

privilege, what is left to Wordsworth is enough to justify his fame. Even where his genius is wrapped in clouds, the unconquerable lightning of imagination struggles through, flashing out unexpected vistas, and illuminating the humdrum pathway of our daily thought with a radiance of momentary consciousness that seems like a revelation. If it be the most delightful function of the poet to set our lives to music, yet perhaps he will be even more sure of our maturer gratitude if he do his part also as moralist and philosopher to purify and enlighten; if he define and encourage our vacillating perceptions of duty; if he piece together our fragmentary apprehensions of our own life and that larger life whose unconscious instruments we are, making of the jumbled bits of our dissected map of experience a coherent chart. In the great poets there is an exquisite sensibility both of soul and sense that sympathizes like gossamer sea-moss with every movement of the element in which it floats, but which is rooted on the solid rock of our common sympathies. Wordsworth shows less of this finer feminine fibre of organization than one or two of his contemporaries, notably than Coleridge or Shelley; but he was a masculine thinker, and in his more characteristic poems there is always a kernel of firm conclusion from far-reaching principles that stimulates thought and challenges meditation. Groping in the dark passages of life, we come upon some axiom of his, as it were a wall that gives us our bearings and enables us to find an outlet. Compared with Goethe we feel that he lacks that serene impartiality of mind which results from breadth of culture; nay, he seems narrow, insular,