

But even in this, the Alma Mater of Spenser, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Dryden, Cowley, Waller, Milton, Herbert and Gray, Wordsworth could not free himself from the spell of nature. With pleasure he listened to the college clock tolling the hours "twice over, with a male and female voice;" with pleasure he, by the aid of the struggling moonbeams or favouring stars,

Beheld

The antechapel, where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of thought,
alone.

But with infinitely greater pleasure he stood under the "brown o'er-arching groves, that contemplation loves." From his own words we can picture the poet stealing out from the dim cloisters of the school or to the shade of the ash tree, wreathed with ivy, decorated with autumn tassels, and wet with the dew, if not with the spray of the river, and calmly and thoughtfully contemplating the scene. "Scarcely Spenser's self," he says,

Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,
Or could more bright appearances create
Of human forms with superhuman powers,
Than I beheld loitering on clear calm nights
Alone beneath this fairy work of earth.

True, the Cambridge scenery is dull and flat. But in spite of nature's plainness he could see food for thought in the green and pleasant grass, in the golden glories of day, and in the stately procession of night.

As if awakened, summoned, roused, con-
strained,
I looked for universal things; pursued
The common countenance of earth and sky—
Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace
Of that first paradise whence man was driven;
And sky, whose beauty and bounty are ex-
pressed
By the proud name she bears—the name of
heaven.

When aimlessly wandering through the streets of London, nature's scenes

were ever present to mould and inspire. What he said of the Farmer of Tilsbury vale may be applied to himself:

In the throng of the town like a stranger is
he,
Like one whose own country's far over the
sea;
And nature, while through the great city he
hies,
Full ten times a day takes his heart by sur-
prise.

In his sonnet on Westminster Bridge he looks upon London as a part of nature—as a child asleep in its mother's arms:

The city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples
lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless
air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill,
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will.
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

Here you see the poet clothing the smoke-begrimed city with the bright garments of morning, and placing tower and turret and church and theatre beside the open fields and under the calm sky.

He sees the city, not as it is, full of noise, and dust, and confusion, but as his love of nature led him to conceive it, as something silent, grand and everlasting. Pope looked at the country through the smoke and fog of the city, and saw little to admire beyond the town limits. Wordsworth beheld the city in the clear light of nature, and saw sights at once beautiful and sublime—sights that the dullest soul could not pass without stopping to admire them because they were so touching in their majesty. In Pope, everything centres around man and ministers to his glory: in Wordsworth, nature is the centre, and from her emanate floods