

Jones, there are *some* things which a Supreme Court of the United States sitting in equity may be presumed to know.' Wordsworth has this fault of enforcing and restating obvious points till the reader feels as if his own intelligence were somewhat underrated. He is over-conscientious in giving us full measure, and once profoundly absorbed in the sound of his own voice, he knows not when to stop. If he feel himself flagging, he has a droll way of keeping the floor, as it were, by asking himself a series of questions sometimes not needing, and often incapable of answer. There are three stanzas of such near the close of the First Part of *Peter Bell*, where Peter first catches a glimpse of the dead body in the water, all happily incongruous, and ending with one which reaches the height of comicality :

Is it a fiend that to a stake  
Of fire his desperate self is tethering ?  
Or stubborn spirit doomed to yell,  
In solitary ward or cell,  
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren ?

The same want of humour which made him insensible to incongruity may perhaps account also for the singular unconsciousness of disproportion which so often strikes us in his poetry. For example, a little farther on in *Peter Bell* we find :

Now—like a tempest-shattered bark  
That overwhelmed and prostrate lies,  
And in a moment to the verge  
Is lifted of a foaming surge—  
Full suddenly the Ass doth rise

And one cannot help thinking that the similes of the huge stone, the sea-beast, and the cloud, noble