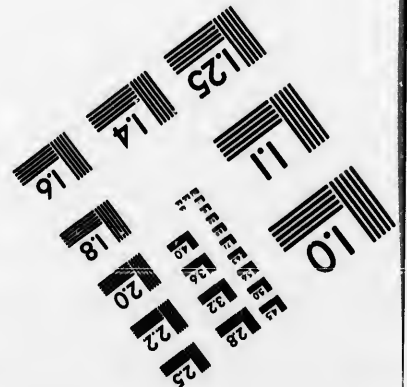
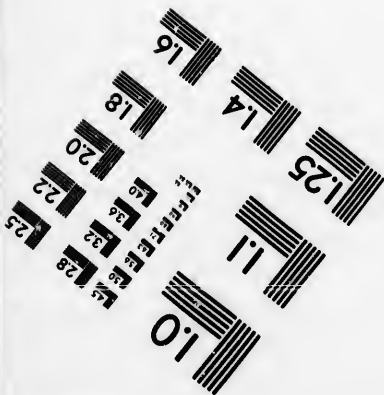
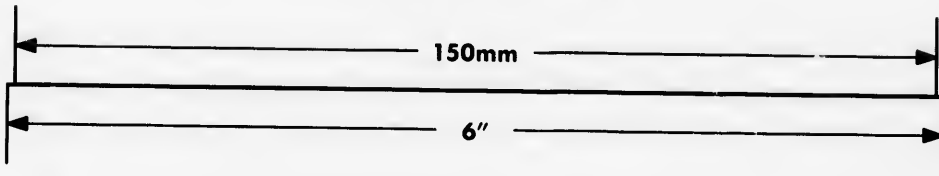
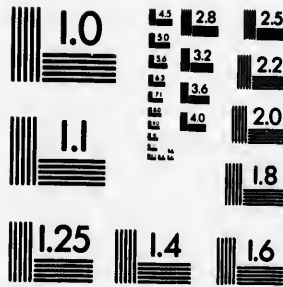
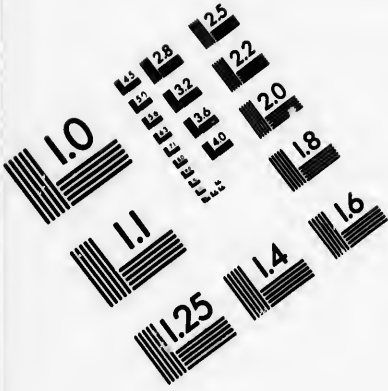


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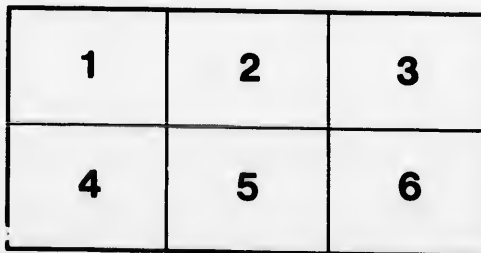
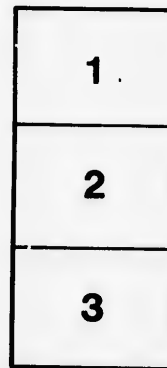
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# WORDSWORTH.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE HAMILTON  
ASSOCIATION BY REV. S. LYLE.

MARCH 9th, 1882.

Wordsworth's fame is a plant of slow growth. But if his poems have been coldly and even cruelly received by some, they have been by others as enthusiastically admired, and as indiscriminately praised. Many of the thoughtful and cultured cherish a profound respect for the man and greatly admire his genius. In the honorable roll of poetic names, Matthew Arnold, no mean critic, places Wordsworth third. Shakespeare heads the list, Milton stands second, and the third place is held by Wordsworth. Francis Jeffrey, the brilliant reviewer, says, when speaking of Wordsworth's Excursion, "this will never do." He admits some merit in the lyrical ballads—an "extreme simplicity and lowliness of tone," wavering prettily "between stillness and pathos." But the Excursion is a poor imitation of Cowper and of Milton, engrafted on the natural drawl of the Lakers, and diluted by a profuse and irrepressible wordiness. To those who have studied Wordsworth carefully, and have with pleasure listened to him singing

Of truth, of grandeur, beauty, love and hope  
And melancholy fear subdued by faith,  
Of blessed consolation in distress,  
Of moral strength and intellectual power,  
Of joy in widest commonality spread,

Jeffrey's estimate appears cruelly unjust. With all Wordsworth's faults, and they are not a few, he is one of the world's great poets. Let us try to estimate the grounds on which such claims rest.

1. He is a lover of nature. And here, as in much else, "the child is father of the man." His intense sympathy with nature manifested itself in his boyish rambles over Hawkhead moor and mountain.

Even then I felt  
Gleams like the flashing of a shield; the earth  
And common face of nature spake to me,  
Rememberable things.

His desire to see nature in her every mood

and phase, led him out into the fields at night that he might watch the stars, and listen to the awful voice of the coming storm as it strikes on the distant rock. Yearning to have a sight of the sublime and the beautiful he climbed the mountains that he might "behold the sun rise up and bathe the world in light." As he looked down on the solid frame of earth and ocean's liquid mass; as he touched the clouds, and in their faces read unutterable love, he felt inspired, and needed not the help of man to enable him to understand the scene. In his own words:

Sensation, soul, and form,  
All melted into him; they swallowed up  
His animal being; in them did he live,  
And by them did he live; they were his life.  
In such access of mind in such high hour  
Of visitation from the living God,  
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired,  
No thanks be breathed, he proffer'd no request  
Rapt into still communion that transcends  
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,  
His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power  
That made him; it was blessedness and love!"

Born at Cookermouth in Cumberland, Wordsworth's early years were spent amid scenes lovely, wild, and inspiring. Many a time this tender and thoughtful boy wandered along the picturesque rivers of the Derwent and the Cocker, and watched them meeting and mingling their waters near the spot where the ruins of an ancient castle look down on the quaint old town. Deeply did the scene impress him. Speaking of the Derwent he says:

One, the fairest of all rivers, loved  
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,  
And from his ford and shallows sent a voice  
That flow'd along my dreams.

At the age of eight he was sent to school at Hawkshead, and thus brought into contact with the other extremity of the Lake scenery. Whether he is setting springs for woodcock, hinging on the naked crags of the rock in his efforts to reach the raven's nest,

following the path of the solitary eagle so rarely seen, plunging into the woods in quest of nuts, or hissing "along the polished ice in games confederate" he is ever drinking deeper and deeper draughts of nature's fountain. In later days Wordsworth recognises the deathful influences of nature in developing what was truest and best in his life, and restraining him from evil.

Yet were I grossly destitute of all  
Those human sentiments that make this earth  
So dear if I should fall, with grateful voice,  
To speak of you, ye mountains and ye lakes,  
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds  
That dwell among the hill where I was born.  
If in my youth I have been pure in heart  
If, mingling with the world, I am content  
With my own modest pleasure, and have lived  
With God and nature communing, removed  
From idle enmities and low desires,  
The gift is yours: if in those times of fear,  
This melancholy waste of hopes is thrown;  
If, mid indolence and apathy,  
And sickled exultation when good men  
On every side fall off, we know not how  
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names  
Of peace and quiet and domestic love,  
Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers  
On visionary minds: if in this time  
Of desolation and dismay, I yet  
Despair not of our nature, but retain  
A more than Roman confidence, a faith  
That fails not, in all sorrow my support,  
The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,  
Ye winds and sounding cataracts: 'tis yours,  
Ye mountains! Thine, O nature! Thou hast fed  
My lofty speculations; and in this,  
For this uneasy heart of ours, I find  
A never failing principle of joy  
And purest passion.

Even in his student life at Cambridge love of nature is the ruling passion. In going up to this ancient and illustrious seat of learning, he felt his heart rising as he neared the enchanted ground.

As near and nearer to the spot we drew  
It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.

But even in this, the Alma Mater of Spenser, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Dryden, Cowley, Waller, Milton, Herbert and Gray, Wordsworth could not free himself from the spell of nature. With pleasure he listened to the college clock tolling the hours twice over, with a male and female voice, "with pleasure he, by the aid of the struggling moonbeams or favoring stars,

Beheld

The antechapel, where the statue stood  
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,  
The marble index of a mind for ever  
Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

But with infinitely greater pleasure he stood under the "brown o'er arching grove, that contemplation loves." From his own words we can picture the poet striding out from the dim cloisters of the school or to the shade of the ash tree, wreathed with ivy, decorated with autumn tassels and wet with the dew, if not with the spray of the river, and calmly and

thoughtfully contemplating the scene. "Scarcely Spenser's self," he says,

Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,  
Or could more bright appearances create  
Of human forms with super-human powers,  
Than I beheld loitering on calm clear nights  
Alone beneath this fairy work of earth.

True the Cambridge scenery is dull and flat. But in spite of nature's plainness he could see food for thought in the green and pleasant grass in the golden glories of day, and in the stately procession of night.

As if awakened, summoned, roused, constrained,  
I looked for universal things; pursued  
The common countenance of earth and sky—  
Earth, nowhere unobscured by some trace  
Of that first paradise whence man was driven:  
And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed  
By the proud name she bears—the name of heaven.

When aimlessly wandering through the streets of London, nature's scenes were ever present to mould and inspire. What he said of the Farmer of Tilbury vale may be applied to himself.

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,  
Like one whose own country's far over the sea;  
And nature, while through the great city he hies  
Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

In his sonnet on Westminster Bridge he looks upon London as a part of nature—as a child asleep in its mother's arms.

"The city now doth like a garment wear  
The beauty of morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill.  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
The river glideth at his own sweet will.  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

Here you see the poet clothing the smoke begrimed city with the bright garments of morning, and placing tower and turret and church and theatre beside the open fields and under the calm sky.

He sees the city not as it is, full of noise and dust and confusion, but as his love of nature led him to conceive it, as something silent, grand and everlasting. Pope looked at the country through the smoke and fog of the city, and saw little to admire beyond the town limits. Wordsworth beheld the city in the clear light of nature, and saw sights at once beautiful and sublime—sights that the dullest souls could not pass without stopping to admire them because they were so touching in their majesty. In Pope everything centers around man and ministers to his glory; in Wordsworth nature is the center and from her emanate floods of light and glory. The reaction commenced by Thomson against the artificialness of Pope and his

school was carried on by Gray and Goldsmith, Collins, Cowper and Crabbe. Thomson took men out of the smoke and pestilence of the city and placed them in the woods and bracing air of the mountains. Gray went with them to the country graveyard, and mingled his tears with theirs. Goldsmith, in language true to nature, sketched the village and its simple country life. Cowper gathered up the language and aspirations of the heart after the true and the good, and in words that appealed to the rustic men and women of his day, sang of Christ and the great salvation; and Crabbe, centering all the interests of his poetry around the morals, the manners, the history of the agricultural poor, drew men's attention to the great drama of country life. And what these did for England and English speaking people, Burns, single handed, and in the face of obstacles not a few did, for Scotland, and did it well. This reaction culminated in Wordsworth. Alone in London he is at home in the wild moor or on the bleak mountain. As a boy with gentle reverent hand he touched the nuts that grew on the hazel trees, and felt there was a spirit in the woods. But here let me quote his own words spoken of his companion, as the best description of his own conduct and feelings

There was a boy, ye know him well, ye cliffs,  
And islands of Winander! many a time  
At evening, when the earliest stars began  
To move along the edges of the hills,  
Rising and setting, would he stand alone  
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,  
And there with fingers interwoven, both hands  
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth  
Uplifted, he as through an instrument,  
Bl w mimic motions to the silent owls,  
That they might answer him, and they would  
shout

Across the watery vale, and shout again  
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals  
And long halloos and "creams," and echoes loud,  
Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild  
Of mirth and jocund din, and when it chanced  
That pause of deepest silence mocked his skill,  
Then so sometimes in that silence while he hung,  
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise,  
Has carried far into his heart the voice  
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene  
Would enter unawares into his mind,  
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven received  
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

His journey on the continent of Europe brought him into contact with new and instructive phases of nature. Crossing over the Alps and sweeping down towards Italy, through the gorge of Gondo, the grandeur of the scene ravished him with delight, and spoke to him things unutterable.

The immeasurable height  
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,  
The stationary blasts of water falls,  
And in the narrow rent at every turn

Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,  
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,  
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,  
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside  
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight  
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,  
The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,  
Turnt all a peace, the darkness and the light,  
Were all like workings of one mind, the fea-

tures  
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;  
Characters of the great Apocalypse,  
The type and symbols of eternity  
Of first and last and midst and without end.

Every vale fresh from the mountains assisted him in his upward flight; "every sound or sight in its degree of power administered to grandeur or to tenderness"; and thus his education was perfected and new delights spread round "his steps like sunshine o'er green fields."

2. Wordsworth's love of man is both deep and pure. Indeed, his constant communion with nature melted his heart and made him truly and tenderly human. Looked at in this light, his sympathies are broader and more intense than those of Byron, Scott, or Shelley. In this, as in much else, he must be placed with Burns, to whom he owed so much. Burns taught him that

The poor inhabitant below  
Was quick to learn and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow  
And softer flame."

Hence among English poets "Wordsworth stands foremost and alone as the poet of common life." Defective in humour, he failed to see and express the comic side of English manners. Here Burns is stronger than his pupil. Refining and ennobling the humorous, Burns gave expression to the wit and merriment of the common people in songs that can never die. If Burns speaks for Scotland's sons and daughters, if Wordsworth paints the life of the thoughtful peddler, and of the dreamy recluse; Lord Byron is the poet of fashionable city life. He moves easily among the circles of pleasure and the depths of passion. He shamefully degrades talent, position and art, to the service of sensuality, and casts around vice the halo of his rare genius. In Scott you have a higher moral tone. In Sir Walter, strong, active, bold, romantic, we have the exponent of the old country aristocrat. The passionate loyalty of the dashing cavalier of the seventeenth century, expresses itself in the heroic scenes so graphically depicted by the Scottish Advocate of the nineteenth. But if Scott loved to linger on the glories of the setting sun, Shelley as eagerly peered into the dark night in the hope of seeing the morning star of a bright and better day. Shelley, as Brimley has well put it, is "the poetical rep-



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representative of those whose hopes and aspirations and affections rush forward to embrace the great hereafter, and dwell in rapturous anticipation on the coming of the golden year, the reign of universal freedom and the establishment of universal brotherhood." This gentle, fervid and ill-fated spirit—shrinking from the least touch of wrong, and fired with all the enthusiasm of the patriot and the martyr—learnt in suffering what he taught the world in song. Like Carlyle, he hates oppression and scorns the oppressor—pours floods of contempt on tyrants and their tools. With savage malignity he attacks knave and hypocrite, and holds them up to scorn. Gladly he welcomed the French Revolution—the deluge of blood—because he thought it would bring in the reign of right and peace on earth. His cruel experience roused his hatred and made him fight against the civil and religious institutions of Britain, and "lent more glowing colors to the rainbow of promise that beamed upon him from the distance, through the storm of bloodshed and revolution." But if Lord Byron dwells most on the glories of the brilliant assembly; if Walter Scott lingers longest around baronial halls: if Shelley dips into the future, and in words rich in color as a painted window and suggestive as the strains of music speaks of the brotherhood of man and federation of the world; Wordsworth sings of the hopes and fears, trials and triumphs, of the love and hatred of our common country life. Burns in Scotland and Wordsworth in England have done more than any other two poets to break down the conventional barriers that keep man from man, that divide rich and poor, and place them against each other in hostile camps. And in representing the men and women of this work-a-day world, Wordsworth has neither vilified the rich nor justified the presence of dirt, disease, vice, and heartlessness so often found in the haunts of the poor. Passing by the accidents of station, he shows us the truth and the beauty of every honest life—the world of poetic wealth in every human breast.

His mother, whom he lost before he was eight, was truly human, and tenderly trained her "stiff, moody, and violent tempered" boy. According to Wordsworth his mother believed that the God, "who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk, doth also for our nobler part provide," and in this faith she brought up her son.

This was her creed, and therefore she was pure  
From anxious fear of error or mishap,  
And evil, overweeningly so called,  
Was not puffed up by false unnatural hopes,  
Nor selfish with unnecessary cares.

Such was she—not from faculties more strong  
Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,  
And spot in which she lived, and through a grace  
Of most meekness, simple mindedness,  
A heart that found be ignity and hope,  
Being itself benign.

But much as Wordsworth owed to his mother, he was more indebted to his sister Dorothy. Though two years younger than the poet she became his guiding star to inspire and direct and give tone and tenderness to his whole life. In his poem on the sparrow's nest he thus speaks of her:

The blessing of my later years  
Was with me when a boy;  
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears  
And humble cares and delicate fears;  
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;  
And love and thought and joy.

This education, so lovingly and faithfully begun by mother and sister, was carried on and completed at school and college. Though his university course was not distinguished, he mastered the Italian language, and was brought into closer contact with the great drama of life. It was here that he began to study the workings of passion, to analyse character, and make himself acquainted with the springs of action. Indeed his college training gave him the Catholic feeling so beautifully expressed in some of his poems, and enriched his vocabulary not a little. It enabled him to combine the homely pathos of Crabbe, and the philosophic breadth of Coleridge—the profound speculations of the philosopher and the simple narrative of the historian of the poor.

But the event that touched his heart most, and set his blood boiling, was the French Revolution. In a tumult of wild joy he hailed the fall of the tyrant and the rise of the reign of the rights of man as man. As he listened to the cry of liberty, equality and fraternity, he could feel every pulse of the movement in his own heart, and responding could say:

From hour to hour the antiquated earth  
Beat like the heart of man."

To use the language of Brooke, Wordsworth was a natural Republican. Besides, there was much to attract the young and imaginative, in that great upheaving. "But we, who live upon the broad river of its thought, can scarcely realize what it was to men when first it broke a living fount of streams, from its rock in the desert to quench the thirst of those who longed, but knew not till it came, for what they longed. We who live in times which, though not dull, are sad coloured can scarcely imagine the glory of that awaking, the stream of new thoughts that transfused life, the passionate emotion, the love and hatred, the horror and the rapture, the visionary glories, the unutterable hopes, the



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sense of deliverance, the new heaven and the new earth, brimfull of promises which dawned on men."

Before them shone a glorious world,  
Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled  
To music suddenly.

Wordsworth's friend, Coleridge, was under a similar spell. He represents freedom as a fierce minister of love, with whirlwind arm, leaping from the bosom of the Almighty. But both Wordsworth and Coleridge were doomed to be disappointed. If Wordsworth could see nothing but gold in the beginning as the end came he could easily perceive the dross of the other side of the shield. He was filled with horror as he saw France on her knees at the feet of Napoleon, whom he distrusted and hated. But in the sad school of blasted hopes, his heart became more tender and clung more to what was human. Doubtless his study of the social condition of the workingmen of France made a deep and lasting impression for good. It prepared him to sympathize with the peasants, and reproduce their feelings as he has done in Michael.

"Isabel," said he,  
'I have been toiling more than seventy years,  
And in the open sunshine of God's love,  
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours  
Should pass into a stranger's hands, I think  
That I could not be quiet in my grave."

Is this not a faithful expression of the farmer's grief at the thought of being forced to part with his farm? There is not a line in that beautiful poem that is not true to nature. Every stroke proclaims the hand of a master, and the picture of the farmer's grief is simply perfect.

But we would do his wife a gross injustice did we not give her a place in the list of those educators who taught him how to love the true and the good. Admiring the genius of her husband; sympathizing with him in his trials; rejoicing, in his joy she was a true wife, "dearer far than life and light are dear." With a keen, practical eye, and a taste for poetry, she was able to correct some of her husband's faults. Two of the best lines of the poem entitled the Daffodils—

They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude—

are her composition. By this happy union—a union of head and of heart—Wordsworth's lot was blessed, and the tenderest emotions developed. How he enjoyed the prattle and the din of his loved children! If the daisy, by the shadow that it casts, protects the lingering dew drop from the sun, Wordsworth's children protected him from the cares of the world, and were to him a joy and an inspiration. How does he speak of Dora, his

infant daughter? He calls her that bright star, the second glory of the heavens.

Smiles have there been seen,  
Tranquil assurances that heaven supports,  
The feeble motions of thy life, and cheers  
Thy loneliness; or shall those smiles be called  
Feelings of love, put forth as if to exult  
This untried world, and to prepare thy way  
Through a strait passage intricate and dim  
Such are they; and the same are tokens, signs,  
Which, when the appointed season hath arrived,  
Joy as her holiest language, shall adopt,  
And reason's godlike power be proud to own.

But much as we may love to dwell on the peace, the love, and the joy of the poet's home, we must pass on, and consider the poet's faith in things unseen.

3. Wordsworth's faith. Some call him deist, some pantheist, and some high churchman. Without seeking to go too minutely into the exact shade of his theological belief, I think it right to say that his faith in a personal God was strong and constant. In writing to a friend he says, "among the more awful scenes of the Alps I had not a thought of man; my whole soul was turned to Him who produced the terrible majesty before me." True, at times he speaks as the pantheist does. Take his well known lines on revisiting Tintern Abbey as an illustration:

And 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,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects and all thoughts,  
And rolls through all things.

Taken by themselves these words seem to teach pantheism. But these lines must be looked at in the light of all that he has written elsewhere of God as a personal Being. And thus viewed they no more teach pantheism than Paul does when he declares that God is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. Before rushing to the conclusion that Wordsworth is either atheist, deist, or pantheist let us carefully examine his Ecclesiastical sonnets—sonnets in which he expresses his faith and hope. And a glance at them will show that we may fairly apply to him the words of Tennyson,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the world's great altar stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,  
I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

Nor is his faith in God concealed in his other works. Look at his sublime ode on the

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Intimations of Immortality—one of the sublimest in any language—and we see his belief in God clearly expressed.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home.

He represents, as Plato did, that the child had its home with God before it took up its abode on the earth. When speaking of the evening's calm on the beach of Calais, he gives expression to the same sentiment.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;  
The holy time is quiet as a nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea.  
Listen! the mighty being is awake,  
And doth with his eternal motion make  
A sound like thunder everlastingly.  
Dear child! dear girl! thou walkest with me here,  
If thou appear'st untroubled by solemn thought,  
Thy nature is not therefore less divine.  
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;  
And worshipp'st at the temple's in our shrine,  
God being with thee when we know it not.

Hear how Brooke speaks of Wordsworth and his religion. "Our greatest poet since Milton, was as religious as Milton, and in both I cannot but think the element of grandeur of style which belongs so pre-eminently to them flowed largely from the solemn simplicity and the strength which a dignified and unbigoted faith in great realities beyond this world gave to the order of their thoughts. Coleridge was flying from one speculation to another all his life. Scott had no vital joy in his belief, and it did not interpenetrate his poetry. Byron believed in Fate more than in God. Shelley floated in an ideal world, which had not the advantage of being generalised from any realities—and not one of them possesses, (though Byron comes near it now and then,) the grand style. Wordsworth alone, combining fine artistic power with profound religion, walks where he chooses, though he limps wretchedly at times, with nearly as stately a step as Milton. He had two qualities which always go with the grand style in poetry—he lived intensely in the present, and he had the roots of his being fixed in a great center of power—faith in the eternal righteousness and love of God." Wordsworth never could have reached the heights he did if he had not laid hold of the hand of God, and by this means lifted himself up. Go where he may he is ever haunted by the Eternal Mind, ever cradled in the arms of divine love. It is the sense of God's presence that makes his poems so calm and comforting, and helpful to the

troubled spirit. When John Stuart Mill fell into despondency, as he gazed upon the wreck that his ruthless analysis had wrought, he was roused, and cheered, and strengthened by reading Wordsworth. And what did Wordsworth do for Mill? He gave him an insight into the spiritual, the true, and the lasting. The poet with his whole soul had grasped the hand of the Eternal, and was leaning his weakness on the arm of the Omnipotent. With clear eye he could see

The ever during power  
And central peace subsisting at the heart  
Of endless agitation.

Had I time, and were this the place, I could show Wordsworth's belief in prayer:

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart  
That shall lack a timely end,  
If but to God we turn and ask  
Of Him to be our friend."

Enough however has been said to show that Wordsworth was not faithless, but believing.

4. Wordsworth's poems are morally high toned and spiritually healthy. Tennyson receiving the laureate wreath from the Queen—a wreath he so gracefully wears—pays Wordsworth a high compliment when he says:

"Your royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laure greener than the brows  
Of him that uttered nothing base."

In Byron the purest gold is mixed up with the vilest dross; in Burns the finest wheat is imbedded in the coarsest chaff. These two kings of song have crowns disfigured with dark blot. Shelley too is open to the same censure. From causes more honorable to himself, he has said much that he ought to have left unsaid. But Wordsworth's hands are clean, because his heart is pure. The high priest of nature, the mediator between rich and poor, the champion of liberty and of truth, the prophet of heaven's peace and good will to earth, Wordsworth's poems are as morally bracing as his mountain air is physically. What they did for John Stuart Mill, they will do for every honest and diligent reader. With Wordsworth as your guide and interpreter, the mearest flower that blows will suggest thoughts "that lie too deep for tears."

Inspired by his love of nature,  
One impulse from the vernal wood  
Will teach you more of man,  
Of mortal evil, and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

His reverence is so great that he says to the dear maiden standing under the shade of the nut tree, and longing to pull and eat

With gentle hand  
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

But whether watching the child of rare beauty feeding the snow white mountain lamb, or wandering through the church yard where he meets a blooming girl whose hair is "wet with points of morning dew;" whether he stands in the deep silence before the battle, and calls on England's sons to rise up in their might, and answer the French cry "so glory" with England's sublime cry of "duty," or weeps as he sees the dogs of war let loose, and the best blood of man slain in the name of justice, reason and humanity; he is ever the same tender, true, and faithful guide who tells us "We must be free or die who speak the tongue that Shakspeare spoke; the faith and morals hold which Milton held." In this feverish and restless age, "when men change swords for ledgers, and desert the students' bower for gold—an age when every door is laid with gold, and opens but to golden keys—Wordsworth's poems are simply valuable beyond all price. He will, if read teach the rising generation to think deep, live plain, and go right. In his pages you are brought face to face with nature, man and God, and never does he put a cloud between you and these great teachers. He lets them speak to you directly and the effect is good both intellectually and morally. Nature herself seems, as Arnold puts it, to "take the pen out of his hand, and to write for him with her own true, sheer, penetrating power. This arises from two causes—from the profound sincereness with which Wordsworth feels his subject, and also from the profoundly sincere and natural character of his subject itself. He can and will treat such a subject with nothing but the most plain, first hand, almost austere naturalness. His expression may often be called bald, as, for instance, in the poem of Revolution and Independence; but it is as the bare mountain is bald, with a baldness which is full of grandeur. As an antidote to the unnatural, wild, love and hatred, blood and murder novels that are devoured by the masses in our day, I would commend a course of careful Wordsworthian reading. Contact with a spirit at once so true and tender, so human and yet with so much of God in it, is certain to purify the affections, and expand our minds. Let us cast out the unclean spirit of a gross and demoralizing sensationalism by introducing the angel of light and of purity.

5. Wordsworth's poetic theory. In this he is extreme and weak. His practice is better than his creed. His theory is an emphatic protest against the doctrines of Jeffrey and the practice of Pope and his school. In attacking their artificialness, he laid down two principles, and from these he elaborated his theory of poetry. He held

that the true poet left the stale, stereotyped phraseology of books, and went direct to the men and women of his day, and from them learned how to speak; and that the language of true poetry in no way differs from that of good prose. His friend and admirer, Coleridge, disputes the truth of both positions, and convicts Wordsworth of false philosophy. With Wordsworth he agrees in condemning "the gaudy, affectation of style which had long passed current for poetic diction," and refuses to call that poetry which would be intolerable in conversation or in prose. But Coleridge denies that the peasant's language is better adapted for poetic purpose than that of the refined. Besides, Wordsworth forgot that the language of the peasant, purified of all that was either coarse or provincial, was not that of every day life. Indeed, as Principal Shairp has shewn, as Coleridge has proved, Hooker, Bacon and Burke use language as real, as expressive, and more comprehensive than that of the unthinking and uneducated. "The language of these writers differs far less from the usage of cultivated society, than the language of Wordsworth's homeliest poems differs from the talk of bullock drivers."

Again, Coleridge takes issue with Wordsworth on the second point, and argues that as poetry implies more passion than prose, it must have a more impassioned language in which to express itself. The feeling creates a new medium, and gives tone and color to the language. Doubtless this defective theory led Wordsworth into some of his faults—the wordy prose, the lack of art, the absence of glowing passion. Wordsworth is what he is in spite of his theory. But though extreme, his faults lean to virtue's side. Besides, by raising the question of poetic language, and by writing simply and naturally as he did, he powerfully influenced the literature of this century, and all for good.

In taking my farewell of one so dear to me as a friend, I cannot find language more appropriate than his own :

I thought of thee, my partner and my guide  
As being past away—vain sympathy!  
For backward . . . as I cast my eyes,  
I see what was, and is, and will abide;  
Still glides the stream, and shall forever glide;  
The form remains, the function never dies;  
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,  
We men who in the morn of youth defied  
The elements, must vanish—be it so!  
Enough, if something from our hands have  
power,  
To live, to act and serve the future hour;  
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,  
Through love through hope, and faith's transcendent power,  
We feel that we are greater than we know."

