802. Published *Morning Post* 17 September 1803 and 1807.

October, 1803 ('One might believe')

Composed October 1803–January 1804. Published 1807. For the well-grounded fear of a French invasion in 1803, see Alexandra Franklin and Mark Philp, *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain* (2003) and Simon Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars* (2003), esp. Chap. 4.

October, 1803 ('These times touch')

Composed October 1803–January 1804. Moorman, I, 601 cites C's letter 2 Oct. 1803 to his brother, George:

These, dear Brother! are awful Times; but I really see no reason for any feelings of Despondency. If it be God's will, that the commercial Gourd should be canker-killed—if our horrible Iniquities in the W. India Islands & on the coasts of Guinea call for judgment on us—God's will be done! . . . Now bad as we may be, we assuredly are the best among the nations.

'England! the time is come when thou shouldst wean'

Composed May–December 1802. Published 1807. W's ambivalent attitude towards his country as the bastion of Liberty—which becomes hostility to its territorial ambitions—should be compared with a similar ambivalence in his presentation of the French Revolution and Britain's response to it in Book Ten of *The Prelude*.

October, 1803 (*'When, looking on'*)

Composed October 1803–January 1804.

To the Men of Kent

Composed September–October 1803. Published 1807. De Selincourt suggests, *PW*, III, 456, that W owed to Michael Drayton's *The Baron's Wars*, I, 323–4, knowledge of a tradition that the men of Kent were not conquered by the Normans but received from them a confirmation of their charters. For the significance of the idea of Kent to W's poetry, see Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (2000), esp. Chap. 8.

October, 1803 (*'Six thousand Veterans'*)

Composed October 1803. Published 1807. DW's *Recollections*, 8 September 1803, reads:

Before breakfast we walked to the Pass of Killiecrankie. A very fine scene; the river Garry forcing its way down a deep chasm between rocks, at the foot of high rugged hills covered with wood, to a great height . . . Everybody knows that this Pass is famous in military history. When we were travelling in Scotland an invasion was hourly looked for, and one could not but think with some regret of the times when from the now depopulated Highlands forty or fifty thousand men might have poured down for the defence of the country, under such leaders as the Marquis of Montrose or the brave man who had so distinguished himself upon the ground where we were standing. (*Recollections*, 171–2)

John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, was victorious at the Battle of Killiecrankie, 17 July 1689, although he died himself.

In a note printed in 1807 only, W directs his readers to an anecdote related in Walter Scott's note to 'The Battle of Bothwell Bridge' in his collection *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3). Scott records that one

who had borne arms for the Stuart cause in 1715 told him that in the battle of Sheriff-muir

a veteran chief . . . covered with scars, came up to the Earl of Mar, and earnestly pressed him to order the Highlanders to charge . . . Mar repeatedly answered, it was not yet time; till the chieftain turned from him in disdain and despair, and, stamping with rage, exclaimed aloud ‘O for one hour of Dundee!’.

Anticipation, October, 1803

Composed October 1803. Published in the *Courier*, 28 October 1803 and 1807. When invasion was expected, W enlisted on 3 October with the men of Grasmere in the Volunteers, but by 15 January 1804 he could write: ‘We have given over even thinking about Invasion though our Grasmere Volunteers do walk past the door twice a week in their Red Coats to be exercised at Ambleside.’

Rob Roy’s Grave

Composed September 1805–February 1806. Published 1807. On 12 September 1803, at Glengyle on Loch Ketterine, W and DW were wrongly informed that Rob Roy was buried there. DW’s *Recollections* record that they

went up to the burying-ground that stood so sweetly near the water-side. The ferryman had told us that Rob Roy’s grave was there, so we could not pass on without going up to the spot. There were several tomb-stones, but the inscriptions were either worn-out or unintelligible to us, and the place was choked up with nettles and brambles. (*Recollections*, 187)

l. 1. Literary and personal connections come together here. A note to Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) quotes Drayton’s lines on Robin Hood. Drayton was in W’s mind in 1803 (see *Recollections*, 18 August 1803), and Scott read some of the *Lay* to W and DW on 20 September.

l. 5. Rob Roy was Robert MacGregor, a Highland outlaw (1671–1734).

l. 10. W noted in 1807:

The people of the neighbourhood of Loch Ketterine, in order to prove the extraordinary length of their Hero’s arm, tell you that ‘he could garter his Tartan Stockings below the knee when standing upright’. According to their account he was a tremendous Swordsman; after having sought all occasions of proving his prowess, he was never conquered but once, and this was not until he was an Old Man.

l. 95. France’s ‘present Boast’ was Napoleon.

The Solitary Reaper

Composed 5 November 1805. Published 1807. DW’s *Recollections* 13 Sept. 1803 record: ‘It was harvest-time, and the fields were quietly—might I be

allowed to say pensively?—enlivened by small companies of reapers. It is not uncommon in the more lonely parts of the Highlands to see a single person so employed' (*Recollections*, 193). A note in 1807 identified the origin of the poem in a sentence from Thomas Wilkinson's *Tours to the British Mountains* (1824), which had been known to the Wordsworths in MS. It reads: 'Passed a female who was reaping alone: she sung in Erse as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard: her strains were tenderly melancholy and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more' (p. 12).

Stepping Westward

Composed 3 June 1805. Published 1807. DW's *Recollections*, 11 Sept. 1803, describes the meeting rather as W does in the headnote and concludes: 'I cannot describe how affecting this simple expression was in that remote place, with the western sky in front, yet glowing with the departed sun' (*Recollections*, 181). In the MS of *Recollections* DW has written: 'The poem . . . was written this day while W and I and little Dorothy were walking in the green field, where we are used to walk, by the [river] Rothay. June 3 1805.'

Glen-Almain

Composed May–June 1805. Published 1807. DW's *Recollections* for 9 Sept. 1803 records their visit to Glenalmond:

the road led us down the glen, which had become exceedingly narrow, and so continued to the end: the hills on both sides heathy and rocky, very steep, but continuous; the rocks not single or overhanging, not scooped into caverns or sounding with torrents: there are no trees, no houses, no traces of cultivation, not one outstanding object.

DW concludes her entry with this poem 'written by William on hearing of a tradition relating to it, which we did not know when we were there' (*Recollections*, 175).

1. 2. Ossian, legendary Gaelic warrior and bard brought into prominence by James Macpherson (1736–96), who published *Fingal* (1762) and *Temora* (1763), epic poems purporting to be translations from Ossian. See Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (1988).

The Matron of Jedborough and Her Husband

Composed March 1804–November 1805. Published 1807. When W and DW reached Jedburgh on 20 September 1803, in the last days of their Scottish tour, they could not find accommodation and so were lodged in a private house. For DW's description of their hostess and her infirm husband see *Recollections*, 209–10.

To a Highland Girl

Composed October–November 1803. Published 1807. W noted in old age: ‘The sort of prophecy with which the verses conclude has through God’s goodness been realized, and now, approaching the close of my 73rd year I have a most vivid remembrance of her and the beautiful objects with which she was surrounded’ (IF note). For DW’s lengthy account of ‘that romantic spot . . . a living image, as it will be to my dying day’, see *Recollections*, 109–12.

Address to the Sons of Burns

Composed September 1805–February 1806. Published 1807. Enlarged version published 1827. On the importance of Burns to W see his 1816 *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns* (above pp. 618–31) and the lengthy 1842 note on Burns and Cowper, *PW*, III, 441–2, and Curtis, *LP*, 474–5.

The occasion of this poem is described in *Recollections*, in an entry, too long to quote, for 18 Aug. 1803. W and DW visited the grave of Burns and his son and afterwards

We talked of Coleridge’s children and family . . . and our own new-born John . . . while the grave of Burns’ son, which we had just seen by the side of his father, and some stories heard at Dumfries respecting the dangers his surviving children were exposed to, filled us with melancholy concern, which had a kind of connexion with ourselves. (*Recollections*, 44)

The fate of Burns had moved W to similar thoughts the year before in ‘Resolution and Independence’, ll. 45–6.

Yarrow Unvisited

Composed October–November 1803. Published 1807. During their tour of Scotland W and DW came close to visiting the River Yarrow, but, as DW writes in her *Recollections*, ‘came to the conclusion of reserving the pleasure for some future time’ (18 Sept. 1803; p. 204). W later confessed in the IF note to *Yarrow Visited* that their reasons for not visiting ‘this celebrated stream [were] not altogether . . . for the reasons assigned in the poem on the occasion’. W said to Scott, 16 January 1805, that he had written the poem ‘not without a view of pleasing you’.

l. 6. From ‘The Braes of Yarrow’ (1724) by William Hamilton of Bangour (1704–54). In a note to l. 35 in 1807 W also acknowledges indebtedness to this poem. ‘Marrow’ means companion or mate.

l. 20. *Lintwhites*. Linnets. In this stanza W is, of course, referring to topographical attractions of the area near the Yarrow.

l. 37. *Strath*. Valley.

l. 42. *Burn-mill meadow*. In the letter to Scott of 16 Jan. 1805 W says of these verses: ‘they are in the same sort of metre as the *Leader Haughs*, and I have

borrowed the name Burnmill meadow from that poem, for which I wish you would substitute something that may really be found in the Vale of Yarrow.’ ‘Leader Haughs and Yarrow’ by Nicol Burne, also echoed in l. 64, was one of Scott’s favourite poems of the Border region. Like ‘The Braes of Yarrow’ above, it was printed in Allan Ramsay’s *The Tea-Table Miscellany: or Allan Ramsay’s Collection of Scots Sangs* (1730) and frequently reprinted.

To a Butterfly (‘Stay near me’)

Composed 14 March 1802. Published 1807. DW records in her journal for 14 March 1802:

while we were at Breakfast . . . [W] wrote the Poem to a Butterfly!—He ate not a morsel, nor put on his stockings but sate with his shirt neck unbuttoned, & his waistcoat open while he did it. The thought first came upon him as we were talking about the pleasure we both always feel at the sight of a Butterfly. I told him that I used to chase them a little but that I was afraid of brushing the dust off their wings, & did not catch them—He told me how they used to kill all the white ones when he went to school because they were frenchmen.

In 1807 the poem opened a gathering of lyrics with a separate title-page, ‘Moods of My Own Mind’, a descriptive title that attracted much scorn from contemporary reviewers and which was alluded to by Keats in his verse letter ‘To J.H. Reynolds, Esq.’, ‘Away ye horrid moods, | Moods of one’s mind!’

‘My heart leaps up when I behold’

Composed 26 March 1802. Published 1807. In 1815 W printed ll. 7–9 as an epigraph to ‘Ode: Intimations of Immortality’, the very lines C had emphasized when he printed the poem in *The Friend*, Essay V, as an expression of the truth that ‘Men are ungrateful to others only when they have ceased to look back on their former selves with joy and tenderness. They exist in fragments’ (see *The Friend*, ed. Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols (1969), I, 40). In *Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Growth* (1970) Stephen Prickett points out, p. 6, that the Rainbow had especial significance. Newton’s prism experiments in *Opticks* (1704) seemed to some, e.g. Keats, to destroy the unity of beauty, but to others, e.g. Thomson and Akenside, understanding the rainbow pointed to the marriage of imaginative and scientific modes of perception.

Written in March

Composed 16 March 1802. Published 1807. DW’s *Journal* entry 16 April 1802 is itself a very beautiful account of the circumstances of composition. DW leaves W sitting on the bridge at Brothers Water, a lake near Patterdale and Ullswater, and when she returns she finds him ‘writing a poem descriptive of the sights and sounds we saw and heard. . . . William finished his poem before we got to the foot of Kirkstone.’

'I wandered lonely as a Cloud'

Composed March 1804–April 1807, Published 1807. On 15 April 1802 W and DW saw the daffodils along the western shore of Ullswater. DW records in her *Journal*:

I never saw daffodils so beautiful they grew among the mossy stones about & about them, some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow for weariness & the rest tossed & reeled & danced & seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the Lake, they looked so gay ever glancing ever changing.

In the IF note W said: 'The two best lines in it [15–16] are by Mary.' W was particularly sensitive to misreading of this poem. See his letter of 4 Nov. 1807 and to Beaumont Feb. 1808. For the collection of 1815 W added a stanza at lines 6/7:

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

The Sparrow's Nest

Composed March–April 1802. Published 1807. W noted:

At the end of the garden at my Father's house at Cockermouth was a high terrace that commanded a fine view of the River Derwent and Cockermouth Castle. This was our favourite play-ground. The terrace wall, a low one, was covered with closely-clipt privet, and roses, which gave an almost impervious shelter to birds, that built their nests there. (IF note)

l. 9. *Emmeline*. DW.

Gipsies

Composed c.26 February 1807. Published 1807. W noted: 'I had observed them, as here described, near Castle Donnington, on my way to and from Derby' (IF note). In an essay called 'On Manner' of 27 August 1815, later collected in *The Round Table* (1817), Hazlitt objected to what he called the 'Sunday-school philosophy' of the poem, an objection which elicited penetrating criticism from Keats:

I think Hazlitt is right and yet I think Wordsworth is rightest. Wordsworth had not been idle he had not been without his task—nor had the Gipseys—they in the visible world had been as picturesque an object as he in the

invisible. The Smoke of their fire—their attitudes—their Voices were all in harmony with the Evening—It is a bold thing to say and I would not say it in print—but it seems to me that if Wordsworth had thought a little deeper at that Moment he would not have written the Poem at all—I should judge it to have been written in one of the most comfortable Moods of his Life—it is a kind of sketchy intellectual landscape—not a search after Truth—nor is it fair to attack him on such a subject. (28–30 Oct. 1817)

To the Cuckoo

Composed March–June 1802. Published 1807. W discussed the function of imagination in this poem in the *Preface to Poems* (1815) (see above, p. 603).

To a Butterfly ('I've watched you')

Composed 20 April 1802. Published 1807.

The Green Linnet

Composed April–June 1802 and published 1807. W grouped this poem with 'To the Daisy' ('In youth') p. 215 and 'To the Daisy' ('With little here') p. 267 as he remembered their composition (IF note). They all reflect W's study of the Elizabethan poets in Robert Anderson's *Works of the British Poets* (1792–5). In the IF note to 'Yarrow Visited' W paid tribute to this collection: 'but for this same work, I should have known little of Drayton, Daniel, and other distinguished poets of the Elizabethan age and their immediate successors, till a much later period of my life.' De Selincourt, *PW*, II, 490–1, points to the influence of Jonson and Drayton on the metre of these poems, but the affinities between W's poems and the Elizabethans are so extensive that they cannot be documented here. The reader should see, as a beginning, Jared R. Curtis, *Wordsworth's Experiments with Tradition: The Lyric Poems of 1802* (1971), especially Chaps. 2–5.

'By their floating Mill'

Composed April–November 1806. Published 1807. From 1820 titled 'Stray Pleasures'. W noted:

Suggested on the Thames by the sight of one of those floating mills that used to be seen there. This I noticed on the Surrey-side between Somerset-House and Blackfriars Bridge. Charles Lamb was with me at the time; and I thought it remarkable that I should have to point out to him, an idolatrous Londoner, a sight so interesting as the happy group dancing on the platform. (IF note)

The edge to W's recollection comes from the fact that Lamb did not disguise his preference for London over the Lake District. See his letters of 29 Nov. 1800, 30 Jan. 1801, 7 Feb. 1801, 27 Feb. 1801: *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed., Edwin W. Marris, Jr. (1975–), I, 248, 267–8.

ll. 33–4. See Drayton, *The Muse's Elysium* (Nymphal VI, 4–7).

Star Gazers

Composed April–November 1806. Published 1807. W noted: ‘Observed by me in Leicester Square as here described, 1806’ (IF note).

Power of Music

Composed April–November 1806. Published 1807. W noted: ‘Taken from life, 1806’ (IF note).

l. 1. Orpheus was a legendary pre-Homeric poet, with exceptional command of the lyre.

l. 3. The Pantheon was built in 1772 as a place of entertainment for the gentry of London. It stood on the south side of Oxford Street.

To the Daisy ('With little here')

See note to ‘The Green Linnet’ above.

l. 25. *Cyclops*. Giants with one eye in the middle of the forehead, on Sicily. Odysseus encounters the chief, Polyphemus, in Homer’s *The Odyssey*.

To the Same Flower ('Bright Flower')

See note above.

A Complaint

Composed late 1806–early April 1807, possibly December 1806. Published 1807. IF note reads, ‘Suggested by a change in the manner of a friend’, almost certainly C who stayed with the Ws at Coleorton (Sir George Beaumont’s house) December 1806 to January 1807. His personal distress—C had decided to separate from his wife and family—deeply affected the Wordsworths. See Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (1989), 255–8.

'I am not One who much or oft delight'

Composed May 1802–March 1804. Published 1807. Titled ‘Personal Talk’ from 1820.

l. 6. Cf. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, I.i.76–8 and *Comus*, ll. 742–3.

ll. 25–6. See William Collins, *The Passions. An Ode for Music*, l. 60.

ll. 41–2. References to *Othello* and *The Faerie Queene*.

'Yes! full surely 'twas the Echo'

Composed c.15 June 1806. Published 1807. W noted: ‘The echo came from Nabscar, when I was walking on the opposite side of Rydal Mere’ (IF note). In a very fine passage on the sights and sounds of early summer in the *Guide W*

mentions: ‘an imaginative influence in the voice of the cuckoo, when that voice has taken possession of a deep mountain valley, very different from any thing which can be excited by the same sound in a flat country’ (*Prose*, II, 228).

Lines. Composed at Grasmere . . .

Composed early September 1806. Published 1807. The statesman is Charles James Fox (b. 24 January 1749, d. 13 September 1806). W sent a copy of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) to Fox, with a letter, 14 Jan. 1801, which gives an idea of his estimation of the man.

l. 10. W’s note in 1807 refers to a phrase from the opening line of Michelangelo’s Sonnet 103, ‘importuna e grave salma’, which W translated twice. See Curtis, *P2V*, 535. The second version was published in the sequence ‘Memorials of a Tour in Italy, 1837’ in *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years* (1842).

Elegiac Stanzas

Composed May–June 1806. Published 1807. In this poem, more than in any other save *The Prelude*, past and present, life and art, interact. The ruined Peele Castle is off the southern-most tip of the Lake District, opposite Rampside, where W stayed in late summer 1794. Sir George Beaumont’s painting ‘A Storm: Peele Castle’ was exhibited in 1806, and W probably saw it at the Royal Academy Private View 2 May 1806. The painting, which depicts a ship labouring past Peele Castle in very heavy seas, was engraved as the frontispiece for volume II of W’s *Poems* (1815). Two versions of the painting exist, one now in the collection of the Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, and the other in Leicester Museum and Art Gallery.

l. 36. *deep distress*. W’s brother John (b. 1772) went down with his ship, the *Earl of Abergavenny*, off the south coast of England on 5 February 1805. See Alethea Hayter, *The Wreck of the Abergavenny* (2002).

l. 42. *Him*. John Wordsworth. *deplere*. Lament, mourn for.

l. 54. *Kind*. Now obsolete usage meaning ‘human kind’.

l. 60. *Not without hope*. Edward Wilson, *Review of English Studies* 43 (1992), 75–80, pointed out the allusion to St Paul’s First Epistle to the Thessalonians, 4:13, words to which reference is made in the Collect at the graveside in the Book of Common Prayer’s ‘Order for the Burial of the Dead’: ‘O merciful God . . . who also hath taught us, by his holy Apostle Saint Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in him.’

Ode (‘There was a time’)

Composed March 1802–March 1804. Published 1807. Exact history of composition uncertain, but generally agreed that stanzas i–iv belong to 1802 and the rest to 1804. See Reed, II, 27 and Curtis, *P2V*, 271. In 1807 this ode was set apart as the culminating poem in the volumes and was generally distin-

guished through typographical layout in later editions. It is clearly W's major achievement in the genre. The title from 1815 became 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality From Recollections of Early Childhood', added, according to Henry Crabb Robinson, at his urging, 'to guide the reader to a perception of its drift'. From 1815 three lines from 'My heart leaps up' were added as epigraph. The epigraph in 1807, from Virgil's *Eclogues*, IV, i, translates: 'Let us sing a loftier strain'.

In his long IF note W describes the poem's origins in his childhood's 'sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me'. For this and other relevant documentation too long for quotation here, see Curtis, *P2V*, 428–30. C's 'Dejection: An Ode' (1802) engages in dialogue with stanzas i–iv and is, in turn, answered by the development of W's poem.

ll. 58 ff. In the IF note W explains his poetic use of this fiction:

a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations, and among all persons acquainted with classic literature is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. . . . I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a Poet.

l. 103. W's quotation marks acknowledge a borrowing from Daniel's *Musophilus* in the sonnet to Fulke Greville, l. 1.

ll. 117–23. On our early 'intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable' see *Essays upon Epitaphs* (1810), above p. 532. See also *Biographia Literaria*, Ch. xxii, where C discusses the passage and objects to 'the frightful notion of lying *awake* in his grave'. W cut ll. 121–4 after 1815. See also DW's *Journal* entry 29 April 1802: recording W's thoughts about lying quietly 'in the grave, to hear the *peaceful* sounds of the earth & just to know that ones dear friends were near.'

l. 144. In the IF note, W recalled that when young,

I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence & I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from but inherent in my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we all have reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character.

l. 156. An echo of l. 50 of 'An Address to Silence' published in the *Weekly Entertainer*, 6 March 1797, which W knew.

OTHER POEMS 1800–1808

'When first I journeyed hither'

Composed 1800–4. Revised version published as 'When to the Attractions of the Busy World' in 1815. This text from MS follows Curtis, *P2V*, 563–7.

W recalled that ‘The grove was a favourite haunt with us all while we lived at Town-End’ (IF note).

ll. 1–5. W and DW arrived in Grasmere to begin life there on 20 December 1799. ‘John’s Grove’ was just above Town-End, the little community just outside the main village where Dove Cottage is situated. John Wordsworth stayed with them January–September 1800.

ll. 41–9. John Wordsworth (1772–1805), who also attended Hawkshead School, near ‘Esthwaite’s shore’ (l. 75), joined the East India Company’s *Earl of Abergavenny* in 1789. He was drowned when this ship, which he now captained, went down on 5–6 February 1805. For a biographical account see *The Letters of John Wordsworth*, ed. Carl H. Ketcham (1969) and Alethea Hayter, *The Wreck of the Abergavenny* (2002).

ll. 85–91. In a letter of 11 Feb. 1805 W wrote of John that he was ‘meek, affectionate, silently enthusiastic, loving all quiet things, and a Poet in every thing but words’. See also W’s letter of 23 Feb. 1805 about John’s love of Nature. DW’s tribute in a letter of 15–17 March 1805 was that ‘he had so fine an eye that no distinction was unnoticed by him, and so tender a feeling that he never noticed anything in vain’, a description that strikingly resembles C’s description in a letter of 13 July 1802 of the sensuous apprehension of a true poet.

‘Farewell, thou little Nook of mountain ground’

Composed May–June 1802. Published 1815. In her journal for 29 May 1802 DW describes this as W’s ‘poem on going for Mary’. W and DW set off on 9 July for Gallow Hill, the farm of Mary Hutchinson’s brothers, Thomas and George, to set in train the visit to France to see Annette Vallon and their daughter, Caroline, and then W’s marriage to Mary Hutchinson on 4 October.

l. 3. Fairfield is part of the mountain range to the north and east of Dove Cottage.

l. 9. *the Shore*. Of Grasmere lake.

l. 18. *two months*. Actually 9 July to 6 October 1802.

l. 56. *one song*. ‘The Sparrow’s Nest’, p. 260.

Ejaculation at the Grave of Burns

Composed 1803–7. Not published. Greatly expanded 1835 into ‘At the Grave of Burns. 1803’ (not included in this edition). An ejaculation is a spontaneous and sudden utterance.

ll. 16–18. In a MS note W directs the reader to Burns’s ‘To Ruin’, in which the poet solicits the ‘friendly aid’ and ‘cold embrace’ of Death.

To the Daisy (‘Sweet Flower!’)

This and the following two elegies for John Wordsworth (see note to ‘Elegiac Stanzas’ above, p. 754) were composed late May–July 1805, and exist in fair

copies in one MS notebook. ‘To the Daisy’ was published 1815. A revision of ‘I only looked for pain and grief’ was published as ‘Elegiac Verses, in Memory of my Brother, John Wordsworth’ in 1842. ‘Distressful gift!’ was not published by W.

I. 13. *free for life*. It was hoped that John Wordsworth would make enough money from his venture in the *Earl of Abergavenny* to become independent. Carl Ketcham in the introduction to *The Letters of John Wordsworth* (1969) gives an account of the voyages W refers to in the poem. See also Alethea Hayter, *op.cit.*

II. 15–28. In a letter of 7 Aug. 1805 W said that the poem ‘was written in remembrance of a beautiful letter of my Brother John, sent to us from Portsmouth’. On 2–9 April 1801 John had written:

I have been on shore this afternoon to stretch my legs upon the Isle of White . . . the evening Primroses are beautiful—& the daisies after sunset are like little *white* stars upon the dark green fields . . . We are painting the ship and making all as smart. Never ship was like us—indeed we are not a *little* proud.

II. 36–42. JW’s body was recovered 20 March 1805. A committee of enquiry cleared him of blame for the wreck.

‘I only looked for pain and grief’

See note above.

I. 6. W’s lengthy note in 1842 identifies the plant as moss campion (*Silene acaulis*). W had acquired in 1801 William Withering, *An Arrangement of British Plants . . . , and an Introduction to the Study of Botany*, and a botanical microscope.

I. 41. DW’s *Journal* 29 Sept. 1800 records: ‘John left us. Wm. & I parted with him in sight of Ulswater.’ In 1843 W could remember the spot exactly: ‘The point is 2 or 3 yards below the outlet of Grisedale Tarn on a foot-road by which a horse may pass to Paterdale—a ridge of Helvelyn on the left, & the summit of Fairfield on the right’ (IF note to ‘Elegiac Verses’). JW did not return to Grasmere.

‘Distressful gift! this Book receives’

Curtis, *P2V*, 6, speculates on this volume, which does not survive.

II. 38–43. See W’s letter about John, 23 Feb. 1805: ‘I trust in God that I shall not want fortitude but my loss is great, and irreparable.’

St Paul’s

Composed April–early autumn 1808. Not published by W. Title given by De Selincourt, *PW*, IV, 374–5. For an account of composition, see Joseph Kishel (ed.), *The Tuft of Primroses, with Other Late Poems for The Recluse* (1986), 3–5. Having passed the night at C’s lodgings above the *Courier* offices in the

Strand, W set off at 7.00 a.m. on 3 April 1808 towards the City. W describes the experience which is the basis for the poem in a letter of 8 April.

The Prelude

Composed 1798–1850 A version in two books was entered into fair-copy manuscripts in 1799. See above pp. 162–86. The thirteen-book poem was completed by 1805: the text printed here largely follows one of the two fair-copy manuscripts, MS A. The fourteen-book poem, published and given its title by W's widow and executors on his death in 1850, was essentially ready by 1839. For all three texts, and indispensable accounts of the history of composition and discussion of textual states, see Stephen Parrish (ed.), *The Prelude, 1798–1799* (1977); Mark L. Reed (ed.), *The Thirteen-Book Prelude*, 2 vols (1991); W. J. B. Owen (ed.), *The Fourteen-Book Prelude* (1985).

During the summer of 1798, towards the end of his period of greatest intimacy with C, W conceived the plan for *The Recluse*, the philosophical poem discussed in the notes to *Home at Grasmere*, pp. 734–5. *The Prelude*, never so called by W, began as a work of self-analysis and intellectual and emotional stock-taking, addressed to C. See I, 640–74; II, 466–84. In 1803, *The Recluse* languishing, W returned to his autobiographical poem and greatly enlarged its scope, including now a fuller treatment both of his own life, of politics and of Romantic aesthetics. The poem's structure underwent many changes, as W expanded it from a two to a five-book version and then further to the thirteen-book poem printed here, but throughout this later stage of development it is clear that the ascent of Snowdon which opens Book XIII was designed as the climax of the whole.

The Prelude refers to W's own experiences, to historical events, to aesthetic and philosophic concepts, to other literature. The notes below necessarily confine themselves to identifying people, places, and events and to giving only such textual information as contributes to an understanding of the growth of the poem's structure. For fuller annotation see the Cornell Wordsworth volumes listed above and Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (eds), *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850* (the Norton *Prelude*) (1979).

Book One

ll. 1–115. The opening celebrates W's sense of release and purposefulness when he went to Grasmere in late 1799. Allusions at ll. 6–7 and ll. 15–19 to Exodus 13:3 and the concluding lines of *Paradise Lost* establish the literary rather than the geographically specific nature of the passage and in particular of the 'city' of l. 7.

l. 46. *redundant*. Superfluous, overflowing.

l. 82. The Ws moved to Dove Cottage, Grasmere on 20 December 1799.

l. 104. Named after Aeolus, God of Winds, the Aeolian harp, a set of strings across a sounding box designed to catch the winds, was seen in the

eighteenth century as an emblem of the responsive poetic mind. See C's poem 'The Aeolian Harp'.

l. 121. *self-congratulation*. Rejoicing.

ll. 151–2. See *Paradise Lost*, I, 19–22.

l. 180. See *Paradise Lost*, IX, 25–41.

ll. 186–8. Mithridates (131–63 BC), King of Pontus, defeated by Pompey in 66 BC, associated by Gibbon in *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* with Odin, who led his tribe northwards, awaiting vengeance on the Romans.

l. 190. Sertorius, Roman general (c.112–72 BC) who ruled Spain. On his assassination his followers were said to have fled to the Canaries, where they survived until conquered by the Spaniards in the fifteenth century.

l. 205. A note in 1850 refers to 'Dominique de Gourgues, a French gentleman who went in 1568 to Florida to avenge the massacre of the French by the Spaniards there'.

l. 211. Gustavus I of Sweden (1496–1560), who lifted the Danish yoke in 1521–3, by raising revolt in the mining region of Dalecarlia.

l. 213. William Wallace (c.1272–1305), Scottish patriot warrior, executed by Edward I. As Reed, *Prelude*, 112, points out, W's friend John Stoddart recommended Wallace as a subject for an epic in his *Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland* (1801).

l. 234. Orpheus, legendary singer of early Greece, was famed as a philosopher as well as a musician.

l. 270. See the parable of the false steward, Matthew 25:14–30.

l. 271. The 1799 two-part *Prelude* began with this abrupt question.

l. 278. W was born at Cockermouth in the northern Lake District; 'sweet birthplace' alludes to C's 'Frost at Midnight', l. 28.

l. 309. W entered Hawkshead Grammar School in May 1779. The region around Hawkshead and the lake Esthwaite is the setting for many of the childhood incidents described.

l. 317. *springes*. Snares.

l. 376. *Patterdale*. At the south-western side of Ullswater. Grevel Lindop's identification is now generally accepted that the 'craggy ridge' (l. 399) is Stybarrow Crag and the 'huge cliff' (l. 407) is Glenridding Dod. See Lindop's *A Literary Guide to the Lake District* (1993), 317–18.

l. 497. *characters*. Distinguishing marks, signs.

l. 570. *Bothnic main*. the northern Baltic.

l. 645. The first of many tributes to C in the poem. See especially VI, 269 ff.

l. 653. W has in mind the great task of writing *The Recluse*.

l. 661. Echo of C's 'Fears in Solitude', l. 187.

Book Two

l. 39. Hawkshead Town Hall, built in 1790.

l. 82. The allusion is to the supposedly frugal way of life of Horace on his Sabine farm.

l. 96. *fountain*. Spring.

l. 108. Furness Abbey in the south-west of the Lake District.

l. 141. *breathed*. Allowed our horses to regain breath.

l. 151. W refers to the White Lion at Bowness and the still surviving house built on Belle Isle for the Curwen family in the early 1780s.

l. 174. Robert Greenwood, later Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. See *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, 78–80.

l. 228. The image is of classifying objects or specimens as in a collection.

l. 314. W draws attention to an echo of *Paradise Lost*, IX, 249.

l. 349. School began at 6 a.m. in summer and 7 a.m. in winter. The friend was John Fleming.

l. 381. *plastic*. Shaping.

l. 448. See C's letter of c.10 Sept. 1799 in which he urgently entreats W to write a poem 'in blank verse, addressed to those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind'. For an account of the social-political climate in what were for many certainly 'these times of fear', see John Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (2006) and Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (1979).

Book Three

l. 1. W entered St John's College, Cambridge, in October 1787.

l. 37. W refers to the fashion for powdering the hair.

l. 63. *Recusants*. Those who resist authority.

l. 182. W invokes Milton who had declared in *Paradise Lost*, IX, 28–9, that his 'heroic argument' was as worthy of epic treatment as the themes of classical epic.

l. 274. Cincinnatus was said to have been ploughing when summoned to be Roman dictator in 458 BC.

l. 276. A reference to Chaucer's *Reeve's Tale* set in Trumpington.

l. 286. In tribute to Milton W echoes *Paradise Lost*, VII, 27.

l. 312. Cassandra repeatedly prophesied the fall of Troy, but was not listened to.

l. 427. *Science*. Learning, knowledge.

ll. 452–4. An image, which reminds one of the range of W's reading in books of travel, drawn from William Bartram's *Travels Through North and South Carolina* (1791).

l. 486. Belisarius, a fallen Byzantine general, was said to have begged 'Date obolum Belisario'.

l. 488. The most famous early-sixteenth-century scholars, Martin Bucer (1491–1551), Desiderius Erasmus (?1466–1536), and Philip Melancthon (1497–1560).

Book Four

l. 11. W describes returning to Hawkshead and, at l. 15, to meeting again Ann Tyson, with whom he had lodged while at school. She died in 1796, aged 83.

l. 237. *those fair Seven*. The Pleiades or Seven Sisters. W was born under the planet Jupiter on 7 April.

l. 318. *promiscuous rout*. Without modern overtones means a varied company.

l. 335. *Grain-tinctured*. W recalls Milton's 'Sky-tinctured grain' of *Paradise Lost*, V, 285; 'grain' means 'fast-dyed'.

l. 361. The meeting with the Discharged Soldier was originally written as an independent poem. See Butler and Green, 277–82.

Book Five

l. 25. W draws attention to a borrowing from Shakespeare's Sonnet 64, l. 14.

l. 60. *Don Quixote* (1605), which W read as a child. See Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770–1799* (1993), 25–6.

l. 71. The dream is a reworking of one experienced by Descartes in 1619. It is generally agreed that C drew W's attention to it.

l. 172. *ingrate*. Ungrateful.

l. 201. *numerous*. Rhythmical, as used in *Paradise Lost*, V, 150 by Milton, who is referred to in the following lines.

l. 238. Here and in the following section W refers to the current interest in educational theory and to books of moral education for the young. See note to 'The Tables Turned', p. 721.

l. 256. W's mother died in early March 1778.

l. 271. *virtual*. Powerful.

l. 307. *notices*. Remarks, observations.

l. 322. *terms of art*. Technical language, jargon.

l. 332. *cunning*. Arts, necessary knowledge.

l. 362. *pinfold*. Pound, enclosure.

ll. 364–7. Reference to heroes of romance. Fortunatus's magical cap would take him wherever he wished. Jack the Giant-killer's coat made him invisible. Robin Hood led the band of outlaws who robbed the rich to give to the poor. Sabra was rescued from a dragon by St George and became his wife. See C's declaration, 16 October 1797, of the importance of letting children read 'Romances, and Relations of Giants and Magicians, and Genii'.

l. 383. *engines*. Machines.

l. 389. W interweaves memories of himself and a schoolfriend William Raincock. The episode was first cast in the first person, amongst the early drafts for the 1799 version of the poem, but put into the third person when published as 'There was a boy' in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800).

l. 470. The drowned man was James Jackson, schoolmaster, who died 18 June 1779.

- l. 584. John Fleming, mentioned II, 352.
- l. 598. *inordinate*. Unordered.

Book Six

l. 1. Furness is the ancient name, still used, for the south-western area of the Lake District.

l. 6. *Granta*. Cambridge, from a name for the River Cam.

ll. 25–6. 1788–90.

l. 60. W's birthday was 7 April 1804. He had recently completed the 'Ode: Intimations' in which he declares: 'The thought of our past years in me doth breed | Perpetual benedictions.'

ll. 130–4. In *Biographia Literaria*, Ch. i, C points out the dangers of composition in classical languages which was forced on schoolboys.

ll. 160–74. DW had copied out in 1798–9 the passage from John Newton's *Authentic Narrative* (1784) on which W draws here.

ll. 200–2. James Thomson, *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), I, xv.

l. 216. W and DW were reunited in summer 1787, DW having lived with relatives since the death of their mother in 1778.

l. 220. Brougham Castle stands to the east of Penrith where the rivers Emont and Lowther join. Sidney did not, in fact, visit it. His *Arcadia* was written for his sister's delight.

l. 233. *Another Maid*. Mary Hutchinson (1770–1859), who became W's wife in 1802.

l. 242. The Border Beacon stands above Penrith and is the site of the episode related at XI, 278–315.

ll. 249–60. C set off for the Mediterranean in April 1804.

l. 260. *gales Etesian*. North-westerly summer winds in the Mediterranean.

l. 276. C was at Christ's Hospital in London, a school noted for its blue-coat uniform, 'livery'.

l. 282. *thy native Stream*. The River Otter. W alludes in these lines to C's own 'Sonnet to the River Otter'.

l. 292. C entered Jesus College, Cambridge in 1791. After a very troubled period he left in 1794 without a degree.

l. 309. *Schoolmen*. Medieval philosophers.

l. 339. *Fellow Student*. Robert Jones, whose family home was in North Wales.

l. 357. *federal Day*. 13 July 1790, the eve of the anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille. For a well-illustrated account of the pedestrian tour, see Donald E. Hayden, *Wordsworth's Walking Tour of 1790* (1983).

l. 404. See Genesis 18:1–15.

l. 412. The so-called 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688.

l. 453. The first recorded ascent of Mont Blanc had been made only recently in 1786.

l. 572. Echoes Milton's description of God in *Paradise Lost*, V, 165: 'Him first, him last, him midst, and without end'.

l. 587. *Locarno's Lake*. Lake Maggiore.

ll. 601–2. In *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), on which this whole description of W's Alpine experiences draws.

l. 691. Troops of the 'États Beligiques Unis', supported by England and her allies in opposing Emperor Leopold II.

Book Seven

l. 4. In October 1804 W refers back to the composition of I, 1–54, most probably in November 1799.

l. 8. Scawfell and Blencathara are mountains in the Lake District.

ll. 13–20. Before C's departure for the Mediterranean W had been confident that *The Prelude* was nearly completed. The 'outward hindrance' of l. 20 included the birth of daughter, Dorothy (later known as Dora) in August.

l. 50. For W's favourite grove, 'John's grove', see 'When first I journeyed hither', p. 283.

l. 58. W took his BA degree in January 1791.

l. 95. Philip Braithwaite. See *Wordsworth's Hawkshead*, 42.

l. 117. In the story Dick Whittington, about to quit the city, hears the bells say 'Turn again Whittington | Lord Mayor of London'.

l. 123. Pleasure gardens on the Thames, famous for the brilliance of their entertainments, lighting, and display.

l. 131. The 'Giants' were very large wooden figures of Gog and Magog standing at the entrance to Guildhall at the heart of the City of London. They were destroyed in the Second World War.

l. 132. *Bedlam*. The Bethlehem Hospital for the Insane, which had statues of maniacs at its gates.

l. 135. The London Monument commemorates the fire of London of 1666. The Armoury is in the Tower of London.

l. 183. Robert Boyle (1627–91); 'Dr' John Graham (1745–94), was a notorious quack, who opened a Temple of Health at the Adelphi in 1779. Its most celebrated attraction was the Celestial Bed, guaranteed to cure impotence.

l. 190. *raree-show*. A peep-show.

l. 220. In his essay 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis', Charles Lamb describes the crippled 'King of the Beggars', Samuel Horsey. Lamb guided W through London's variety in September 1802.

ll. 255–80. W refers to Panorama exhibitions. See Richard Altick's richly detailed compendium, *The Shows of London* (1978).

l. 289. Sadler's Wells in Islington was 'half-rural' in the 1790s.

l. 313. Thespis was the sixth-century BC founder of Greek tragedy.

l. 322. In 1803 a melodrama at Sadler's Wells told the story of Mary Robinson, daughter of the innkeeper of Buttermere in the Lake District, who was seduced into a bigamous marriage by one John Hatfield.

l. 346. The River Cocker flows from Buttermere to W's birthplace Cocker-mouth.

- l. 399. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. See Daniel 3:23–6.
- l. 416. W's journey to Cambridge, October 1787.
- l. 441. *lustres*. Chandeliers.
- l. 526. *One*. Prime Minister William Pitt the younger (1759–1806), a spell-binding orator in the House of Commons.
- l. 528. See *Henry V*, IV.iii.51–5.
- l. 533. *Aurora*. Goddess of the dawn.
- ll. 560–2. The preacher quotes from Solomon Gessner's *The Death of Abel* (1758), Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742–5), and the Gaelic poems, supposedly by Ossian, brought to light by James Macpherson in 1760–3. 'Morven' is the north-west coast of Scotland in Ossian.
- l. 603. W refers to the Lake District legend about ghostly horsemen in *An Evening Walk*, 179–87.
- l. 651. St Bartholomew's Fair was held annually in September at Smithfield, where Protestant martyrs were burned in Queen Mary's reign (1553–8). See Altick, *Shows of London*, 40–2.
- l. 675. *salt-box*. A rudimentary instrument, in which salt or similar substance was rattled.
- l. 686. Madame Tussaud's wax-work collection opened in London in 1802.
- l. 689. *Promethean*. Inventive, creative. In Greek myth Prometheus fashioned man out of clay.

Book Eight

- l. 1. Helvellyn is a peak a little to the north-east of Grasmere and here looks down on the annual Grasmere fair.
- l. 75. *complacency*. Without modern overtones, means tranquil satisfaction.
- l. 86. *redounding*. Eddying, swirling.
- l. 123. Pleasure gardens of the Chinese emperor, details taken from John Barrow's *Travels in China* (1804).
- ll. 183–91. W refers to literary presentation of pastoral life in Greek and Latin poetry; 'Arcadia', in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* and in Spenser's *The Shepheard's Calendar*.
- l. 221. *Household Dame*. Ann Tyson. Her tale was originally part of composition for 'Michael' in late 1800.
- ll. 229–43. W refers to the range of mountains and valleys to the east and north-east of Grasmere.
- ll. 314–24. W again invokes poetic celebration of pastoral life. Galesus and Clitumnus are rivers mentioned in Virgil's *Georgics*. Lucretilis is the hill overlooking Horace's Sabine farm, mentioned in *Odes*, I, 17.
- l. 339. *flagelet*. A pipe like the modern recorder.
- ll. 349–53. Over the winter of 1798–9 W and DW stayed at Goslar, once the seat of the emperor of the Franks, near the Hartz, 'Hercynian', mountains.

ll. 420-2. Corin and Phyllis are common names in pastoral poetry. *Coronal*. Usually a circlet or crown, here a ring.

l. 507. W draws attention to a borrowing from 'I'll never love thee more', by James Graham, first Marquis of Montrose (1612-50).

l. 681. An echo of 'Lycidas', ll. 104-6.

l. 713. *Antiparos*. One of the Cyclades islands in the Aegean. *Yordas*. a cave in north-west Yorkshire, visited by W in May 1800.

l. 763. *punctual*. Confined to one spot.

l. 771. *popular*. Republican, i.e. ruled by the people.

ll. 819-23. W draws attention to borrowing from *Paradise Lost*, XI, 203-7.

Book Nine

l. 31. *A year*. W actually only passed January-May 1791 in London.

l. 39. W reached Orleans in December 1791 and moved to Blois, the hometown of Annette Vallon, in early 1792.

ll. 43-7. Just as W had visited the famous sights in London, so in Paris he toured places made famous since the Revolution of 1789. He mentions the 'field of Mars' where the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille had been celebrated, 14 July 1790; the Pantheon, the 'Dome of Geneviève'; the National Assembly; and the Jacobin Club.

l. 78. *Le Brun*. Charles Le Brun (1619-90). His *La Madeleine Repetante* is now in the Louvre.

l. 179. *Carra, Gorsas*. Journalists who were executed under Robespierre's Reign of Terror in October 1793.

l. 294. Michael Beaupuy (1755-96). Though wounded in the civil war of the Vendée, he did not die there, as W thought, l. 431-2, but on the eastern front in Germany, 19 October 1796.

ll. 368-71. The sense is compressed. It means: 'making social life as just and pure as individual life is in the wise and good'.

ll. 399-400. Lake District rivers: The Rothay at Grasmere, the Greta at Keswick, the Derwent at Cockermouth.

ll. 416-24. Dion liberated Sicily in 357 from the rule of Dionysius the Younger. According to Plutarch, Dion was supported in negotiation by Plato and in campaign by others of philosophical bent such as Eudemus and Timonides.

ll. 454-6. *Angelica . . . Erminia*. From Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

l. 483. Romorantin, once a provincial capital, near Blois.

l. 493. *Chambord*. A magnificent château in the Loire valley built by Francis I.

l. 555. For the account of Vaudracour and Julia W may have drawn on a story he heard. F. M. Todd in *Politics and the Poet* (1957), 217-28, gives evidence that W was also indebted to an episode in Helen Maria Williams's *Letters Written in France . . .* (1790). In the story W deals in an oblique way

with some aspects of his relationship with Annette Vallon, who bore him a daughter in 1792. W was separated from Annette by the outbreak of war between England and France and did not meet her again until 1802, the year of his marriage to Mary Hutchinson.

l. 580 *outside*. Surface.

ll. 638–42. See *Romeo and Juliet*, III.v.2.

l. 667. A 'lettre de cachet' was an order for imprisonment without trial.

Book Ten

l. 4. W left Orleans at the end of October 1792 and arrived in England by late December.

ll. 9–13. Louis XVI was deposed on 10 August 1792, and the armies of Austria and Prussia repelled at Valmy on 20 September 1792.

l. 31. 22 September 1792 saw the proclamation of the Republic.

ll. 46–8. The Swiss Guard of the Palace of the Tuileries killed many insurgents before being themselves slaughtered. The corpses were burnt in the Place du Caroussel in front of the Tuileries.

l. 65. In September 1792 many prisoners were executed after summary trial.

ll. 70–6. W echoes *As You Like It*, I.i.13–16 and *Macbeth*, II.ii.35–6. *manage* is the training of a horse.

l. 103. On 29 October 1792 Jean Baptiste Louvet de Couvrai (1760–97), writer and political activist, accused Robespierre of aiming at supreme power.

ll. 165–7. Harmodius and Aristogiton attempted to free Athens from tyranny in 504 BC. Both perished. Brutus took part in the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC.

ll. 205–10. A bill to abolish slave trading had been passed by the Commons in 1792 but 'baffled' by the Lords.

l. 230. On 1 February 1793 France declared war on Britain, now allied with Austria and Prussia.

l. 297. W spent late June–early August 1793 on the Isle of Wight.

l. 310–12. Robespierre achieved supreme power in July 1793 and unleashed the Reign of Terror in October, ostensibly to rid the Republic of its enemies within. The allusion here is to *Paradise Lost*, IV, 393–4, associating the French tyrants with Satan.

ll. 318–20. Notre Dame was established as the Temple of the Goddess of Reason on 10 November 1793.

ll. 352–4. Madame Roland's famous last words before she was guillotined in November 1793 were 'Oh Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name.'

l. 362. Hercules, while still in his cradle, throttled two snakes sent to kill him.

l. 455. W and Jones had stayed at Arras, the birthplace of Maximilien Robespierre, on 16 July 1790.

l. 468. 'Moloch, horrid king besmeared with blood | Of human sacrifice' (*Paradise Lost*, I, 392–3).

ll. 471–5. W was at Rampside on the south-west coast of the Lake District, near the estuary of the river Leven, August–September 1794.

l. 492. William Taylor (1754–86), headmaster of Hawkshead Grammar School, buried at Cartmel Priory.

l. 535. Robespierre was executed 28 July 1794.

l. 548. One of the labours of Hercules was the cleaning of the stables of King Augeas. He did it by diverting the rivers Alpheus and Peneus.

l. 549. *their own helper*. The guillotine.

ll. 559–66. A reference back to the boyhood episode of II, 99–144.

l. 600. W did not imagine that the worst spirits would become dominant in the French cause and that a war of defence would become one of territorial gain, as at l. 791.

l. 618. *Babel-like*. See Genesis 9:3–9.

l. 810. Almost certainly a reference to William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793). In this passage W selects only one aspect of Godwin's complex work, his emphasis on the power of human reason if fearlessly employed.

l. 905. W met C in September 1795. They corresponded and by 13 May 1796 C could refer to W as 'A very dear friend of mine, who is in my opinion the best poet of the age.'

l. 908. DW lived with W at Racedown House in Dorset from September 1795.

l. 940. Napoleon summoned Pope Pius VII to crown him Emperor on 2 December 1804. For English responses to his rise, see Simon Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (1995).

l. 950. Timoleo drove Dionysius the Younger from Syracuse in 343 BC.

l. 982. In 1804, the time of writing, Britain has now become the only hope for liberty against the French 'become oppressors in their turn' (791). See the sonnet 'England! the time is come', above p. 243.

l. 1003. See *Paradise Lost*, IV, 268–71.

ll. 1012–14. Empedocles (c.493–c.433 BC) is supposed to have thrown himself into Etna. Archimedes (c.287–212 BC), mathematician, was born at Syracuse.

ll. 1015–26. Theocritus, Sicilian pastoral poet (c.310–250 BC). The story of Comates is told in *Idyll*, VII, 78–83.

l. 1033. *Arethuse*. A spring at Syracuse, often mentioned in pastoral poetry.

l. 1036. *gratulatest*. Rejoice over.

l. 1037. *Votary*. Worshipper.

Book Eleven

l. 31. *distracted times*. W refers both, largely, to the years of tension and repression following the outbreak of war in 1793 and, personally, to his own

period of instability described in the previous book. Lines 40–136 recapitulate that period.

l. 108. *appanage*. Endowment.

ll. 155–63. W refers to the late-eighteenth-century cult of the picturesque. See Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800* (1989).

ll. 187–94. See ‘Tintern Abbey’, ll. 68–71.

l. 199. *A Maid*. Mary Hutchinson, who became W’s wife on 4 October 1802.

l. 258. The two ‘spots of time’, 257–315, 344–88, were composed in early 1799 for the two-part version of *The Prelude*, where they appeared naturally amongst other memories of childhood. The lines which now make a transition between them were written in early 1804 and have clear links with the ‘Ode: Intimations’, completed then.

l. 305. *Beacon*. Stone signal-beacon on a hill above Penrith built in 1719.

l. 317. *two dear Ones*. Mary Hutchinson and DW.

l. 366. W’s father, John Wordsworth, died 30 December 1783.

l. 367. *two brothers*. Richard (1768–1816) and John (1772–1805).

Book Twelve

ll. 78–80. *Statists*. Political theorists, such as Adam Smith whose *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), are alluded to here.

l. 158. *Bedlamites*. Lunatics, so called after the Bethlehem Hospital for the Insane in London.

l. 168. *vulgar*. Ordinary, without modern class connotation.

l. 315. W crossed Salisbury Plain (‘the plain of Sarum’) on foot mid-summer 1793. His ‘Salisbury Plain’, written 1793–4, records his mood and some of his experiences, and is quoted from verbatim in this passage. The poem presents Stonehenge as a Druidic temple and accepts the belief that the Druids performed human sacrifice, burning victims to death in huge wicker baskets. ‘Salisbury Plain’ was revised in 1795 and it was this version that C recalls hearing with delight in *Biographia Literaria*, Ch. iv. For texts and history of composition, see Stephen Gill (ed.), *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth* (1975).

l. 365. C read the revised poem, ‘Adventures on Salisbury Plain’, early in 1796 and records this response to it in *Biographia Literaria*, Ch. iv.

Book Thirteen

l. 5. W made a pedestrian tour of North Wales with Robert Jones in the summer of 1791. *Bethkelet*. Beddgelert. W revisited in 1824 and was dismayed by what he found: ‘new and formal houses have supplanted the old rugged and tufted cottages; and a smart hotel has taken the place of the lowly public-house in which I took refreshment almost thirty years ago’ (letter, 20 Sept. 1824).

l. 11. *glaring*. Clammy, sticky, from northern dialect 'glarry' or 'glaurie'.

l. 113. For the distinction see *Paradise Lost*, V, 487-90.

l. 136. *jealousy*. Vigilance.

l. 350. Raisley Calvert, brother of W's schoolfriend William Calvert, died of consumption in January 1795. W had been with him during his decline and received a legacy of £900.

ll. 386-90. W once again refers to *The Recluse*, whose projected substantiality was to justify this extended personal work.

ll. 393-8. W refers to 1798 when he and C lived in the Quantocks in northern Somerset and wrote the poems alluded to here: 'The Ancient Mariner', 'Christabel' (Part I), 'The Idiot Boy', 'The Thorn'.

l. 416. *a private grief*. The death of W's brother John, drowned in the wreck of his ship, the *Earl of Abergavenny*, 5 February 1805.

FROM *THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA* (1809)

Published in *The Courier*, December 1808 and January 1809 and in full as a separate publication in May 1809. In August 1808 British troops under Sir Arthur Wellesley (the future Duke of Wellington) routed a French force at Vimiero in Portugal, but the advantage was not pursued by Wellesley's successors, who agreed a Convention permitting the withdrawal of French men and arms. W—amongst others—was incensed at what he judged a betrayal of the Portuguese and Spanish in their struggle against Napoleon. The passion that had fuelled the sonnets he had been writing since 1802—poems grouped in successively expanding editions as 'Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty'—now poured out in a prose pamphlet in which, to quote its subtitle, the Convention of Cintra is 'brought to the test of those Principles, by which alone the Independence and Freedom of Nations can be Preserved or Recovered'. C acutely remarked that in struggling with *The Convention of Cintra* W was really at work on *The Recluse*: 'a considerable part [of the pamphlet] is almost a self-robbery from some great philosophical poem, of which it would form an appropriate part, & be fitlier attuned to the high dogmatic Eloquence, the oracular [tone] of impassioned Blank Verse' (letter, 13 June 1809). For full text, compositional history, and annotation, see *Prose*, I, 191-415.

FROM *ESSAYS UPON EPITAPHS*, I AND III (1810)

Essay I published in C's periodical, *The Friend*, 22 February 1810 and in 1814 appended by W as a note to Book Five of *The Excursion*. *The Friend* ceased publication in March 1810 and Essays II and III were not published by W. The text of *Essay I* is from *The Excursion*; the excerpt from the third *Essay* is from *Prose*, II. The passages included here contain much of W's most forceful writing on the great topics of human life and on the power(s) of language, and serve as commentary on many of his finest poems, but on 'Elegiac Stanzas . . . Peele

Castle', the 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality', *The Excursion*, and *The Prelude* in particular. The revealing Fenwick Note to the 'Ode' is a reprise of much of *Essays Upon Epitaphs*, I.

FROM *THE EXCURSION* (1814)

For the genesis of the poem see the note to *Home at Grasmere* above and for full details and indispensable annotation, see *The Excursion*, ed. Sally Bushell, James A. Butler, and Michael C. Jaye (2007). Work on *The Excursion* as a distinct poem dates from 1810 on. It was published as a handsome quarto in late July/early August 1814, in an edition of 500 copies. A second edition appeared in 1820.

The poem had its origins in the plan W conceived with C in 1798 for 'a philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, *The Recluse*; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a Poet living in retirement', as he explained in the Preface to *The Excursion* in 1814. The poem consists of nine books of discussion between the Poet, the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor as they walk in the Lake District. The Solitary has retreated to the Lake District, nursing the disappointment of a painful life, details of which he relates. The Wanderer attempts to lift him from despondency, as does the Pastor.

The Excursion was the only part of *The Recluse* published. From 1814 to 1836 the title-page of successive editions announced *The Excursion* as only a portion of a larger work, but after 1836 that explanation was dropped. For other work towards *The Recluse*, see Joseph F. Kishel (ed.), *The Tuft of Primroses, with Other Late Poems for The Recluse* (1986) and for discussion of the whole project see Kenneth R. Johnston, *Wordsworth and The Recluse* (1984). As a first offering towards *The Recluse*, *The Excursion* was an enormous disappointment to its co-begetter, C (see his letter of 30 May 1815), but for Keats it was one of the 'three things to rejoice at in this Age' (letter, 10 Jan. 1818).

In all the extracts the line numbers are keyed to the Cornell Wordsworth edition of *The Excursion*, ed. Bushell, Butler, and Jaye.

Prospectus to *The Recluse*

In the Preface to *The Excursion*, W explained not only the poem's genesis but also its relation to both an unpublished self-examination in verse (the first public announcement of the existence of *The Prelude*) and the rest of his 'minor pieces'. After presenting a vision of the organic connectedness of all his work, W brought the Preface to a climax with the following lines, 'taken from the conclusion of the first Book of the Recluse', as a 'kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem'. The first book of *The Recluse* referred to was the unpublished *Home at Grasmere*. See notes above to that poem and ll. 959–1048 of it in particular, pp. 734–5.

Book One

See note to *The Ruined Cottage* above, pp. 731–2. Annotation given there is not duplicated here.

l. 112. The hills of Atholl are in Perthshire, Scotland. In earlier versions of *The Ruined Cottage* the Pedlar/Wanderer is of Cumbrian (Lake District) birth.

l. 345. *Savoyard*. A native of Savoy, a region of South East France, an independent kingdom until 1792.

l. 346. See note to ‘Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland’ above, p. 744.

ll. 399–400. Cf. *Tempest*, I.ii.5–6.

ll. 968–9. An 1845 addition here stresses the strength of Margaret’s Christian faith. She becomes one ‘Who in her worst distress, had oftentimes felt | The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with soul | Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs, | From sources deeper far than deepest pain, | For the meek Sufferer.’

from Book Three

l. 400. *monastic brotherhood*. The passage was written in 1808 for *The Tuft of Primroses*, where it included an account of St. Basil, who founded a mountain retreat in the fourth century. See Joseph Kishel (ed.), *The Tuft of Primroses and Other Late Poems for The Recluse* (1986), pp. 48–9. The whole of the Solitary’s utterance relates also to the ‘Ode to Duty’ and *The White Doe of Rylstone*.

l. 102. One of the finest sonnets of *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822) is titled ‘Mutability’. See above p. 681.

from Book Four

(a)

l. 73. Cf. W’s ‘Ode to Duty’, above p. 223.

(b)

l. 681. *Tower*. Temple raised by the Chaldeans to Belus (Bel, Baal), a great Babylonian god.

l. 764. *Sceptic*. I.e. the Solitary.

ll. 845–55. The painter B. R. Haydon, friend of Wordsworth and Keats, noted in his copy of *The Excursion* (now in Cornell University library) against these lines, ‘Poor Keats used always to prefer this passage to all others.’

ll. 869–83. In Greek mythology Naiads were nymphs of lakes, river, and streams; Oreads, nymphs of the mountains; Zephyrs, west winds. Satyrs were half-men, half-goat. Pan was the god of flocks and herds and more generally a personification of the deity present in all things.

(c)

ll. 1200–71. This most important passage was composed for exposition by the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage* in 1798. See James Butler (ed.), *The Ruined Cottage and the Pedlar* (1979), 261–75, for the earlier version of the lines.

from Book Seven

l. 1002. In 1814 W's note acknowledges that for some of the phrasing of this 'Transit gloria mundi' passage he drew on the foundation charter of Furness Abbey.

from Book Nine

ll. 1–26. The Wanderer's exposition of the 'active principle' has its origins in work of late 1798, at the beginning of the conception of *The Recluse*. See Butler and Green, 309–10. By 1814, however, as the introduction to the final book of *The Excursion*, it leads to a call for national attention to education, especially of the poor, which locates the poem firmly in contemporary socio-political discourse. See the important note, p. 419, in the edition by Butler, Bushell, and Jaye, cited above.

FROM POEMS (1815)

The two-volume *Poems...including Lyrical Ballads, and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author* was published on or around 27 April 1815 in an edition of 500 copies. It was W's first collective edition, with a new preface and a supplementary essay (see pp. 601–13). In this edition poems were grouped according to a classification system which W had been pondering since *Poems, in Two Volumes* and which he expounds in the Preface. For discussion of it and references to further detailed study, see *Shorter Poems, 1807–1820*, ed. Carl H. Ketcham (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 26–32.

from the Preface to *Poems* (1815)

The two handsome volumes W published in 1815 were his first Collected Works and in them he presented his poems in classifications of his own which, however much varied in the many Collected Editions that followed, remained his preferred method of arrangement. The 'Preface', W's most extended critical statement since 1802, dwells particularly on two matters which had long concerned him: the distinction between powers of mind, chiefly Fancy and Imagination, predominant in the composition of particular poems, and the need so to arrange the poems as to 'assist the attentive Reader in perceiving their connection with each other'.

The 'Preface' and the 'Essay, Supplementary to the Preface', which was published at the end of the first volume of *Poems*, were both written about

January 1815. An account of composition, a commentary, and identification of allusions can be found in *Prose*, III, 23–107. W. J. B. Owen discusses the aesthetics of the ‘Preface’ in *Wordsworth as Critic*.

Characteristics of a Child three Years old

Composed most probably January 1813–May 1814. Published 1815. The child is Catherine Wordsworth (b. 6 September 1808, d. 4 June 1812).

ll. 12–13. See *Paradise Lost*, IX, 429.

Yew-Trees

Composed 1811–14. Published 1815. W visited the Lorton Vale yew-tree in late 1804 and composition may have begun then, but no MS evidence exists to support this attractive idea. The earliest extant version of the poem, composed after June 1811 (see Curtis, P2V, 605–6 and Reed, II, 37–8) reads:

—That vast eugh-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single in the midst
Of its own darkness as it stood of yore;
Nor those fraternal four in Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks, and each particular trunk a mass
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Upcoiling and inveterately convolv'd,—
Nor uninform'd with phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane, a pillar'd shade
On whose [] floor, 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 undisturb'd of mossy stone,
United worship, or in mute repose
To lie and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves;
Pass not the place unnoticed—ye will say
That Mona's druid oaks composed a fane
Less awful than this grove, as Earth so long
On its unwearied bosom has sustain'd
The undecaying pile, as drouth and frost,
The fires of heaven, have spared it, and the storms,
So in its hallowed uses may it stand
Forever spared by Man!—

In the IF note W said: ‘Calculating upon what I have observed of the slow growth of this tree in rocky situations, & of its durability, I have often thought that the one I am describing must have been as old as the Christian era.’ Clearly it was the yew’s identity as a mute survivor which moved W’s imagination to include in revision references to English warriors of the fourteenth century and to famous battles of the Hundred Years War. ‘Yew-Trees’ was one of the poems C chose to demonstrate that ‘in imaginative power [W] stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own’ (*Biographia Literaria*, Ch. xxii).

Lorton Vale and Borrowdale are in the western-central part of the Lake District, as is the mountain Glaramara. For photographs and further information see Michael G. Baron and Derek Denham, *Wordsworth and the Famous Lorton Yew Tree* (Lorton and Derwent Fells Local History Society, 2004).

Yarrow Visited

Composed September 1814. Published 1815. See note to ‘Yarrow Unvisited’, p. 749. W visited the Yarrow on 1 September 1814, in the company of James Hogg (see *Extempore Effusion*, pp. 696–7 and note) and Robert Anderson, to whose collection of *British Poets* W was much indebted and to which he pays tribute in the IF note to this poem. The note, which is too long to quote here, should be read in Curtis, *Fenwick Notes*, 27–8; Ketcham, 527; and *PW*, III, 450–1.

On 23 November 1814 W wrote: ‘Second parts, if much inferior to the first, are always disgusting, and as I had succeeded in *Yarrow Unvisited*, I was anxious that there should be no falling off; but that was unavoidable, perhaps from the subject, as imagination almost always transcends reality.’ This comment should be compared with *The Prelude*, VI, 452–61.

ll. 25–31. Allusions are embedded here to two poems, both called *The Braes of Yarrow*, by William Hamilton of Bangour (1704–54) and John Logan (1747–88), which W was particularly fond of.

l. 55. A graceful tribute to Scott. Newark’s Towers are the scene of his *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805).

Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture

Composed June 1811. Published 1815. The painting by Sir George Beaumont was of Bredon Hill and Cloud Hill in the neighbourhood of his house at Coleorton in Leicestershire. When the Wordsworths lived in the Rectory at Grasmere, 1811–13, the picture hung over the chimney-piece. W noted:

We resided only two years in this house; and during the last half of the time, which was after this poem had been written, we lost our two children Thomas and Catherine. Our sorrow upon these events often brought it to my mind, & cast me upon the support to which the last line of it gives expression, ‘The appropriate calm of blest eternity.’ (IF note)

'Surprized by joy—impatient as the Wind'

Composed 1813–October 1814. Published 1815. W noted: 'This was in fact suggested by my daughter Catherine, long after her death' (IF note). Catherine (b. 6 September 1808, d. 4 June 1812) was a much loved child, though 'the *arrantest* Mischief that ever lived' (MW, 1 August 1810).

FROM A LETTER TO A FRIEND OF ROBERT BURNS (1816)

The circumstances of the composition of this open letter to James Gray are complicated. Robert Burns died in 1796 and in 1800 an edition of his works appeared with a prefatory 'Life' by Dr James Currie. In 1815 this 'Life' was reissued by Alexander Peterkin, with a preface which moderated the view of Burns given by Currie. A further edition was called for, to be superintended by the poet's brother Gilbert Burns, and he, through their mutual friend Gray, made contact with W, 'exceedingly desirous', according to Gray, of obtaining W's opinion 'as to the best mode of conducting the defence' of his defamed brother. W's letter was transmitted to Gilbert Burns, who read it, Gray says, 'with feelings of unmingled pleasure' and it was published in 1816, the year of its composition.

Because of its attack on Francis Jeffrey the 'Letter' was taken by many to be merely a pretext for W to hit back at the influential critic who had savaged *The Excursion* and *The White Doe of Rylstone* within the past two years. There is some force in this judgement, but it is far from being the whole truth. W was genuinely concerned for the appreciation of a poet who had been important to him ever since his youth. He was also, and not improperly, concerned to lay down principles for the proper evaluation of a poet's work, and the place in evaluation of assessment of a poet's life, in opposition especially to Jeffrey who had mounted his attack on 'the Lake School' in increasingly personal terms. For full text and annotation, see *Prose*, III, 109–36.

FROM THE RIVER DUDDON (1820)

The River Duddon, a series of sonnets: Vaudracour and Julia: and other poems. To which is annexed, a Topographical Description of the Lakes in the North of England was published late April 1820 in an edition of 500 copies.

The River Duddon: Conclusion

Composed December 1818–March 1819. Published 1820. The conclusion of 'The River Duddon' sonnet sequence. This sonnet has been selected as the finest of the sequence and the one best able to stand alone. See the IF note to the whole, which is too long to quote here; *Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820–1845*, ed. Geoffrey Jackson (2004), 99–100; and Curtis, *Fenwick Notes*, 30–2.

l. 5. See *Home at Grasmere*, l. 384. As Jackson notes, p. 109, W is echoing a translation of Horace, *Epistles*, I, ii, 43-4 by Philip Francis: 'Still glides the river and will ever glide'. Cf. also C's description of a waterfall, in a letter of 25 Aug. 1802: 'the continual *change* of the *Matter*, the perpetual *Sameness* of the *Form*—it is an awful Image & Shadow of God & the World'.

l. 7. W added a teasing note: 'The allusion to the Greek Poet will be obvious to the classical reader.' The reference is to Moschus's *Lament for Bion*. W had translated part of it in late 1788 or 1799, in which appears the line, 'But we the great the mighty and the wise'. See *Early Poems and Fragments, 1785-1797*, ed. Carol Landon and Jared Curtis (1997), 690.

Composed at Cora Linn

Composed in part 25 July 1814. Completed by 1820. Published 1820 in *River Duddon*. Epigraph from *The Prelude*, i. 213-19 (whole poem not published till 1850). W noted: 'I had seen this celebrated waterfall twice before. But the feelings to which it had given birth were not expressed till they recurred in presence of the object on this occasion' (IF note). W visited it—falls on the River Clyde near Lanark—in 1801 and 1803. This occasion was 25 July 1814. For the place of the Falls in picturesque tours, see Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain 1760-1800* (1989), pp. 230-6.

l. 20. Another tribute to Scott. The phrase 'Wallace Wight' is from *Marmion* (1808), II, 113 and *passim*. William Wallace (?1272-1305), Scottish patriot and national hero of wars against England. It was traditionally but wrongly believed that Corra Castle, above Corra Linn, had been one of Wallace's retreats. In the course of a peroration about national characters in the *Convention of Cintra* (1809), W refers to the place of Wallace in Scottish imagination: 'the flashing eye, and the agitated voice, and all the tender recollections, with which the names of Prince Llewellyn and William Wallace are to this day pronounced by the fire-side and on the public road' (see p. 526).

l. 41. Leonidas, King of Sparta (491-480 BC) held the Pass of Thermopylae against the invasion of Xerxes.

l. 42. *devoted*. Doomed to die.

l. 46. William Tell, legendary hero of the liberation of Switzerland from Austria. Uri was his Canton.

To the Rev. Dr. W—. (With the Sonnets to the River Duddon)

Composed December 1819. Published in *River Duddon* (1820). Christopher Wordsworth (1774-1846), W's younger brother, had a distinguished ecclesiastical and academic career. Having been Rector of St Mary's Lambeth from 1816 to 1820, he became Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

l. 51. *Cytherea's zone*. Zone is an archaic term for 'girdle'; Cytherea is one of the names of Aphrodite (Venus). In *Iliad*, Book XIV, Hera borrows Aphrodite's girdle to beguile her husband, Zeus the Thunderer.

Ode. Composed Upon an Evening . . . Beauty

Composed 1817. Published in *River Duddon* (1820). Titled 'Evening Ode' in Collected Editions 1820–32. W noted: 'Felt and in a great measure composed upon the little mount in front of our abode at Rydal' (IF note). W's note at the end of the text in 1820 reads:

The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described, at the commencement of the third stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze,—in the present instance by the latter cause. See the account of the Lakes at the end of this volume. The reader, who is acquainted with the Author's Ode, intitled, 'Intimations of Immortality, &c.' will recognize the allusion to it that pervades the last stanza of the foregoing Poem.

In the *Topographical Description of The Country of the Lakes* printed in the *River Duddon* volume, W dwells in particular with effects of light. See above p. 650. In a note to the 1820 Collected Edition W acknowledged indebtedness to the painting 'Jacob's Dream' by Washington Allston (1779–1843), which he saw in London in December 1817.

Ode. The Pass of Kirkstone

Composed June 1817. Published in *River Duddon* (1820). W noted that the poem embodied 'Thoughts and feelings of many walks in all weathers by day and night over this pass, alone and with beloved friends' (IF note). The Kirkstone Pass joins the valley in which Grasmere and Ambleside lie with Patterdale and Ullswater.

Ode.—1817

Composed April 1817. Published 1820 in *River Duddon*. Titled 'Vernal Ode' from Collected Edition of 1820 on. W noted that the poem was 'Composed to place in view the immortality of succession where immortality is denied, as far as we know, to the individual creature' (IF note). Compare Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850).

ll. 66–8. *mild pastoral Muse*. Thalia. Urania is the muse of astronomy, Clio of history.

l. 120. *Tartarian den*. The deepest region of the Underworld, deeper even than Hades, where the most guilty were doomed to punishment.

from *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes*

In 1810 W supplied an anonymous prose text to accompany Joseph Wilkinson's publication of engravings comprising *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland,*

and Lancashire. W's authorship was acknowledged when a revised version appeared in *The River Duddon* volume of 1820 as *Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes, In the North of England*. This is the text presented here. In 1822 W issued this text separately as *A Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England*. In 1835 the title of the further revised and expanded work changed yet again, becoming *A Guide through the District of the Lakes in the North of England*. For a full account of the compositional history, annotation, and texts of important related unpublished prose, see *Prose*, II, 121–465.

OTHER POEMS 1815–1846

The following poems were published between 1820 and W's death in 1850. The 1815 collective edition was followed by others, each revised and expanded, the most important being the fresh edition of 1820, 1827, 1832, 1836, 1845, and finally 1849–50. In between the collective editions, and the single volume collection of his sonnets in 1838, W published new volumes such as *Ecclesiastical Sketches* (1822), *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820* (1822), *Yarrow Revisited* (1835), and *Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years* (1842).

To B. R. Haydon, Esq

Composed late November 1815. Published 1 April 1816 in *The Champion* and 1820. W declared, 21 December 1815, that the poem was inspired by Haydon's letter of 27 Nov., in which he said:

I shall ever remember with secret delight the friendship with which you honour me, and the interest you take in my success. God grant it ultimately be assured! I will bear want, pain, misery and blindness, but I will never yield one step I have gained on the road I am determined to travel over. (*Benjamin Robert Haydon: Correspondence and Table Talk*, ed. Frederic Wordsworth Haydon, 2 vols (1876), II, 19)

For Haydon's private response to the sonnet: 'It is impossible to tell how I felt, after the first blaze of joy, feeling as it were lifted up in the great eye of the World, and feeling nothing more could be said of one.' See *The Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. Willard Bissell Pope, 5 vols (1960–3), I, 491–2, and for his reply to W: 'You are the first English poet who has ever done complete justice to my delightful Art'; see *Correspondence*, II, 20–2, 29 Dec. 1815.

Haydon (1786–1846) attempted to maintain the prestige of historical painting. In a letter of 10 Jan. 1818 Keats declared Haydon's pictures to be one of the 'three things to rejoice at in this Age', but they met with little success and eventually in 1846 Haydon took his own life.

November 1, 1815

Composed early December 1815. Published 28 January 1816 in *The Examiner* and 1820. W noted: 'Suggested on the banks of the Brathay by the sight of the

Langdale Pikes. It is delightful to remember these moments of far-distant days, which probably would have been forgotten if the impression had not been transferred to verse' (IF note).

Sequel to [Beggars]

Composed 1817. Published 1827 as 'Sequel to the Foregoing', 'Beggars' being printed before it. See p. 224.

1. 1. Recollection of *King Lear*, IV.i.38.
1. 2. *daedal*. Varied. See *Faerie Queene*, IV.x.45.

Bruges ('Bruges I saw attired')

Composed November 1820–November 1821. Published 1822. DW wrote, 16 Jan. 1822, that W

began . . . with saying, 'I will write some Poems for your journal', and I thankfully received them as a tribute to the journal which I was making from notes, memoranda taken in our last summer's journey on the Continent; but his work has grown to such importance . . . that I have long ceased to consider it in connection with my own narrative.

W published his *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820* in 1822. The Tour lasted July–October 1820. DW's *Journal* for 13 July 1820 records: 'We entered Bruges by a long gently-winding street . . . W . . . walked out immediately, eager to view the City in the warm light of the setting sun' (*Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt, 2 vols (1941), II, 17). For an account of the tour, with excellent photographs, see Donald E. Hayden, *Wordsworth's Travels in Europe, I* (1988), 41–109.

Mutability

Composed 1821. Published 1822 in *Ecclesiastical Sketches*. Line 14 is a fine example of W's total recall of his own verse. He had first written, but not published, the line in 1796 in a 'Gothic Tale' of which only a fragment survives. See Robert Osborn (ed.), *The Borderers* (1982), 752, l. 68.

To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge

Composed September 1824. Published 1827. In September 1824 W revisited North Wales and met again Robert Jones to revisit places seen in 1791 and 1793. W wrote 20 Sept.: 'It rained heavily in the night, and we saw the waterfalls in perfection. While Dora was attempting to make a sketch from the chasm in the rain, I composed by her side the following address to the torrent.' Mary Wordsworth declared the day 'a sublime finale to the whole' (*The Letters of Mary Wordsworth*, ed. Mary E. Burton (1958), 116).

1. 4. *Pindus*. Mountain range in Northern Greece. W refers to the Greek War of Independence (1821–6).

ll. 7–8. In the letter quoted above W writes: ‘If the remembrance of 34 years may be trusted, this chasm bears a strong likeness to that of Viamala in the Grisons, thro’ which the Rhine has forced its Way.’ W had visited the spot in August 1790 and refers to it in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), 184–5.

‘Scorn not the Sonnet’

Composed January–April 1827. Published 1827. W said the poem was ‘Composed, almost extempore, in a short walk on the western side of Rydal Lake’ (IF note). See ‘Nuns fret not’, p. 232 and note.

Incident at Bruges

Composed after July 1828. Published 1835. W noted:

This occurred in Bruges in the year 1828... Dora & I while taking a walk along a retired part of the town heard the voice as here described & were afterwards informed that it was a Convent in which were many English—we were both much touched, I might say affected,—& Dora moved as appears in the Verses. (IF note)

Yarrow Revisited

Composed October 1831. Published 1835. W noted:

In the autumn of 1831, my daughter and I set off from Rydal to visit Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy... How sadly changed did I find him from the man I had seen so healthy, gay, & hopeful, a few years before... On Tuesday morning [20 September] Sir Walter Scott accompanied us & most of the party to Newark Castle on the Yarrow. When we alighted from the carriages he walked pretty stoutly & had great pleasure in revisiting these his favorite haunts—of that Excursion the Verses ‘Yarrow revisited’ are a memorial: notwithstanding the romance that pervades Sir W.’s works and attaches to many of his habits, there is too much pressure of fact for these verses to harmonise as much as I could wish with the two preceding Poems [‘Yarrow Unvisited’ and ‘Yarrow Visited’, pp. 256–8 and 615–17]. (IF note)

Only a small section of W’s long note is quoted here. See Geoffrey Jackson (ed.), *Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820–1845* (2004), 525–6; Curtis, *Fenwick Notes*, 49–51; *PW*, III, 524–6.

1. 2. See note to ‘Yarrow Unvisited’, pp. 749–50.

1. 8. The ‘Great Minstrel of the Border’ is, of course, Scott, whose *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 26–32, is alluded to in ll. 100–4.

ll. 49–56. Illness forced Scott abroad in search of a better climate. He left Abbotsford on 23 September 1831. He returned a very sick man and died 21 September 1832.

On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott

Composed September 1831. Published in 1833 in the *Literary Souvenir* and 1835. In the IF note to ‘Yarrow Revisited’, quoted above, W writes of this poem:

On our return [from Newark Castle] in the afternoon we had to cross the Tweed directly opposite Abbotsford. The wheels of our carriage grated upon the pebbles in the bed of the stream that there flows somewhat rapidly—a rich but sad light of rather a purple than a golden hue was spread over the Eildon hills at that moment & thinking it probable that it might be the last time Sir Walter would cross the stream I was not a little moved & expressed some of my feelings in [this] Sonnet . . . At noon on Thursday we left Abbotsford & in the morning of that day Sir W. and I had a serious conversation tête-à-tête when he spoke with gratitude of the happy life which upon the whole he had led.

l. 14. *Parthenope*. Virgil’s name for Naples, Scott’s destination.

‘Calm is the fragrant air, and loth to lose’

Composed probably around April 1833 (Curtis, 237). Published 1835. In one MS titled ‘Twilight by the side of Grasmere Lake’. This late poem should be compared with the evocation of the sights and sounds of evening in *An Evening Walk* (1793).

Airey-Force Valley

Composed 28–9 September 1835. Published 1842. Aira Force is on the western shore of Ullswater. ‘Force’ is the northern word for waterfall. In *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes* W declares Ullswater ‘As being, perhaps, upon the whole, the happiest combination of beauty and grandeur, which any of the Lakes affords . . . Ara-force thunders down the Ghyll on the left’ (*Prose*, II, 165–6).

from ‘Postscript’ to *Yarrow Revisited* (1835)

Written 1835. In this extract W explains his hostility to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which sought to abolish relief for the poor other than that offered in workhouses and to regulate the provision offered so as to make the workhouse the resort only of the most desperate. W’s concern for vagrants and the deserving poor was life-long—see ‘The Old Cumberland Beggar’ of 1797–8, above, pp. 118–23, and ‘I knew an aged Man’ of 1846, above, p. 702—and in this ‘Postscript’ he is concerned more with the attitude of mind towards the poor represented by the new law, its tendency and spirit, than with the law itself. In this he is allied with, amongst other contemporaries, the Dickens of *Oliver Twist* (1837–8).

Extempore Effusion Upon the Death of James Hogg

Composed November 1835. First published 5 December 1835 in the *Newcastle Journal* and 1836–7. W's very long IF note begins: 'These verses were written extempore immediately after reading a notice of the Ettrick Shepherd's death . . . The persons lamented in these verses were all either of my friends or acquaintance.' For whole see Curtis *Fenwick Notes*, 58–61. The poem laments the following writers: James Hogg (1770–1835), called 'The Ettrick Shepherd', remembered now primarily for his *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*; Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), famous in his day as poet as well as novelist, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) being his best-known poem; Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1771–1834), the poet and thinker to whom W said he was most intellectually indebted (25 June 1832) and to whom *The Prelude* (1805) was addressed; Charles Lamb (1775–1834), best known for his *Essays of Elia*; George Crabbe (1754–1832), poet, author of *The Village* and *The Borough*; Felicia Hemans (1793–1835), a very popular poet, who dedicated her *Scenes and Hymns of Life* (1834) to W.

ll. 1–5. See 'Yarrow Visited' and 'Yarrow Revisited', pp. 615–17 and 684–7. Hogg was with W when they visited the Yarrow on 1 September 1814. Scott was their companion when Yarrow was revisited on 20 September 1831.

l. 10. Scott was buried in Dryburgh Abbey.

l. 12. Hogg was born in the Borders region of Ettrick Forest and was a shepherd in his early life.

l. 19. An allusion tying the poets together. Lamb is called 'gentle-hearted' in C's 'This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison', written in 1797 when C, W, and Lamb were all enjoying intense friendship. W presumably did not know that Lamb objected strongly to the term—see his very funny letter of 14 Aug. 1800.

Thoughts. Suggested the Day Following ('Too frail to keep the lofty vow')

Composed November–December 1835. Published 1842. In 1803 W composed 'Ejaculation at the Grave of Burns', intended for but eventually not included in *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807). See pp. 287–8. In 1835 he greatly expanded it into 'At the Grave of Burns. 1803' (not included in this edition) and composed this poem. Both were published in 1842. Curtis's note on the complicated history of these poems, *LP*, 471–6, is indispensable. Burns' farm, Ellisland, was near the River Nith.

ll. 8–9. W and DW visited Burns' grave 18 August 1803.

ll. 25–30. W and DW read Burns' *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (1786) almost as soon as they appeared.

At Furness Abbey ('Here, where, of havoc tired')

Composed July–August 1840; revised 1843. Published 1845. The ruins of Furness Abbey are on the south-western tip of the Lake District. The site is

part of the estate of the dukes of Devonshire—family name Cavendish, l. 14—who were instrumental in pushing through a railway line (officially opened 1846) which runs alongside the abbey grounds. In Book Two of *The Prelude*, ll. 99–144, W describes visiting Furness Abbey as a schoolboy; this sonnet was occasioned by a visit in July 1840.

'Glad sight wherever new with old'

Composed 31 December 1842; revised 1843. Published 1845.

Sonnet. On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway ('Is then')

Composed 12 October 1844. Published *Morning Post*, 16 October 1844 and 1845. W included this and the following sonnet in *Kendal and Windermere Railway* (1845), his fruitless pamphlet protest against the building of a railway line from Kendal to Windermere (see *Prose*, III, 329–66). In 1845 the sonnet was accompanied by a note:

The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be over-rated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. 'Fell it!' exclaimed the yeoman, 'I had rather fall on my knees and worship it.' It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling.

l. 9. *Orrest-head*. Part of the high ground above Lake Windermere on which the railway station still stands.

'Proud were ye, Mountains, when, in times of old'

Composed 13 December 1844. Published *Morning Post*, 20 December 1844 and as previous sonnet. In the *Kendal and Windermere Railway* pamphlet W reprinted a sonnet published in 1835, 'Steamboats and Railways', as evidence of how far he was 'from undervaluing the benefit to be expected from railways in their legitimate application'.

At Furness Abbey ('Well have yon Railway Labourers')

Composed 21 June 1845. Published 1845. See note above to 'Here, where, of havoc tired'. MW reported 21 June 1845 that on a recent visit to Furness Abbey Isabella Fenwick and others 'had the pain (tho it was a picturesque appearance) of seeing the Old Abbey occupied by the "Navys" at their meal, who are carrying a rail-way, so near to the East window that from it Persons might shake hands with the Passengers!!'.

'I know an aged Man constrained to dwell'

Composed January 1846. Published 1846 in the enlarged seven-volume collection of W's *Poetical Works*. With its implied attack upon the Workhouse system, this poem demonstrates the unity of so much of W's work. It looks back to the 'Old Cumberland Beggar' of 1798 (see pp. 118–23), but also to W's Postscript to 'Yarrow Revisited' (1835) (see pp. 688–96), which attacks the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act for violating the 'most sacred claims of civilised humanity' through blind adherence to a system of political economy.

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INDEX OF TITLES AND FIRST LINES

- A famous Man is Robin Hood 250
 A simple child, dear brother Jim 21
 A slumber did my spirit seal 103
 A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping
 rain 693
Address to the Sons of Burns 261
 Age! twine thy brows with fresh
 spring flowers! 256
Airey-Force Valley 695
Alice Fell 229
 Among all lovely things my Love
 had been 224
 An Orpheus! An Orpheus!—yes,
 Faith may grow bold 272
 And is this—Yarrow?—This the
 Stream 621
Anecdote for Fathers 19
Anticipation, October, 1803 249
 Appendix to the Preface to *Lyrical*
Ballads (1800 and 1802) 78
 Art thou a Statesman, in the van 125
At Furness Abbey (Here, where, of
 havoc tired) 707
At Furness Abbey (Well have yon
 Railway Labourers to this
 ground) 709
 At the corner of Wood Street, when
 daylight appears 112
Beggars 227
 Behold her, single in the field 253
 “Beloved Vale!” I said, “when I
 shall con” 237
 Beneath the concave of an April
 sky 650
 Bright Flower, whose home is every
 where! 275
Brothers, The 88
Bruges (Bruges I saw attired) 687
 By their floating Mill 270
Calais, August 15th, 1802 240
Calais, August, 1802 239
 Calm is the fragrant air and loth to
 lose 694
Character of the Happy
Warrior 221
Characteristics of a Child three
Years old 620
Complaint, A 275
Composed at Cora Linn 641
Composed by the Sea-Side, near
Calais 238
Composed in the Valley, near
Dover 242
Composed Upon Westminster
Bridge 236
Conclusion (I thought of Thee) 641
 From *The Convention of Cintra*
 (1809) 517
 Dear fellow Traveller! here we are
 once more 242
 Distressful gift! this Book
 receives 298
 Earth has not any thing to shew more
 fair 236
Ejaculation at the Grave of
Burns 293
Elegiac Stanzas 279
 England! the time is come when
 thou shouldst wean 247
 From *Essay, Supplementary to the*
Preface to Poems (1815) 615
 From *Essays Upon Epitaphs*
 (1810) 535
 From *The Excursion* (1814) 553
Expostulation and Reply 46
Extempore Effusion Upon the Death of
James Hogg 704

- Fair Star of Evening, Splendor of the West 238
- Farewell, thou little Nook of mountain ground 292
- Female Vagrant, The* 4
- Festivals have I seen that were not names 240
- Five years have passed; five summers 49
- Fountain, The* 115
- From low to high doth dissolution climb 688
- From Stirling Castle we had seen 262
- Gipsies* 266
- Give me a spark of nature's fire 149
- Glad sight wherever new with old 708
- Glen-Almain* 255
- Goody Blake and Harry Gill* 11
- Great Men have been among us 245
- Green Linnet, The* 269
- Had this effulgence disappeared 645
- Hart-Leap Well* 83
- Here, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing 707
- High is our calling, Friend!—
Creative Art 685
- His simple truths did Andrew glean 104
- Home at Grasmere* 188
- How art thou named? In search of what strange land 688
- How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright 685
- I am not One who much or oft delight 276
- I grieved for Buonaparte 240
- I have a boy of five years old 19
- I heard a thousand blended notes 23
- I know an aged Man constrained to dwell 710
- I only looked for pain and grief 296
- I saw an aged Beggar in my walk 120
- I shiver, Spirit fierce and bold 293
- I travelled among unknown Men 224
- I wandered lonely as a Cloud 265
- I was thy Neighbour once, thou rugged Pile! 279
- Idiot Boy, The* 33
- Idle Shepherd-Boys, The* 109
- If from the public way you turn your steps 134
- If nature, for a favorite child 113
- In Bruge's town is many a street 689
- In distant countries I have been 30
- In the sweet shire of Cardigan 16
- In this still place, remote from men 255
- In youth from rock to rock I went 217
- Incident at Bruges 689
- Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood 243
- Is it a Reed that's shaken by the wind 239
- Is then no nook of English ground secure 708
- It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free 238
- It is not to be thought of that the Flood 245
- It is the first mild day of March 15
- It seems a day 118
- It was an April Morning: fresh and clear 127
- I've watched you now a full half hour 268
- Jones! when from Calais southward you and I 239

- Last of the Flock, The* 30
 From *A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns* (1816) 625
Lines Composed at Grasmere 278
Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree 3
Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey 49
Lines Written at a Small Distance from my House 15
Lines Written in Early Spring 23
Lines written on a Tablet in a School 113
London, 1802 244
 Look, five blue eggs are gleaming there! 266
 Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up 278
 Loving she is, and tractable, though wild 620
Lucy Gray 107
- Matron of Jedborough and Her Husband, The* 256
Michael 134
 Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour 244
Mutability 688
 My heart leaps up when I behold 264
- Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
Night Piece, A 162
 Not a breath of air 695
November 1, 1815 685
 Nuns fret not at their Convent's narrow room 235
Nutting 118
- O blithe New-comer! I have heard 267
 O Friend! I know not which way I must look 244
- O Thou! whose fancies from afar are brought 223
Oak and the Broom, The 104
October, 1803 (One might believe) 246
October, 1803 (Six thousand Veterans) 249
October, 1803 (These times touch) 247
October, 1803 (When, looking on the present face) 248
Ode.—1817 650
Ode (There was a time) 281
Ode. Composed Upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendor and Beauty 645
Ode. The Pass of Kirkstone 647
Ode to Duty 225
 Oft had I heard of Lucy Gray 107
 Oh! what's the matter? what's the matter? 11
Old Cumberland Beggar, The 120
Old Man Travelling 48
On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford, for Naples 693
On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic 241
 Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee 241
 Once on the brow of yonder Hill I stopped 188
 One might believe that natural miseries 246
 One morning (raw it was and wet,/ A foggy day in winter time) 220
- Poems on the Naming of Places* 127
Poet's Epitaph, A 125
Poor Susan 112
 From 'Postscript' to *Yarrow Revisited* 696
Power of Music 272

- Praised be the Art whose subtle
power could stay 624
- Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800 and
1802) 57
- From the Preface to *Poems*
(1815) 607
- Prelude, The* (1805) 301
- Pressed with conflicting thoughts
of love and fear 300
- Proud were ye, Mountains, when,
in times of old 709
- Resolution and Independence* 230
- From *The River Duddon*
(1820) 639
- Rob Roy's Grave* 250
- Ruined Cottage, The* 149
- Sailor's Mother, The* 220
- Scorn not the Sonnet 689
- September 1st, 1802* 242
- September, 1802* 243
- Sequel to [Beggars]* 686
- She dwelt among th' untrodden
ways 103
- She had a tall Man's height, or
more 227
- She was a Phantom of
delight 219
- Shout, for a mighty Victory is
won! 249
- Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman* 16
- Six thousand Veterans practised in
War's game 249
- Solitary Reaper, The* 253
- Song* 103
- Sonnet. On the Projected Kendal
and Windermere Railway* 708
- Sparrow's Nest, The* 266
- St Paul's* 300
- Star Gazers* 271
- Stay near me—do not take thy
flight! 264
- Stepping Westward* 254
- Stern Daughter of the Voice of
God! 225
- Strange fits of passion I have
known 102
- Surprized by joy—impatient as the
Wind 624
- Sweet Flower! belike one day to have /
A place upon thy Poet's
grave 294
- Sweet Highland Girl, a very shower /
Of beauty is thy earthly
dower! 259
- Tables Turned, The* 47
- The cock is crowing 265
- The gallant Youth, who may have
gained 690
- The Knight had ridden down from
Wensley moor 83
- The little hedge-row birds 48
- The May is come again 269
- The Minstrels played their
Christmas tune 643
- The Post-boy drove with fierce
career 229
- The sky is overspread 162
- The valley rings with mirth and
joy 109
- The world is too much with
us 237
- There is a change—and I am
poor 275
- There is a thorn; it looks
so old 24
- There is a Yew-tree, pride of
Lorton Vale 620
- There was a roaring in the wind all
night 230
- There was a time when meadow,
grove, and stream 281
- These times touch moneyed
Worldlings with dismay 247
- These Tourists, Heaven preserve us!
needs must live 88

- Thorn, The* 24
*Thought of a Briton on the
 Subjugation of Switzerland* 243
*Thoughts. Suggested the Day
 Following...* 705
 Three years she grew in sun and
 shower 119
 'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March
 night 33
*To a Butterfly ('I've watched
 you')* 268
To a Butterfly ('stay near me') 264
*To a Friend, Composed near
 Calais* 239
To a Highland Girl 259
To a Sky-Lark 228
To B. R. Haydon, Esq. 685
To H.C., Six Years Old 223
To the Cuckoo 267
To the Daisy (In youth) 217
To the Daisy (Sweet Flower!) 294
To the Daisy (With little here) 273
To the Men of Kent 248
To the Rev. Dr. W—. (*With the
 Sonnets to the River Duddon*) 643
*To the Same Flower (Bright
 Flower)* 275
*To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge,
 North Wales* 688
To Toussaint L'Ouverture 241
 Too frail to keep the lofty
 vow 705
 From *Topographical Description of the
 Country of the Lakes* 654
 Toussaint, the most unhappy
 Man of Men! 241
Two April Mornings, The 114
Two-Part Prelude, The 164
 Two Voices are there; one is of the
 Sea 243
 Up! up! my friend, and clear your
 looks 47
 Up with me! up with me into the
 clouds! 228
*Upon the Sight of a Beautiful
 Picture* 624
 Vanguard of Liberty, ye Men of
 Kent 248
 Was it for this 164
We Are Seven 21
 We had a fellow-Passenger who
 came 242
 We talked with open heart, and
 tongue 115
 We walked along, while bright and
 red 114
 Well have yon Railway Labourers to
 this ground 709
 What crowd is this? what have
 we here! we must not pass it
 by 271
 What you are stepping
 westward? 254
 When first, descending from the
 moorlands
 When first I journeyed hither 289
 When I have borne in memory what
 has tamed 246
 When, looking on the present face of
 things 248
 Where are they now, those wanton
 Boys? 686
 Where lies the Land to which yon
 Ship must go? 235
 Who is the happy Warrior? Who is
 he 221
 Why William, on that old grey
 stone 46
 With little here to do or see 273
 With Ships the sea was sprinkled far
 and nigh 236
 Within the mind strong fancies
 work 647

Written in London, September,
1802 244

Written in March 265

Yarrow Revisited 690

Yarrow Unvisited 262

Yarrow Visited 621

Ye now are panting up life's
hill! 261

Yes! full surely 'twas the
Echo 277

Yet are they here?—the same
unbroken knot 266

Yew-Trees 620