

twenty-four. Byron and Shelley, of volcanic and ethereal fame, were at the time too young for even poetic dreams, while Leigh Hunt, who was destined to be in future years Keats's warm and constant friend, had just reached his eleventh year.

It was, however, fortunate for Keats that he had fallen upon such a period, when, as Dr. Hamilton Mabie says, "the intellectual and spiritual tides were rising, and English literature was recalling, in the breadth and splendour of its movement, the great Elizabethan age." It was enough that Keats responded to his time, and his genius took birth from what Matthew Arnold rightly considers to be the powers that concur in the creation of a master-work of literature: "the power of the man and the power of the moment."

The very essence of Keats's poetic creed is to be found in his lines:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

His poetic vision pierced the soul of things. It was not merely surface beauty which concerned him, it was that beauty which is the reflection of the very soul of things. "When I wrote it," he said of one of his poems, "it was a regular stepping of the imagination toward a truth." In