

austere naturalness. His expression may often be called bald, as, for instance, in the poem of *Resolution and Independence*; but it is bald as the bare mountain-tops are bald, with a baldness which is full of grandeur.

Wherever we meet with the successful balance, in Wordsworth, of profound truth of subject with profound truth of execution, he is unique. His best poems are those which most perfectly exhibit this balance. I have a warm admiration for *Laodamia* and for the great *Ode*; but if I am to tell the very truth, I find *Laodamia* not wholly free from something artificial, and the great *Ode* not wholly free from something declamatory. If I had to pick out poems of a kind most perfectly to shew Wordsworth's unique power, I should rather choose poems such as *Michael*, *The Fountain*, *The Highland Reaper*. And poems with the peculiar and unique beauty which

distinguishes these, Wordsworth produced in considerable number; besides very many other poems of which the worth although not so rear as the worth of these, is still exceedingly high.

On the whole, then, as I said at the beginning, not only is Wordsworth eminent by reason of the goodness of his best work, but he is eminent also by reason of the great body of good work which he has left to us. With the ancients I will not compare him. In many respects the ancients are far above us, and yet there is something that we demand which they can never give. Leaving the ancients, let us come to the poets and poetry of Christendom. Dante, Shakspeare, Molière, Milton, even Goethe, are altogether larger and more splendid luminaries in the poetical heaven than Wordsworth. But I know not where else, among the moderns, we are to find his superiors.

THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN.—Professor Mudge has presented some interesting evidence relating to the antiquity of man in an American scientific journal. He starts by assuming the correctness of the generally accepted opinion among geologists that man was on the earth at the close of the Glacial epoch, and endeavours to prove that the antiquity of the race cannot be taken at less than 200,000 years. After the Glacial epoch, American geologists have recognized, by their effects, three others—namely, the Champlain, the Terrace, and the Delta, all supposed to be of nearly equal length. His argument for estimating the duration of these epochs is as follows:—He takes the case of the Delta of the Mississippi, and notes the fact that for a distance of about 300 miles of this deposit there are to be observed buried forests of large trees, one over the other, with interspaces of sand. Ten distinct forest growths of this nature have been observed, which must have succeeded one another.—These trees are the bald cypress of the Southern States. Some have been observed over

25 feet in diameter, and one contained 5,700 annual rings. In some instances these huge trees have grown over the stumps of others equally large, and such instances occur in all, or nearly all, the ten forest beds. From these facts, Professor Mudge thinks it is not assuming too much to estimate the antiquity of each of these forest growths at 10,000 years, or 100,000 years for the ten forests. This estimate would not take into account the interval of time—which doubtless was very considerable—that elapsed between the ending of one forest and the beginning of another. "Such evidence," Professor Mudge concludes, "would be received in any court of law as sound and satisfactory. We do not see how such proof is to be discarded when applied to the antiquity of our race.—There is satisfactory evidence that man lived in the Champlain epoch. But the Terrace epoch, or the greater part of it, intervenes between the Champlain and Delta epochs, thus adding to my 100,000 years. If only as much time is given to both these epochs as to the Delta epoch, 200,000 years is the total result."