

we can still rejoice in Nature, for the loss is more than compensated by the human sympathies of riper years through which we see new and nobler meanings

In the faith that looks through death.

Such is Wordsworth's most characteristic message ; but he does not urge its acceptance. He says himself in a note prefixed to the poem, that although he has regarded the vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, he does not mean to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. "But," he continues, "though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of man presents an analogy in its favour."

Another characteristic of Wordsworth's teaching is his constant assertion of the dignity of virtue, of simplicity, of independence wherever found, and quite apart from all external surroundings.

In the poem "Resolution and Independence" the interest turns upon the simple, steady resolution of an old leech-gatherer who pursues his trade in extreme old age about the lonely moors, and the strength, firmness and perseverance which the sight of the old man brought to the poet, who represents his own poetic nature as inclined in a moment to turn from hope to despondency. But he took courage when he saw such a man rise above his surroundings, sad and desolate as they were, and at the close of the poem thus expresses himself :

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 in the lonely moor.

The whole of this poem embodies with singular beauty and