

witness to the need of a social regeneration. The ninth, tenth and eleventh Books of the "Prelude" have a historical value as pictures of France at the great crisis. In the ninth, speaking of himself and a French enthusiast with whom he was communing, the poet says :

"And when we chanced
One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,
Who crept along, fitting her languid gait
Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
In agitation said, 'Tis against *that*
That we are fighting,' I with him believed
That a benignant spirit was abroad
Which might not be withstood, that poverty
Abject as this would in a little time
Be found no more, but we should see the earth
Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil."

As the terrible drama of the Revolution advanced, Wordsworth, like Coleridge and Southey, recoiled and became Conservative. He became in some respects rather weakly Conservative ; and especially he fell into a superstitious belief in the absolute necessity for a State Church ; an error which, however, is most pardonable in a poet living amongst the cathedrals and the ancient churches of old England. But he never apostatized from liberty, or cast off his reverence for Milton, Sidney, Harrington, and the great fathers and spokesmen of English freedom. He had nothing in common with the sensual Reactionists and Imperialists of our time. With truth he might say—

"The poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song."

Ceasing to be a revolutionist in politics, Wordsworth, however, remained one in poetry ; and, perhaps, he deemed himself one to a greater extent than he really was. His theory, that there ought to be no difference in point of language between poetry and prose, has been philosophically confuted by Coleridge in the "Biographia Literaria," and less philosophically but perhaps more effectively, by the excellent parody in the