

for solitary scenes of nature amongst woods and mountains, with a direct, conscious anticipation of imaginative pleasure, and loving them with a pure disinterested love on their own separate account. * * * * *

“Wordsworth, like his companions, haunted the hills and the vales for the sake of angling, snaring birds, swimming, and sometimes of hunting according to the Westmoreland fashion (or the Irish fashion in Galway), on foot—for riding to the chase is quite impossible from the precipitous nature of the ground. It was in the course of these pursuits, by an indirect effect growing gradually upon him, that Wordsworth became a passionate lover of nature, at the time when the growth of his intellectual faculties made it impossible that he should combine those thoughtful passions with the experience of the eye and the ear.” So says DeQuincey, and so psychological phenomena, and, as we shall see, Wordsworth's own account of the matter, requires us to believe. Our powers and capacities are developed by degrees and perfected through exercise. At first we are open to impressions of the beautiful, simply from its lowest forms, and are quite unable duly to appreciate the swelling loveliness of nature as a whole. We may chase with glee the gaudily painted butterfly, and see a prettiness in the perfect rose; we may even look with interest upon the many colored richness of an autumnal wood, or like to gaze into the tremulous blue of a summer evening sky, and watch the changing outline of its intersecting clouds; but all the subtle analogies of things, all prophetic hints, and the deeper power of harmony escape us. Slowly we begin to catch occasional glimpses of nature's meaning, and learn to read her thoughts. We cling more closely to her, and hear her faintly murmuring in her dreams of sympathy and kinship. Mountain, wood and stream at length, no longer standing apart in hard disunion, begin to mingle in their grandeur with our blood, and fill us with “sonorous cadences” of things invisible. Now, more than ever, do they beam with glory; for all their heaving beauty seems a constant effluence from the central heart-love, and joy and song made visible. Now heaven does not merely lie *about* us as in our infancy, when our view of it was bounded by the over-arching sky, but is a power *within* us—its light no longer only light, but conscious life as well. If “the visionary gleam” has fled, a more substantial glory—a mightier power of joy, has come.