

young man, just before he became personally involved in the revolutionary conflict:

And I, who at that time was scarcely dipped
Into the turmoil, bore a sounder judgement
Than later days allowed; carried about me,
With less alloy to its integrity,
The experience of past ages, as, through help
Of books and common life, it makes sure way
To youthful minds, by objects over near
Not pressed upon, nor dazzled or misled
By struggling with the crowd for present ends.¹

This confidence in his own judgement was no self-deception. It is incidentally confirmed by the language of the one man who ever had a really intimate knowledge of the poet. Coleridge, when writing with the severity of a candid friend, notes the extraordinary combination in Wordsworth of strong sense with imaginative genius and declares that

Without his depth of feeling and his imaginative power, his *sense* would want its vital warmth and peculiarity; and without his strong sense, his *mysticism* would become *sickly*—mere fog and dimness.²

Circumstances conferred upon him another tremendous advantage which has rarely fallen to the lot of an English statesman. He before he attained full age, and throughout life, personally felt the blessings—and they may be very great—both of poverty and of wealth. Living among the yeomen, or so-called 'statesmen', of Cumberland and Westmorland, he was trained up to

¹ Hutchinson, p. 714.

² Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ii. 161. Compare the immense impression of Wordsworth's wisdom and fairness made upon J. S. Mill, then a young man of twenty-five, on a visit to Wordsworth during 1831. See p. 112, *post*.