

prose preachers have kept steadily in view the spiritual meaning of life. The consequence is that they have contributed powerfully to all truly liberal tendencies of the time. Reforms in every sphere have come, and they have come not with poets discoursing on the Rape of the Lock or perfumers' and milliners' shops, or on veiled prophets of Khorassan, or on men and scenes far distant, but—as might have been expected—with poets profoundly impressed with the seriousness, we might say the sacredness, of the work they had undertaken. There has been and there still is continual protest against materialism in philosophy and traditionalism in theology; against unreality of all kinds and injustice of all kinds, and though the old evils are not dead and new ones appear every day, and the century has to bear the accumulated iniquities of the past and the present, yet reform has been made, things are getting better and the battle of truth is being fought hopefully by men of "inwardness, faith and power."

Of all this great movement Wordsworth may be considered the greatest pioneer. Not only so, the quantity and quality of his work is so notable that Matthew Arnold places him, "among the poets who have appeared in the last two or three centuries, after Shakespeare, Moliere, Milton, Goethe indeed, but before all the rest." If he has so few superiors among modern poets, he must have done permanent and splendid work.

Nature was Wordsworth's great teacher; but his ideas took form and colour from the French Revolution, that "grim protest against the conventional and the false," and from the critical philosophy which in Germany was replacing the barren illuminism of a

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