

life of the generation in the pages of Alfred Tennyson or Robert Browning. The study of such poets will not make a new creature, but it will certainly help to the sensitiveness that reads the heart through the sympathies, that is true in analysis and generous in judgment, and quick to interpret and meet the movements of human life.

Poetry helps us to a clearer vision of truth.

There are, to be sure, two aspects of the poet—the artistic and the prophetic. First of all, poetry does minister to the world's enjoyment. It sings as the linnet, delighting in its own song. But the great poets never aim purely and solely at artistic effect, for they appeal to the higher side of human nature and strengthen it. They give us "nobler loves and nobler cares." They make us heirs

"Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays."

Milton was right in invoking the heavenly muse, the

"Spirit that dost prefer  
Before all temples the upright heart and pure."

The best minds have ever held

"The animating faith  
That poets, even as prophets,  
Have each his own peculiar faculty,  
Heaven's gift, a sense that fits them to perceive  
Objects unseen before."

Heaven's gift is the imagination, that flashes its way where reason often painfully gropes—the faculty that gives force, clearness, distinctness of outline, vividness of coloring to man's ordinary conceptions. The generalizations of science cannot be made without it; and without its aid the elements of religious truth cannot be harmonized. Imagination is the power of larger vision, a penetrative and interpretative power, seeing into the heart of things. It pierces the veil of sense and reads spiritual truths. The poet in states of intense feeling rises to grasp relations and facts larger and truer than those of common hours, and bodies forth the dim and intangible visions that at times haunt all men. He is indeed the seer.

"He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul,  
The marvel of the everlasting will  
An open scroll  
Before him lay."

Poetry helps us to a clearer vision of nature.

It feels and interprets beauty; but beauty is not wholly in outward form; it calls forth feelings of the soul which poetry notes, and it leads to the eternal beauty of the spirit. The truest impressions of nature are not worldly. The ideas and sentiments that fill Wordsworth's mind are not those which pass current in society. They breathe an unworldly atmosphere.