

very much a matter of temperament, and accordingly by far the greater part of his finer product belongs to the period of his prime, ere Time had set his lumpish foot on the pedal that deadens the nerves of animal sensibility.¹ He did not grow as those poets do in whom the artistic sense is predominant. One of the most delightful fancies of the Genevese humorist, Toepffer, is the poet Albert, who, having had his portrait drawn by a highly idealizing hand, does his best afterwards to look like it. Many of Wordsworth's later poems seem like rather unsuccessful efforts to resemble his former self. They would never, as Sir John Harington says of poetry, 'keep a child from play and an old man from the chimney-corner'.²

Chief Justice Marshall once blandly interrupted a junior counsel who was arguing certain obvious points of law at needless length, by saying, 'Brother

¹ His best poetry was written when he was under the immediate influence of Coleridge. Coleridge seems to have felt this, for it is evidently to Wordsworth that he alludes when he speaks of 'those who have been so well pleased that I should, year after year, flow with a hundred nameless rills into their main stream' (*Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. C.*, vol. i, pp. 5-6). 'Wordsworth found fault with the repetition of the concluding sound of the participles in Shakespeare's line about bees:

The singing masons building roofs of gold.

This, he said, was a line that Milton never would have written. Keats thought, on the other hand, that the repetition was in harmony with the continued note of the singers' (Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography*). Wordsworth writes to Crabb Robinson in 1837, 'My ear is susceptible to the clashing of sounds almost to disease.' One cannot help thinking that his training in these niceties was begun by Coleridge.

² In the Preface to his translation of the *Orlando Furioso*