

In the Ode two doctrines stand distinctly forth, (1) pre-existence, and (2) the necessity of making the pure joys of youth a permanent possession, in order to genuine happiness during the declining years of life. These spring out of, and are a natural result of Wordsworth's view of the outside world, the world of nature. What, then, was his view of nature? Description of natural scenery had found a place - though often a small place--in the writings of English poets from the time of Chaucer, but about the beginning of the eighteenth century, under the direction of Pope, the stream which had hitherto flowed in its natural course, free and untrammelled, was diverted into a channel dug for it by the hand of man. It was an artificial age in every respect. The soul of things was of little moment, the form was everything. Nature was accorded no place in the writings of the period until she had been dressed up by the art of man, as she appeared in the gay parterres and villa gardens of the city. But a reaction against this unnaturalness set in even during the lifetime of Pope himself. Thomson led the way, others followed, until in Cowper we find that richness of coloring, that truth and beauty and sweetness of description, which could only be penned by one who felt in all their fullness the delights of rural sights and sounds. But Cowper painted only the face of nature, painted it with a loving hand, indeed, and in all its varying phases, yet he conceived not of a soul beneath. It remained for Wordsworth to add the spirit, and so to see in what we are pleased to call inanimate nature a living, breathing, teaching personality. With receptive mind he stood in her presence ready to learn the deep truths she alone was capable of teaching, for through her was diffused the omniscient spirit of the Creator.

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

In the calm he heard her whisperings, in the storm her wilder notes of power. Mountain, dell, and stream, the quiet vale, and the sounding cataract had each its message—a message fraught with peace, and hope, and inspiration.

"From Nature doth emotions come, and moods
Of calmness equally are nature's gift:
This is her glory; these two attributes
Are sister horns that constitute her strength."

And he who comes forth into the light of things, into the school of nature, bringing with him "a heart that watches, and receives," cannot fail to be uplifted in thought and feeling, to be purified and sanctified. Wordsworth deplored the mad rush of his time for wealth, and the sordid motives that