

treating sacred things lightly ; or censorious, making other people's faults an excuse for their own. In both cases, rebuke—but very wise and tender—is needed. Then, the child may hide his feelings, and be deeply moved, when no sign of it appears on the surface. Boys particularly are inclined to do this. Again, the child's nature may be such that a

word dropped is far more effective than any direct appeal. "A word in season" may be a seed from which an abundant harvest may spring. The scholar may be in different conditions at different times. Sometimes it may be necessary to speak, at other times to do so would be folly.

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The Teacher and The Poets

IN TWELVE ARTICLES

X. WITH SOME OF THE LESSER POETS

By *Rev. F. H. McIntosh, M.A.*

The religious teacher will not forget the greater lights, but he will also do well to note the lesser lights along the shore. There are Cowper and Coleridge and Wordsworth from across the seas ; and Bryant and Whittier and Lowell and Longfellow of our own New World. Other names might well be mentioned, but space forbids. We can indicate the serviceableness of but two of the foregoing—Wordsworth from the old land, and Longfellow from the new.

Wordsworth, take him all in all, has no superior as the poet for the teacher of religion. His noble imagery was fashioned on the mount, and can be used to illustrate a thousand spiritual truths. But his special service consists in this—he saw God in nature, like the ancient prophets : he was above all else the poet of natural revelation. Some people find God only in a holy Book. To Wordsworth, the earth and sea and sky were God's first inscriptions. Does he chance to stand on the high hills at break of day ? Then this is what he feels :

"In such high hour of visitation from the
living God
Thought was not."

How full of grandeur would be this life of ours, if only every dawn were a real approach of God ! Or, does he look out from the same vantage point in broad daylight, and see the great dome of sky and the vast hills in fluctuation fixed, then this is his raptured cry :

"Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise Thee with impassioned voice.
My lips that may forget Thee in the crowd,

Cannot forget Thee here, where Thou hast built
For Thine own glory in the wilderness."
Or does his face flash with the fires of fading day, then these words tremble on his lips :

"I have felt
A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns."
He makes us see God in every growth and motion of the material universe.

Of American poets, Longfellow, though not so deep as Lowell, or so devotional as Whittier, is yet, perhaps, the most useful for our purpose. He has been called the poet of grace and sentiment. He taught many lessons, the principal of which was the cheerful acceptance of our life as it is. Life may be, and often is, dark and dreary ; but what of that ? In, *The Rainy Day*, we meet with this :

"Be still, sad heart ! and cease repining ;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining."

He applies this principle to concrete cases. Is unrequited love one of the trials of this dark day ? Then, *Endymion* is writ to teach us that,

"No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some one tho' unknown,
Responds unto his own."

Or is the present sting a wasted life ? Then read, *The Ladder of St. Augustine* :

"Nor deem the irrevocable Past
As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last,
To something nobler we attain."