Whoever doubts that this is so should ponder over the following picture of London streets:

. Before me flow. Thou endless stream of men and moving things! Thy every-day appearance, as it strikes— With wonder heightened, or sublimed by awe-On strangers, of all ages; the quick dance Of colours, lights, and forms; the deafening din; The comers and the goers face to face, Face after face; the string of dazzling wares, Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names, And all the tradesman's honours overhead: Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page, With letters huge inscribed from top to toe, Stationed above the door, like guardian saints; There, allegoric shapes, female or male, Or physiognomies of real men, Land-warriors, kings, or admirals of the sea, Boyle, Shakespeare, Newton, or the attractive head Of some quack-doctor, famous in his day.2

He possessed, even in youth, a naturally sound judgement. Wordsworth was himself aware of the extent to which good sense and reflection in his mind balanced the effect of his fervent imagination. These are the words in which he describes his attitude when quite a

This sketch of the Town is paralleled by many passages in The Prelude. Ruskin's works are full of references to Dickens, and Ruskin clearly catches and suggests the likeness, in point of keenness of eye, between the poet and the novelist. (See Modern Painters, Ruskin's Collected Works, iii, pp. 570, 571, and read the whole note in reference to Dickens.) In truth Wordsworth, Carlyle, Dickens, and Ruskin himself, belong to that special class to be found among men of genius who may be characterized as (if the expression may be allowed) 'thinking through their eyes'. Such men immediately reproduce in thought the impressions which their keen eyesight conveys to them, and which ordinary persons overlook. Nor can it be doubted that of the four Wordsworth was the keenest observer, no less than the calmest critic.

¹ Hutchinson, p. 680.