

INTRODUCTION¹

To many readers the very title of this book—*The Statesmanship of Wordsworth*—may cause perplexity. To most of them Wordsworth is known as a poet, and possibly as one of the most famous of English poets. He is known to them also as a moralist. But they know that he never sat in Parliament, and never tried to obtain a seat there. How then can such a man have had anything to do with statesmanship? The few who have heard of Wordsworth as in any sense connected with politics probably think of him, owing to the misrepresentation or misapprehension of opponents, as an ill-fated man of letters who in early life was a revolutionist, not to say a Jacobin, but who in his later years was so panic-stricken by the Reign of Terror that he became the most vehement and bigoted of Tories. He is looked upon, in short, as a thinker who might be described, with many others of his time, as a weather-cock which, having grown rusty, set up as a sign-post. Such a one,

¹ *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, edited by the Rev. A. B. Grosart, 3 vols. E. Moxon, 1876. (Hereinafter referred to as Grosart.)

The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, edited by T. Hutchinson, Oxford edition, 1895. (Hereinafter referred to as Hutchinson.)

The Patriotic Poetry of William Wordsworth. By the Right Hon. Arthur H. D. Acland. Oxford, 1915.

Wordsworth's *Tract on the Convention of Cintra* [published 1809]. Republished Oxford University Press, 1915. (Hereinafter referred to as *Tract*.)