

This distinguishing attribute of Wordsworth's best poetry is precisely what we cannot afford to lose. He was not wrong in the reverence he felt for his own gift, and in the estimate he put upon the highest of his work. No doubt he seemed vainly to confuse his episodes of inspiration with the prosy setting in which we are apt to find them; yet even the prophets imperfectly understand themselves. But it is just this gentle, loving quietism, poetically expressed; this kindling of the soul; this voicing of her primal instincts, that makes his work one of the most valuable, most salutary things in all our literature. Its neglect by us is to our own loss. Others have written arguments and declamations about Immortality; but here is a new, real prophetic assurance. The Ode is transcendent from this point of view. None like this was ever written before; when can it be superseded? There is about this, and about other things we might quote an almost Scriptural quality; you do not look upon it as ordinary art, or as mere poetic enthusiasm. It has more sanction than can be drawn from an individual experience; as the child to the voice in the Temple, our midmost self responds, "Here am I, speak for I listen." With him the heart is happier, for it is better; we feel the Universe suffused with Spirit, and redolent—

"Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love and hope."

To the lover and student of this poet, the spirit of man, and his relations to the universe, are of heightened significance. Not only by his help the more clearly

"Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,"

but we are not altogether away from home, being here. All evil is not immediately present, and all good far away and beyond man's relations, he being here, they are for the present here also:

"And, O ye fountains, meadows, hills and groves,
Think not of any severing of our lives!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they:
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality!
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live;
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears;
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Others had written charmingly, and even lovingly of nature; many have succeeded since in this line. We catch her features, sometimes fair through the sometimes rhetorical tinsel of Thomson; yet better we love to trace them in Cowper's sym-