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"Prodesse Quam Conspici."

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THE SPECIAL USE OF WORDSWORTH.

I do not know that Wordsworth is properly read, or that he is more than superficially studied by the ordinary student. Perhaps not; for there is considerable required of him who would come to the best there is in such a poet. Certainly, he does not set the poetic fashion of the time, however his spirit may be here and there diffused through contemporary literature. The difficult model is liable to be discarded. Not that, because of any exquisiteness of mould, any fineness of touch, like that of Tennyson, he is difficult; but because of the elevation of the spirit in him, the immanence of soul, the clearness of that "inward eye." But surely our good grey poet must not go upon the shelf. His own age needed him no more than does ours. He is the antidote to our present life's materialising tendencies; the leaven against spiritual atrophy in the dry intellectualism of the time; the quick sedative for the fever-madness that still increases the ever wilder-throbbing pulse of hearts that leap to time with the electro-motor. It is Matthew Arnold who claims in him a power not to be reduplicated:

" Ah ! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course,
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel;
Others will strengthen us to bear—
But who, ah ! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly—
But who, like him, will put it by?
Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best ! for few or none
Hear thy voice right, now he is gone."

No mere piece of friendly partiality is this; but a truth evidently heart-felt by him who uttered it. Strange is it that the intimate and admirer of such a soul could not have lived more in the light that rayed therefrom. But, alas! however we admire,

" We receive but what we give ; "

he saw according to a differing nature; he was not, like Wordsworth, a buoyant and divinely luminous soul.