

Book Eleventh

Imagination, How Impaired and Restored

- Long time hath man's unhappiness and guilt
Detained us: with what dismal sights beset
For the outward view, and inwardly oppressed
With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,
[15] Confusion of the judgement, zeal decayed— 5
And lastly, utter loss of hope itself
And things to hope for. Not with these began
Our song, and not with these our song must end.¹
Ye motions of delight, that through the fields
[10] Stir gently, breezes and soft airs that breathe 10
The breath of paradise, and find your way
To the recesses of the soul; ye brooks
Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
[20] By day, a quiet one in silent night; 15
And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
[25] To interpose the covert of your shades,
Even as a sleep, betwixt the heart of man
And the uneasy world—'twixt man himself,
Not seldom, and his own unquiet heart— 20
Oh, that I had a music and a voice
[30] Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
Nor heedeth man's perverseness; spring returns—
I saw the spring return, when I was dead 25
To deeper hope, yet had I joy for her
And welcomed her benevolence, rejoiced
In common with the children of her love,
[35] Plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds in bower.
So neither were complacency, nor peace, 30
Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my good
[40] Through those distracted times:³ in Nature still

1. An allusion, which Coleridge would enjoy, to *The Idiot Boy*, 445–56, “And with the owls began my song, / And with the owls must end.”

3. Wordsworth is referring to spring 1796, and the period of moral crisis described at the end of Book X; see 1805, X, 904*n*, above.

Book Twelfth

Imagination and Taste, How Impaired and Restored

LONG time have human ignorance and guilt
Detained us, on what spectacles of woe
Compelled to look, and inwardly oppressed
With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,
Confusion of the judgment, zeal decayed, 5
And, lastly, utter loss of hope itself
And things to hope for! Not with these began
Our song, and not with these our song must end.¹—
Ye motions of delight, that haunt the sides
Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft airs, 10
Whose subtle intercourse with breathing flowers,
Feelingly watched, might teach Man's haughty race
How without injury to take, to give
Without offence; ye who, as if to show
The wondrous influence of power gently used, 15
Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,
And, with a touch, shift the stupendous clouds
Through the whole compass of the sky; ye brooks,
Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
By day, a quiet sound in silent night; 20
Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal forth
In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore,
Not mute, and then retire, fearing no storm;
And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
To interpose the covert of your shades, 25
Even as a sleep, between the heart of man
And outward troubles, between man himself,
Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:
Oh! that I had a music and a voice
Harmonious as your own, that I might tell 30
What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring returns,—
I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,
In common with the children of her love,
Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields, 35
Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
On wings that navigate cerulean skies.
So neither were complacency,² nor peace,
Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my good
Through these distracted times;³ in Nature still 40

2. Contentedness, satisfaction—as at 1850, VIII, 75, above.

Glorifying, I found a counterpoise in her,
 Which, when the spirit of evil was at height,
 Maintained for me a secret happiness.
 Her I resorted to, and loved so much 35
 I seemed to love as much as heretofore—
 And yet this passion, fervent as it was,
 Had suffered change; how could there fail to be
 Some change, if merely hence, that years of life
 Were going on, and with them loss or gain 40
 Inevitable, sure alternative?

This history, my friend, hath chiefly told
 [45] Of intellectual⁵ power from stage to stage
 Advancing hand in hand with love and joy,
 And of imagination teaching truth 45
 [50] Until that natural graciousness of mind
 Gave way to over-pressure of the times
 And their disastrous issues. What availed,
 When spells forbade the voyager to land,⁷
 The fragrance which did ever and anon 50
 [55] Give notice of the shore, from arbours breathed
 Of blessèd sentiment and fearless love?
 What did such sweet remembrances avail—
 Perfidious then, as seemed—what served they then?
 My business was upon the barren seas, 55
 My errand was to sail to other coasts.⁸
 Shall I avow that I had hope to see
 (I mean that future times would surely see)
 The man to come parted as by a gulph
 [60] From him who had been?—that I could no more 60
 Trust the elevation which had made me one
 With the great family that here and there
 Is scattered through the abyss of ages past,
 Sage, patriot, lover, hero; for it seemed
 [65] That their best virtues were not free from taint 65
 Of something false and weak, which could not stand
 The open eye of reason. Then I said,
 ‘Go to the poets, they will speak to thee
 More perfectly of purer creatures—yet

5. Spiritual—as at 1805, 168 below, and elsewhere.

7. See 1805, 67n, below.

8. The image of lines 48–56 is drawn from *Paradise Lost*, IV, 156–65, where the scents of Eden are compared to those blowing “from the spicy shore / Of Arabia the blest” to mariners who pass.

9. The arbors of “blessèd sentiment and fearless love” (lines 51–52) from which the poet cut himself off because they seemed perfidious, must be interpreted

by reference to lines 57–67. The barren seas he sailed were those of Godwinian rationalism; he was tempted to think himself connected by emotion and love to the “great family” of man (line 62), but sailed on as if bound by a spell (line 49) because man’s future behavior was to be so different that even that which seemed best in the past, and the present, was not to be trusted (seemed “perfidious,” line 54).

Glorying, I found a counterpoise in her,
Which, when the spirit of evil reached its height,
Maintained for me a secret happiness.⁴

This narrative, my Friend! hath chiefly told
Of intellectual⁵ power, fostering love, 45
Dispensing truth, and, over men and things,
Where reason yet might hesitate, diffusing
Prophetic sympathies of genial faith:
So was I favoured—such my happy lot⁶—
Until that natural graciousness of mind 50
Gave way to overpressure from the times
And their disastrous issues. What availed,
When spells forbade the voyager to land,⁷
That fragrant notice of a pleasant shore
Wafted, at intervals, from many a bower 55
Of blissful gratitude and fearless love?
Dare I avow that wish was mine to see,
And hope that future times *would* surely see,
The man to come, parted, as by a gulph,
From him who had been; that I could no more 60
Trust the elevation which had made me one
With the great family that still survives
To illuminate the abyss of ages past,
Sage, warrior, patriot, hero; for it seemed
That their best virtues were not free from taint 65
Of something false and weak, that could not stand
The open eye of Reason. Then I said,
'Go to the Poets; they will speak to thee
More perfectly of purer creatures;—yet

4. The final text of lines 1–43 is the result of many independent revisions, beginning in 1816/19, when the striking poetry of 1805, 23–28 is reduced to

1850, 31–34, and 1805, 35–36 are cut.

6. Lines 45–49 are incorporated in Wordsworth's final revisions, in or after 1839.

- [70] If reason be nobility in man, 70
 Can aught be more ignoble than the man
 Whom they describe, would fasten if they may
 Upon our love by sympathies of truth?
- [76] Thus strangely did I war against myself; 75
 A bigot to a new idolatry,
 Did like a monk who hath forsworn the world
 Zealously labour to cut off my heart
- [80] From all the sources of her former strength; 80
 And, as by simple waving of a wand,
 The wizard instantaneously dissolves
 Palace or grove, even so did I unsoul
 As readily by syllogistic words
 (Some charm of logic, ever within reach)
- [85] Those mysteries of passion which have made, 85
 And shall continue evermore to make—
 In spite of all that reason hath performed,
 And shall perform, to exalt and to refine—
 One brotherhood of all the human race,¹
 Through all the habitations of past years,
 And those to come: and hence an emptiness 90
 Fell on the historian's page, and even on that
 Of poets, pregnant with more absolute truth.
 The works of both withered in my esteem,
 Their sentence was, I thought, pronounced—their rights 95
 Seemed mortal, and their empire passed away.

What then remained in such eclipse, what light
 To guide or cheer? The laws of things which lie
 Beyond the reach of human will or power,
 The life of Nature, by the God of love
 Inspired—celestial presence ever pure— 100
 These left, the soul of youth must needs be rich
 Whatever else be lost; and these were mine,
 Not a deaf echo merely of the thought
 (Bewildered recollections, solitary),
 But living sounds. Yet in despite of this— 105
 This feeling, which howe'er impaired or damped,
 Yet having been once born can never die—
 'Tis true that earth with all her appanage³
 Of elements and organs, storm and sunshine,
 With its pure forms and colours, pomp of clouds, 110

1. Wordsworth has in mind the wizardry of Prospero in *The Tempest*, IV, i, 148–56, as he evokes the power of rationalist

language to “unsoul” the mysteries of passion.

3. Endowment.

If reason be nobility in man, 70
 Can aught be more ignoble than the man
 Whom they delight in, blinded as he is
 By prejudice, the miserable slave
 Of low ambition or distempered love?

In such strange passion, if I may once more 75
 Review the past, I warred against myself—
 A bigot to a new idolatry—
 Like a cowed monk who hath forsworn the world,
 Zealously laboured to cut off my heart
 From all the sources of her former strength; 80
 And as, by simple waving of a wand,
 The wizard instantaneously dissolves
 Palace or grove, even so could I unsoul
 As readily by syllogistic words
 Those mysteries of being which have made, 85
 And shall continue evermore to make,
 Of the whole human race one brotherhood.¹

What wonder, then, if, to a mind so far
 Perverted, even the visible Universe
 Fell under the dominion of a taste 90
 Less spiritual, with microscopic view
 Was scanned, as I had scanned the moral world?²

2. Wordsworth's final text of lines 44–92 is not reached until the corrections of *MS. E* in 1839 or later, but dissatisfaction with 1805, 42–137 shows itself as early as ca. January 1807. There is ex-

tensive revision in 1816/19, and again in 1832, this time with an attempt to substitute a version of 1850, XI, 333–52 for 1805, 102–37.

Rivers, and mountains, objects among which
 It might be thought that no dislike or blame,
 No sense of weakness or infirmity
 Or aught amiss, could possibly have come,
 Yea, even the visible universe was scanned 115
 With something of a kindred spirit,⁴ fell
 [90] Beneath the domination of a taste
 Less elevated, which did in my mind
 With its more noble influence interfere,
 Its animation and its deeper sway. 120

There comes (if need be now to speak of this
 After such long detail of our mistakes),
 There comes a time when reason—not the grand
 And simple reason, but that humbler power
 Which carries on its no inglorious work 125
 By logic and minute analysis—
 Is of all idols that which pleases most
 The growing mind.⁵ A trifle would he be
 Who on the obvious benefits should dwell
 That rise out of this process; but to speak 130
 Of all the narrow estimates of things
 Which hence originate were a worthy theme
 For philosophic verse. Suffice it here
 To hint that danger cannot but attend
 Upon a function rather proud to be
 The enemy of falsehood, than the friend 135
 Of truth—to sit in judgement than to feel.

Oh soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
 [95] Rejoiced, through early youth, before the winds 140
 And powerful waters, and in lights and shades
 That marched and countermarched about the hills
 In glorious apparition, now all eye
 [100] And now all ear, but ever with the heart 145
 Employed, and the majestic intellect!
 O soul of Nature, that dost overflow
 With passion and with life, what feeble men
 [105] Walk on this earth, how feeble have I been
 When thou wert in thy strength! Nor this through stroke
 Of human suffering, such as justifies 150
 Remissness and inaptitude of mind,

4. I.e., kindred to the spirit described in lines 74–90.

5. The last two-thirds of Book XI—lines 123–388—must coincide almost exactly with the final part of Book V of the five-Book *Prelude*. For the passage used

by Wordsworth to link the opening section of his original Book V—corresponding broadly to XIII, 1–165—into the materials now in XI, see MS. Drafts and Fragments, 3(b), below.

O Soul of Nature! excellent and fair!
 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I, too,
 Rejoiced through early youth, before the winds 95
 And roaring waters, and in lights and shades
 That marched and countermarched about the hills
 In glorious apparition, Powers on whom
 I daily waited, now all eye and now
 All ear; but never long without the heart 100
 Employed, and man's unfolding intellect:
 O Soul of Nature! that, by laws divine
 Sustained and governed, still dost overflow
 With an impassioned life, what feeble ones
 Walk on this earth! how feeble have I been 105
 When thou wert in thy strength! Nor this through stroke
 Of human suffering, such as justifies
 Remissness and inaptitude of mind;

- But through presumption,⁶ even in pleasure pleased
- [110] Unworthily, disliking here, and there
Liking, by rules of mimic art transferred
To things above all art. But more—for this, 155
Although a strong infection of the age,
Was never much my habit—giving way
- [115] To a comparison of scene with scene,
Bent overmuch on superficial things,
Pampering myself with meagre novelties, 160
Of colour and proportion, to the moods
- [120] Of Nature, and the spirit of the place,
Less sensible.⁷ Nor only did the love
Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt
My deeper feelings, but another cause, 165
More subtle and less easily explained,
- [125] That almost seems inherent in the creature,
Sensuous and intellectual as he is,
A twofold frame of body and of mind:
The state to which I now allude was one 170
In which the eye was master of the heart,
When that which is in every stage of life
The most despotic of our senses gained
- [130] Such strength in me as often held my mind
In absolute dominion. Gladly here,
Entering upon abstruser argument,
Would I endeavour to unfold the means
Which Nature studiously employs to thwart
- [135] This tyranny, summons all the senses each
To counteract the other and themselves, 180
And makes them all, and the objects with which all
Are conversant, subservient in their turn
To the great ends of liberty and power.
But this is matter for another song;⁸
Here only let me add that my delights, 185
- [141] Such as they were, were sought insatiably.
Though 'twas a transport of the outward sense,
Not of the mind—vivid but not profound—
Yet was I often greedy in the chace,
And roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock, 190

6. Arrogance, presumptuousness (Johnson's *Dictionary*).

7. Wordsworth moves on in *1805*, 138–63 (*1850*, 83–121) from his preceding discussion of reason as an idol to consider a different but equally destructive, and equally fashionable, form of sitting in judgment. He had not himself subscribed to the cult of the picturesque as defined by William Gilpin—"liking, by rules of mimic art transferred" to Nature (*1805*,

149–57; *1850*, 106–114) but had nevertheless indulged too much in aesthetic comparisons of landscape, and pleasure in transient effects.

"Sensible" (*1805*, 163): responsive; "insensible" (*1850*, 121): unresponsive.

8. Another reference to the prospective but never written philosophical section of *The Recluse*; not removed until Wordsworth's final revision, in 1839 or later.

But through presumption;⁶ even in pleasure pleased
 Unworthily, disliking here, and there 110
 Liking, by rules of mimic art transferred
 To things above all art; but more,—for this,
 Although a strong infection of the age,
 Was never much my habit—giving way
 To a comparison of scene with scene, 115
 Bent overmuch on superficial things,
 Pampering myself with meagre novelties
 Of colour and proportion; to the moods
 Of time and season, to the moral power,
 The affections and the spirit of the place, 120
 Insensible.⁷ Nor only did the love
 Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt
 My deeper feelings, but another cause,
 More subtle and less easily explained,
 That almost seems inherent in the creature, 125
 A twofold frame of body and of mind.
 I speak in recollection of a time
 When the bodily eye, in every stage of life
 The most despotic of our senses, gained
 Such strength in *me* as often held my mind 130
 In absolute dominion. Gladly here,
 Entering upon abstruser argument,
 Could I endeavour to unfold the means
 Which Nature studiously employs to thwart
 This tyranny, summons all the senses each 135
 To counteract the other, and themselves,
 And makes them all, and the objects with which all
 Are conversant, subservient in their turn
 To the great ends of Liberty and Power.
 But leave we this: enough that my delights 140
 (Such as they were) were sought insatiably.
 Vivid the transport, vivid though not profound;
 I roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,

- Still craving combinations of new forms,⁹
 [145] New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,
 Proud of its own endowments, and rejoiced
 To lay the inner faculties asleep.
- Amid the turns and counter-turns, the strife 195
 And various trials of our complex being
 [150] As we grow up, such thralldom of that sense
 Seems hard to shun; and yet I knew a maid,
 Who, young as I was then, conversed with things
 In higher style.¹ From appetites like these 200
 She, gentle visitant, as well she might,
 Was wholly free. Far less did critic rules
 [155] Or barren intermeddling subtleties
 Perplex her mind,² but, wise as women are
 When genial circumstance³ hath favored them, 205
 She welcomed what was given, and craved no more.
 Whatever scene was present to her eyes,
 [160] That was the best, to that she was attuned
 Through her humility and lowliness,
 And through a perfect happiness of soul, 210
 Whose variegated feelings were in this
 [164] Sisters, that they were each some new delight.
 For she was Nature's inmate:⁴ her the birds,
 And every flower she met with, could they but
 Have known her, would have loved. Methought such charm 215
 Of sweetness did her presence breathe around
 That all the trees, and all the silent hills,
 And every thing she looked on, should have had
 [170] An intimation how she bore herself
 Towards them and to all creatures. God delights 220
 In such a being, for her common thoughts
 Are piety, her life is blessedness.⁵

Even like this maid, before I was called forth
 [175] From the retirement of my native hills

9. For this phase of Wordsworth's development, compare *Tintern Abbey*, 68–71, "when like a roe / I bounded o'er the mountains"; and for a clearly deliberate verbal echo, see *To the Daisy* ("In youth from rock to rock"), 1–2.

1. Mary Hutchinson, whom Wordsworth married on October 4, 1802, but whom he had known since childhood (see *1805*, VI, 236*n*, above). "Young as I was then" (*1805*, 199) is an adjectival clause referring to Mary: she was as young as he was. The clause is emended in one of Wordsworth's earliest revisions, ca. January 1807.

2. Wordsworth is again alluding to one

of his own earlier poems, *Tables Turned*, 26–28, "Our meddling intellect / Mishapes the beauteous forms of things— / We murder to dissect."

3. Good fortune.

4. She lived as a companion with Nature.

5. Mary is presented here—as her sister Sara had been two years before in the first version of Coleridge's *Dejection* (April 1802)—as an emblem of innocence. Like Sara, the "conjugal and mother dove" of Coleridge's poem, she is capable of unquestioning responsiveness, the outgoing joy that both poets chiefly value, and that both at times feel themselves to have lost.

Still craving combinations of new forms,⁹
 New pleasure, wider empire for the sight, 145
 Proud of her own endowments, and rejoiced
 To lay the inner faculties asleep.
 Amid the turns and counterturns, the strife
 And various trials of our complex being,
 As we grow up, such thralldom of that sense 150
 Seems hard to shun. And yet I knew a maid,
 A young enthusiast, who escaped these bonds;¹
 Her eye was not the mistress of her heart;
 Far less did rules prescribed by passive taste,
 Or barren intermeddling subtleties, 155
 Perplex her mind;² but, wise as women are
 When genial circumstance³ hath favoured them,
 She welcomed what was given, and craved no more;
 Whate'er the scene presented to her view,
 That was the best, to that she was attuned 160
 By her benign simplicity of life,
 And through a perfect happiness of soul,
 Whose variegated feelings were in this
 Sisters, that they were each some new delight. 165
 Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field,
 Could they have known her, would have loved; methought
 Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,
 That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,
 And every thing she looked on, should have had
 An intimation how she bore herself 170
 Towards them and to all creatures. God delights
 In such a being; for her common thoughts
 Are piety, her life is gratitude.⁵

Even like this maid, before I was called forth
 From the retirement of my native hills, 175

- I loved whate'er I saw, nor lightly loved, 225
 But fervently—did never dream of aught
 More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed,
 Than those few nooks to which my happy feet
 [180] Were limited. I had not at that time
 Lived long enough, nor in the least survived 230
 The first diviner influence of this world
 As it appears to unaccustomed eyes.
 I worshipped then among the depths of things
 [185] As my soul bade me; could I then take part
 In aught but admiration, or be pleased 235
 With any thing but humbleness and love?
 I felt, and nothing else; I did not judge,
 I never thought of judging, with the gift
 [190] Of all this glory filled and satisfied—
 And afterwards, when through the gorgeous Alps 240
 Roaming, I carried with me the same heart.⁷
 In truth, this degradation⁸—howsoe'er
 Induced, effect in whatsoe'er degree
 [195] Of custom that prepares such wantonness
 As makes the greatest things give way to least, 245
 Or any other cause that hath been named,
 Or, lastly, aggravated by the times,
 Which with their passionate sounds might often make
 [200] The milder minstrelsies of rural scenes
 Inaudible—was transient. I had felt 250
 Too forcibly, too early in my life,
 Visitings of imaginative power
 For this to last: I shook the habit off
 [205] Entirely and for ever, and again
 In Nature's presence stood, as I stand now, 255
 A sensitive, and a *creative* soul.⁹

There are in our existence spots of time,¹
 Which with distinct preeminence retain

- [210] A renovating² virtue, whence, depressed

7. At the age of twenty, in summer 1790; see *1805*, VI, 428 ff., above.

8. I.e., the decline in responsiveness recorded in *1805*, 152–98 (*1850*, 109–51).

9. The original text of lines 242–56 (as composed for the five-Book *Prelude* in *MS. W*, March 1804) is briefer, and so muted as almost to suggest that Wordsworth had never been subject to the “malady” he describes: “In truth this malady of which I speak / Though aided by the times, whose deeper sound / Without my knowledge sometimes might perchance / Make rural Nature’s milder minstrelsies / Inaudible, did never take in me / Deep root, or larger action. I had received / Impressions far too early,

and too strong, / For this to last: I threw the habit off / Entirely and for ever, and again / In Nature’s presence stood, as I do now, / A meditative and creative soul.”

1. The original “spots of time” sequence (corresponding broadly to *1805*, 257–315, 342–88) was written ca. January 1799, and appears as *1799*, I, 288–374.

2. Wordsworth’s third attempt at this highly important adjective, and certainly the neatest, though less striking in its implications than either “fructifying” (*1799*) or “vivifying” (the intermediate stage, printed in de Selincourt’s text of *1805*, but in fact corrected very early to “renovating” in both faircopies).

I loved whate'er I saw: nor lightly loved,
 But most intensely; never dreamt of aught
 More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed
 Than those few nooks to which my happy feet
 Were limited. I had not at that time 180
 Lived long enough, nor in the least survived
 The first diviner influence of this world,
 As it appears to unaccustomed eyes.
 Worshipping then among the depth of things,
 As piety ordained;⁶ could I submit 185
 To measured admiration, or to aught
 That should preclude humility and love?
 I felt, observed, and pondered; did not judge,
 Yea, never thought of judging; with the gift
 Of all this glory filled and satisfied. 190
 And afterwards, when through the gorgeous Alps
 Roaming, I carried with me the same heart:⁷
 In truth, the degradation⁸—howsoe'er
 Induced, effect, in whatsoe'er degree,
 Of custom that prepares a partial scale 195
 In which the little oft outweighs the great;
 Or any other cause that hath been named;
 Or lastly, aggravated by the times
 And their impassioned sounds, which well might make
 The milder minstrelsies of rural scenes 200
 Inaudible—was transient; I had known
 Too forcibly, too early in my life,
 Visitings of imaginative power
 For this to last: I shook the habit off
 Entirely and for ever, and again 205
 In Nature's presence stood, as now I stand,
 A sensitive being, a *creative* soul.

There are in our existence spots of time,¹
 That with distinct pre-eminence retain
 A renovating virtue, whence, depressed 210

6. A small but significant emendation of 1816/19.

- By false opinion and contentious thought, 260
 Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight
 In trivial occupations and the round
 Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
 [215] Are nourished and invisibly repaired—
 A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced, 265
 That penetrates, enables us to mount
 When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
 This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
 [220] Among those passages of life in which 270
 We have had deepest feeling that the mind
 Is lord and master, and that outward sense
 Is but the obedient servant of her will.
 Such moments, worthy of all gratitude,
 Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
 [225] From our first childhood—in our childhood even 275
 Perhaps are most conspicuous. Life with me,
 As far as memory can look back, is full
 Of this beneficent influence.³
- At a time
- When scarcely (I was then not six years old)
 My hand could hold a bridle, with proud hopes 280
 I mounted, and we rode towards the hills:
 We were a pair of horsemen—honest James
 [230] Was with me, my encourager and guide.⁴
 We had not travelled long ere some mischance 285
 Disjoined me from my comrade, and, through fear
 Dismounting, down the rough and stony moor
 I led my horse, and stumbling on, at length
 [235] Came to a bottom⁵ where in former times
 A murderer had been hung in iron chains. 290
 The gibbet-mast was mouldered down, the bones
 And iron case were gone, but on the turf
 Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,
 [240] Some unknown hand had carved the murderer's name.
 The monumental writing was engraven 295
 In times long past, and still from year to year
 By superstition of the neighbourhood
 The grass is cleared away; and to this hour
 [245] The letters are all fresh and visible.
 Faltering, and ignorant where I was, at length 300
 I chanced to espy those characters inscribed

3. Lines 257–78 should be compared with Wordsworth's much briefer original statement, *1799*, I, 288–96. The important new element in *1805* is the emphasis on mind as "lord and master" (line 271).

4. Wordsworth, probably aged five, was staying with his grandparents at Penrith. "Honest James" was presumably their servant.

5. Valley bottom.

By false opinion and contentious thought,
 Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
 In trivial occupations, and the round
 Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
 Are nourished and invisibly repaired; 215
 A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
 That penetrates, enables us to mount,
 When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
 This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks
 Among those passages of life that give 220
 Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,
 The mind is lord and master—outward sense
 The obedient servant of her will. Such moments
 Are scattered everywhere, taking their date
 From our first childhood. I remember well, 225
 That once, while yet my inexperienced hand
 Could scarcely hold a bridle, with proud hopes
 I mounted, and we journeyed towards the hills:
 An ancient servant of my father's house
 Was with me, my encourager and guide:⁴ 230
 We had not travelled long, ere some mischance
 Disjoined me from my comrade; and, through fear
 Dismounting, down the rough and stony moor
 I led my horse, and, stumbling on, at length
 Came to a bottom,⁵ where in former times 235
 A murderer had been hung in iron chains.
 The gibbet-mast had mouldered down, the bones
 And iron case were gone; but on the turf,
 Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,

- On the green sod:⁶ forthwith I left the spot,
 And, reascending the bare common, saw
 A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
 [250] The beacon on the summit,⁷ and more near, 305
 A girl who bore a pitcher on her head
 And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
 Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
 An ordinary sight, but I should need
 [255] Colours and words that are unknown to man 310
 To paint the visionary dreariness
 Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,
 Did at that time invest the naked pool,
 The beacon on the lonely eminence,
 [260] The woman, and her garments vexed and tossed 315
 By the strong wind. When, in blessed season,
 With those two dear ones⁸—to my heart so dear—
 When, in the blessed time of early love,
 Long afterwards I roamed about
 In daily presence of this very scene,
 Upon the naked pool and dreary crags, 320
 [265] And on the melancholy beacon, fell
 The spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam—
 And think ye not with radiance more divine
 From these remembrances, and from the power
 They left behind? So feeling comes in aid 325
 [270] Of feeling, and diversity of strength
 Attends us, if but once we have been strong,
- Oh mystery of man, from what a depth
 Proceed thy honours! I am lost, but see
 In simple childhood something of the base 330
 [275] On which thy greatness stands—but this I feel,
 That from thyself it is that thou must give,
 Else never canst receive. The days gone by
 Come back upon me from the dawn almost
 Of life; the hiding-places of my power 335
 [280] Seem open, I approach, and then they close;
 I see by glimpses now, when age comes on
 May scarcely see at all; and I would give

6. Wordsworth is conflating two separate murder stories, one belonging to Hawkshead, the other to Penrith; see 1799, I, 310n, above. According to the anonymous *History of Penrith* (1858), the letters cut in the turf—an 1804 addition to the *Prelude* account—were “TPM,” signifying “Thomas Parker Murdered.” The interpretation is not very convincing, but Wordsworth’s statement that the letters recorded the name of the murderer (Thomas Nicholson) is suspect too, as

there is no particular reason to suppose he ever saw them.

7. The impressive stone signal-beacon, built in 1719 on the hill (737 feet) above Penrith. Nicholson was hanged a mile or so to the east, near the Edenhall road.

8. Wordsworth’s companions in summer 1787 had been his future wife, Mary Hutchinson, and Dorothy; see 1805, VI, 236n, above. Dorothy’s presence is no longer mentioned in the 1850 text.

Some unknown hand had carved the murderer's name.⁶ 240
 The monumental letters were inscribed
 In times long past; but still, from year to year,
 By superstition of the neighbourhood,
 The grass is cleared away, and to that hour
 The characters were fresh and visible: 245
 A casual glance had shown them, and I fled,
 Faltering and faint, and ignorant of the road:
 Then, reascending the bare common, saw
 A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
 The beacon on its summit,⁷ and, more near, 250
 A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,
 And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
 Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
 An ordinary sight; but I should need
 Colours and words that are unknown to man, 255
 To paint the visionary dreariness
 Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,
 Invested moorland waste, and naked pool,
 The beacon crowning the lone eminence,
 The female and her garments vexed and tossed 260
 By the strong wind. When, in the blessed hours
 Of early love, the loved one at my side,⁸
 I roamed, in daily presence of this scene,
 Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
 And on the melancholy beacon fell 265
 A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam;
 And think ye not with radiance more sublime
 For these remembrances, and for the power
 They had left behind? So feeling comes in aid
 Of feeling, and diversity of strength 270
 Attends us, if but once we have been strong.
 Oh! mystery of man, from what a depth
 Proceed thy honours. I am lost, but see
 In simple childhood something of the base
 On which thy greatness stands; but this I feel, 275
 That from thy self it comes, that thou must give,
 Else never canst receive. The days gone by
 Return upon me almost from the dawn
 Of life: the hiding-places of man's power
 Open; I would approach them, but they close. 280
 I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
 May scarcely see at all; and I would give,

- While yet we may, as far as words can give,
 A substance and a life to what I feel: 340
- [285] I would enshrine the spirit of the past
 For future restoration. Yet another
 Of these to me affecting incidents,
 With which we will conclude.⁹
- One Christmas-time,
- The day before the holidays began, 345
 Feverish, and tired, and restless, I went forth
- [290] Into the fields, impatient for the sight
 Of those two horses which should bear us home,
 My brothers and myself.¹ There was a crag,
 An eminence, which from the meeting-point 350
 Of two highways ascending overlooked
 At least a long half-mile of those two roads,
 By each of which the expected steeds might come—
- [296] The choice uncertain.² Thither I repaired
 Up to the highest summit. 'Twas a day 355
 Stormy, and rough, and wild, and on the grass
 I sate half sheltered by a naked wall.
- [300] Upon my right hand was a single sheep,
 A whistling hawthorn on my left, and there,
 With those companions at my side, I watched, 360
 Straining my eyes intensely as the mist
 Gave intermitting prospect of the wood
- [305] And plain beneath. Ere I to school returned
 That dreary time, ere I had been ten days
 A dweller in my father's house, he died, 365
 And I and my two brothers, orphans then,
 Followed his body to the grave.³ The event,
- [310] With all the sorrow which it brought, appeared
 A chastisement; and when I called to mind
 That day so lately past, when from the crag 370
 I looked in such anxiety of hope,
 With trite reflections of morality,
- [315] Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low

9. Lines 315–44 were written in early March 1804, just after the completion of the *Intimations Ode* and composition of the *Ode to Duty*; for their original context and different conclusion, see *Composition and Texts: 1805/1850*, Introduction, below.

1. The date was almost certainly December 19, 1783; Wordsworth was thirteen. Two of his three brothers, Richard (born 1768) and John (born 1772), were also at Hawkshead Grammar School at this time. The horses of 1805, 348, turn into the literary “palfreys” of 1850, 291 as

early as the 1816/19 revisions of 4; the emendation “couched” for “was” in line 358 belongs to the same time, as does the recasting of line 359.

2. Wordsworth was waiting on the ridge north of Borwick Lodge, a mile and a half from the school.

3. John Wordsworth, Sr., died on December 30, 1783; Wordsworth's mother had died five years before. The 1805 reading “two brothers” is correct, as against 1850 “three.” Richard and John Wordsworth were present (*MY*, I, p. 185).

While yet we may, as far as words can give,
 Substance and life to what I feel, enshrining,
 Such is my hope, the spirit of the Past 285
 For future restoration.—Yet another
 Of these memorials:—

One Christmas-time,
 On the glad eve of its dear holidays,
 Feverish and tired, and restless, I went forth
 Into the fields, impatient for the sight 290
 Of those led palfreys that should bear us home;
 My brothers and myself.¹ There rose a crag;
 That, from the meeting-point of two highways
 Ascending, overlooked them both, far stretched;²
 Thither, uncertain on which road to fix 295
 My expectation, thither I repaired,
 Scout-like, and gained the summit; 'twas a day
 Tempestuous, dark, and wild, and on the grass
 I sate half-sheltered by a naked wall;
 Upon my right hand couched a single sheep, 300
 Upon my left a blasted hawthorn stood;
 With those companions at my side, I sate
 Straining my eyes intensely, as the mist
 Gave intermitting prospect of the copse:
 And plain beneath. Ere we to school returned,— 305
 That dreary time,—ere we had been ten days
 Sojourners in my father's house, he died,
 And I and my three brothers, orphans then,
 Followed his body to the grave.³ The event,
 With all the sorrow that it brought, appeared 310
 A chastisement; and when I called to mind
 That day so lately past, when from the crag
 I looked in such anxiety of hope;
 With trite reflections of morality,
 Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low 315

To God who thus corrected my desires.
 And afterwards the wind and sleety rain, 375
 And all the business⁴ of the elements,

[320] The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,
 And the bleak music of that old stone wall,
 The noise of wood and water, and the mist
 Which on the line of each of those two roads 380
 Advanced in such indisputable shapes⁵—

[325] All these were spectacles and sounds to which
 I often would repair, and thence would drink
 As at a fountain. And I do not doubt
 That in this later time, when storm and rain 385
 Beat on my roof at midnight, or by day

[331-32] When I am in the woods, unknown to me
 The workings of my spirit thence are brought.

Thou wilt not languish here, O friend, for whom
 I travel in these dim uncertain ways— 390

Thou wilt assist me, as a pilgrim gone
 In quest of highest truth. Behold me then
 Once more in Nature's presence, thus restored,
 Or otherwise,⁷ and strengthened once again
 (With memory left of what had been escaped) 395
 To habits of devoutest sympathy.

4. I.e., busy-ness, activity.

5. Scansion: *indíspütáblě shápes.*"

7. I.e., "restored in this, or in other ways."

To God, Who thus corrected my desires;
 And, afterwards, the wind and sleety rain,
 And all the business⁴ of the elements,
 The single sheep, and the one blasted tree, 320
 And the bleak music of that old stone wall,
 The noise of wood and water, and the mist
 That on the line of each of those two roads
 Advanced in such indisputable shapes;⁵
 All these were kindred spectacles and sounds
 To which I oft repaired, and thence would drink, 325
 As at a fountain; and on winter nights,
 Down to this very time, when storm and rain
 Beat on my roof, or, haply, at noon-day,
 While in a grove I walk, whose lofty trees,
 Laden with summer's thickest foliage, rock 330
 In a strong wind, some working of the spirit,
 Some inward agitations thence are brought,
 Whate'er their office, whether to beguile
 Thoughts over busy in the course they took,
 Or animate an hour of vacant ease.⁶ 335

6. Wordsworth's first expansion of 1805, 386–88, belongs to 1832, and this final text to 1839 or later.

Book Twelfth

Same Subject (Continued)

- From Nature doth emotion come, and moods
Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
This is her glory—these two attributes
[4] Are sister horns that constitute her strength; 5
This twofold influence is the sun and shower
Of all her bounties, both in origin
And end alike benignant.¹ Hence it is
[5] That genius, which exists by interchange
Of peace and excitation,² finds in her 10
His best and purest friend—from her receives
That energy by which he seeks the truth,
Is roused, aspires, grasps, struggles, wishes, craves
From her that happy stillness of the mind
[10] Which fits him to receive it when unsought.
- Such benefit may souls of humblest frame 15
Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine
To speak of what myself have known and felt—
Sweet task, for words find easy way, inspired
[15] By gratitude and confidence in truth. 20
Long time in search of knowledge desperate,
I was benighted heart and mind, but now
On all sides day began to reappear,³
And it was proved indeed that not in vain
[20] I had been taught to reverence a power 25
That is the very quality and shape
And image of right reason,⁴ that matures
Her processes by steady laws, gives birth
To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
[25] No heat of passion or excessive zeal, 30
No vain conceits, provokes to no quick turns
Of self-applauding intellect, but lifts
The being into magnanimity,
Holds up before the mind, intoxicate
[30] With present objects and the busy dance 35
Of things that pass away, a temperate shew
Of objects that endure—and by this course
Disposes her, when over-fondly set

1. The horns which in line 4 suggest first twofoldness, and then strength, become in lines 5–6 "horns of plenty," cornucopias.

2. Stimulus, encouragement.

3. Wordsworth is referring to the period of rehabilitation that followed his moral

crisis of spring 1796, described in *1805*, X, 888–904 (*1850*, XI, 293–333) above.

4. The power described is Nature, as in the opening line, above. The phrase "right reason" is used by Milton to signify reason that is attuned to intellectual, moral, and religious truth.

Book Thirteenth

Imagination and Taste, How Impaired and Restored—Concluded

FROM Nature doth emotion come, and moods
Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
This is her glory; these two attributes
Are sister horns that constitute her strength. 5
Hence Genius, born to thrive by interchange
Of peace and excitation,² finds in her
His best and purest friend; from her receives
That energy by which he seeks the truth,
From her that happy stillness of the mind
Which fits him to receive it when unsought. 10

Such benefit the humblest intellects
Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine
To speak, what I myself have known and felt;
Smooth task! for words find easy way, inspired
By gratitude, and confidence in truth. 15
Long time in search of knowledge did I range
The field of human life, in heart and mind
Benighted; but, the dawn beginning now
To re-appear,³ 'twas proved that not in vain
I had been taught to reverence a Power 20
That is the visible quality and shape
And image of right reason;⁴ that matures
Her processes by steadfast laws; gives birth
To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
No heat of passion or excessive zeal, 25
No vain conceits; provokes to no quick turns
Of self-applauding intellect; but trains
To meekness, and exalts by humble faith;⁵
Holds up before the mind intoxicate
With present objects, and the busy dance 30
Of things that pass away, a temperate show
Of objects that endure; and by this course
Disposes her, when over-fondly set

5. Lines 27–28 belong to 1832, or 1838/39. The strength of 1805, 31–32, is sacrificed to neatness and conventional piety.

On leaving her incumbrances behind,
 [35] To seek in man, and in the frame of life
 Social and individual, what there is 40
 Desirable, affecting, good or fair,
 Of kindred permanence, the gifts divine
 And universal, the pervading grace
 That hath been, is, and shall be. Above all
 Did Nature bring again this wiser mood, 45
 More deeply reestablished in my soul,
 [41] Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
 In what we blazon with the pompous names
 Of power and action, early tutored me
 [45] To look with feelings of fraternal love 50
 Upon those unassuming things that hold
 A silent station in this beauteous world.

Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
 Once more in man an object of delight,
 [50] Of pure imagination, and of love; 55
 And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,
 Again I took the intellectual eye
 For my instructor, studious more to see
 Great truths, than touch and handle little ones.
 [55] Knowledge was given accordingly: my trust 60
 Was firmer in the feelings which had stood
 The test of such a trial, clearer far
 My sense of what was excellent and right,
 The promise of the present time retired
 [60] Into its true proportion; sanguine⁶ schemes, 65
 Ambitious virtues, pleased me less; I sought
 For good in the familiar face of life,
 And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

With settling judgements now of what would last,
 [65] And what would disappear; prepared to find 70
 Ambition, folly, madness, in the men
 Who thrust themselves upon this passive world
 As rulers of the world—to see in these
 Even when the public welfare is their aim
 [70] Plans without thought, or bottomed⁷ on false thought 75
 And false philosophy; having brought to test
 Of solid life and true result the books
 Of modern statist, and thereby perceived
 The utter hollowness of what we name
 The wealth of nations,⁸ where alone that wealth 80

6. Hopeful.

7. Based.

8. A reference to the most influential of eighteenth-century "statists" (political theorists), Adam Smith, whose *Inquiry**into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) not very surprisingly ignores the spiritual riches chiefly valued by the poet.

On throwing off incumbrances, to seek
 In man, and in the frame of social life, 35
 Whate'er there is desirable and good
 Of kindred permanence, unchanged in form
 And function, or, through strict vicissitude
 Of life and death, revolving. Above all
 Were re-established now those watchful thoughts 40
 Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
 In what the Historian's pen so much delights
 To blazon—power and energy detached
 From moral purpose—early tutored me
 To look with feelings of fraternal love 45
 Upon the unassuming things that hold
 A silent station in this beauteous world.

Thus moderated, thus composed, I found
 Once more in Man an object of delight,
 Of pure imagination, and of love; 50
 And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,
 Again I took the intellectual eye
 For my instructor, studious more to see
 Great truths, than touch and handle little ones.
 Knowledge was given accordingly; my trust 55
 Became more firm in feelings that had stood
 The test of such a trial; clearer far
 My sense of excellence—of right and wrong:
 The promise of the present time retired
 Into its true proportion; sanguine⁶ schemes, 60
 Ambitious projects, pleased me less; I sought
 For present good in life's familiar face,
 And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

With settling judgments now of what would last
 And what would disappear; prepared to find 65
 Presumption, folly, madness, in the men
 Who thrust themselves upon the passive world
 As Rulers of the world; to see in these,
 Even when the public welfare is their aim,
 Plans without thought, or built on theories 70
 Vague and unsound; and having brought the books
 Of modern statist to their proper test,
 Life, human life, with all its sacred claims
 Of sex and age, and heaven-descended rights,
 Mortal, or those beyond the reach of death; 75
 And having thus discerned how dire a thing
 Is worshipped in that idol proudly named
 'The Wealth of Nations',⁸ *where* alone that wealth

- Is lodged, and how encreased; and having gained
 [80] A more judicious knowledge of what makes
 The dignity of individual man—
 Of man, no composition of the thought,
 Abstraction, shadow, image, but the man 85
 Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
 With our own eyes—I could not but inquire,
 [85] Not with less interest than heretofore,
 But greater, though in spirit more subdued,
 Why is this glorious creature to be found 90
 One only in ten thousand? What one is,
 Why may not many be? What bars are thrown
 [90] By Nature in the way of such a hope?
 Our animal wants and the necessities
 Which they impose, are these the obstacles?— 95
 If not, then others vanish into air.
 Such meditations bred an anxious wish
 [95] To ascertain how much of real worth,
 And genuine knowledge, and true power of mind,
 Did at this day exist in those who lived 100
 By bodily labour, labour far exceeding
 Their due proportion, under all the weight
 Of that injustice which upon ourselves
 By composition of society
 [100] Ourselves entail. To frame such estimate 105
 I chiefly looked (what need to look beyond?)
 Among the natural abodes of men,
 Fields with their rural works—recalled to mind
 My earliest notices,⁹ with these compared
 [105] The observations of my later youth 110
 Continued downwards to that very day.

- For time had never been in which the throes
 And mighty hopes of nations, and the stir
 And tumult of the world, to me could yield—
 How far soe'er transported and possessed— 115
 [110] Full measure of content, but still I craved
 An intermixture of distinct regards¹
 And truths of individual sympathy
 Nearer ourselves.² Such often might be gleaned

9. His earliest social observations.

1. Sights, or experiences. Wordsworth is saying that he can grasp the implications of major political events only if they are mixed with (or exemplified by) specific, local experience.

2. In their earliest form 1805, 112–277 had been the conclusion of a sequence of 206 lines found at the end of *MS. Y* of October 1804, and were probably part of the original version of Book VIII,

written before the full-scale treatment of London in VII. Wordsworth's subject in *MS. Y* had been the unity of man—more especially the human potential of unrefined and unpretentious man. The sequence had begun with the tenderness of the London artificer (VIII, 824–59), then moved, *via* lines that became XI, 9–14, to a consideration of the country poor whom he had met in his walks and travels.

Is lodged, and how increased; and having gained
 A more judicious knowledge of the worth 80
 And dignity of individual man,
 No composition of the brain, but man
 Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
 With our own eyes—I could not but inquire—
 Not with less interest than heretofore, 85
 But greater, though in spirit more subdued—
 Why is this glorious creature to be found
 One only in ten thousand? What one is,
 Why may not millions be? What bars are thrown
 By Nature in the way of such a hope? 90
 Our animal appetites and daily wants,
 Are these obstructions insurmountable?
 If not, then others vanish into air.
 ‘Inspect the basis of the social pile:
 Inquire,’ said I, ‘how much of mental power 95
 And genuine virtue they possess who live
 By bodily toil, labour exceeding far
 Their due proportion, under all the weight
 Of that injustice which upon ourselves
 Ourselves entail.’ Such estimate to frame 100
 I chiefly looked (what need to look beyond?)
 Among the natural abodes of men,
 Fields with their rural works; recalled to mind
 My earliest notices;⁹ with these compared
 The observations made in later youth, 105
 And to that day continued.—For, the time
 Had never been when throes of mighty Nations
 And the world’s tumult unto me could yield,
 How far soe’er transported and possessed,
 Full measure of content; but still I craved 110
 An intermingling of distinct regards¹
 And truths of individual sympathy
 Nearer ourselves. Such often might be gleaned

- From that great city—else it must have been 120
 [115] A heart-depressing wilderness indeed,
 Full soon to me a wearisome abode—
 But much was wanting; therefore did I turn
 To you, ye pathways and ye lonely roads,
 Sought you enriched with every thing I prized, 125
 With human kindness and with Nature's joy.
- [120] Oh, next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed
 Alas to few in this untoward³ world,
 The bliss of walking daily in life's prime
 Through field or forest with the maid we love 130
 While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
- [125] Nothing but happiness, living in some place,
 Deep vale, or anywhere the home of both,
 From which it would be misery to stir—
 Oh, next to such enjoyment of our youth, 135
 In my esteem next to such dear delight,
- [130] Was that of wandering on from day to day
 Where I could meditate in peace, and find
 The knowledge which I love, and teach the sound,
- [135] Of poet's music to strange fields and groves, 140
 Converse with men, where if we meet a face
 We almost meet a friend, on naked moors
- [140] With long, long ways before, by cottage bench,
 Or well-spring where the weary traveller rests.
- I love a public road: few sights there are 145
 That please me more—such object hath had power
 O'er my imagination since the dawn
- [145] Of childhood, when its disappearing line
 Seen daily afar off, on one bare steep
 Beyond the limits which my feet had trod,⁵ 150
 [150] Was like a guide into eternity,
 At least to things unknown and without bound.
 Even something of the grandeur which invests
 The mariner who sails the roaring sea
 Through storm and darkness, early in my mind 155
 Surrounded too the wanderers of the earth—
- [155] Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more.
 Awed have I been by strolling bedlamites;⁶

3. Unfortunate, vexatious.

5. The road which the child Wordsworth could see from the garden at Cocker-mouth, leading over Hay Hill to the

village of Isel.

6. Madmen; so called from the Bethle-hem (pronounced "Bedlam") Hospital for the Insane in London.

From the great City, else it must have proved
 To me a heart-depressing wilderness; 115
 But much was wanting: therefore did I turn
 To you, ye pathways, and ye lonely roads;
 Sought you enriched with everything I prized,
 With human kindnesses and simple joys.

Oh! next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed 120
 Alas! to few in this untoward³ world,
 The bliss of walking daily in life's prime
 Through field or forest with the maid we love,
 While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
 Nothing but happiness, in some lone nook, 125
 Deep vale, or any where, the home of both,
 From which it would be misery to stir:
 Oh! next to such enjoyment of our youth,
 In my esteem, next to such dear delight,
 Was that of wandering on from day to day 130
 Where I could meditate in peace, and cull
 Knowledge that step by step might lead me on
 To wisdom; or, as lightsome as a bird
 Wafted upon the wind from distant lands,
 Sing notes of greeting to strange fields or groves, 135
 Which lacked not voice to welcome me in turn:
 And, when that pleasant toil had ceased to please,
 Converse with men, where if we meet a face
 We almost meet a friend, on naked heaths
 With long long ways before, by cottage bench, 140
 Or well-spring where the weary traveller rests.

Who doth not love to follow with his eye
 The windings of a public way? the sight
 Hath wrought on my imagination since the morn⁴
 Of childhood, when a disappearing line, 145
 One daily present to my eyes, that crossed
 The naked summit of a far-off hill
 Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,⁵
 Was like an invitation into space
 Boundless, or guide into eternity. 150
 Yes, something of the grandeur which invests
 The mariner who sails the roaring sea
 Through storm and darkness, early in my mind
 Surrounded, too, the wanderers of the earth;
 Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more. 155
 Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites;⁶

4. The first edition conflates two versions present in *MS. D* in order to avoid the alexandrine (six-foot) line 144 created by

Wordsworth in revision: "Familiar object as it is, hath wrought / On my imagination since the morn * * *."

- From many other uncouth vagrants, passed
 In fear, have walked with quicker step—but why 160
 Take note of this? When I began to inquire,
 [160] To watch and question those I met, and held
 Familiar talk with them, the lonely roads
 Were schools to me in which I daily read
 With most delight the passions of mankind, 165
 [165] There saw into the depth of human souls—
 Souls that appear to have no depth at all
 To vulgar⁷ eyes. And now, convinced at heart
 [170] How little that to which alone we give
 The name of education hath to do 170
 With real feeling and just sense, how vain
 A correspondence with the talking world
 Proves to the most—and called to make good search
 [175] If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked
 With toil, is therefore yoked with ignorance, 175
 If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
 And intellectual strength so rare a boon—
 I prized such walks still more; for there I found
 [180] Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
 And steadiness, and healing and repose 180
 To every angry passion. There I heard,
 From mouths of lowly men and of obscure,
 A tale of honour—sounds in unison
 [185] With loftiest promises of good and fair.
- There are who think that strong affections, love 185
 Known by whatever name, is falsely deemed
 A gift (to use a term which they would use)
 Of vulgar Nature—that its growth requires
 [190] Retirement, leisure, language purified
 By manners thoughtful and elaborate— 190
 That whoso feels such passion in excess
 Must live within the very light and air
 Of elegances that are made by man.
 [195] True is it, where oppression worse than death
 Salutes the being at his birth, where grace 195
 Of culture hath been utterly unknown,
 And labour in excess and poverty
 From day to day pre-occupy the ground
 [200] Of the affections, and to Nature's self
 Oppose a deeper nature—there indeed 200
 Love cannot be; nor does it easily thrive
 In cities, where the human heart is sick,

7. Common, ordinary.

From many other uncouth vagrants (passed
 In fear) have walked with quicker step; but why
 Take note of this? When I began to enquire,
 To watch and question those I met, and speak 160
 Without reserve to them, the lonely roads
 Were open schools in which I daily read
 With most delight the passions (of mankind,
 Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears, revealed;
 There saw into the depth of human souls, 165
 Souls that appear to have no depth at all
 To careless eyes. And—now convinced at heart
 How little those formalities, to which
 With overweening trust alone we give 170
 The name of Education, hath to do
 With real feeling and just sense; how vain
 A correspondence with the talking world
 Proves to the most; and called to make good search
 If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked 175
 With toil, is therefore yoked with ignorance;
 If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
 And intellectual strength so rare a boon—
 I prized such walks still more, for there I found
 Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace 180
 And steadiness, and healing and repose
 To every angry passion. There I heard,
 From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
 Replete with honour; sounds in unison
 With loftiest promises of good and fair. 185

There are who think that strong affections, love
 Known by whatever name, is falsely deemed
 A gift, to use a term which they would use,
 Of vulgar nature; that its growth requires
 Retirement, leisure, language purified 190
 By manners studied and elaborate;
 That whoso feels such passion in its strength
 Must live within the very light and air
 Of courteous usages refined by art.
 True is it, where oppression worse than death 195
 Salutes the being at his birth, where grace
 Of culture hath been utterly unknown,
 And poverty and labour in excess
 From day to day pre-occupy the ground
 Of the affections, and to Nature's self 200
 Oppose a deeper nature; there, indeed,
 Love cannot be; nor does it thrive with ease
 Among the close and overcrowded haunts
 Of cities, where the human heart is sick,

[205] And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed:
Thus far, no further, is that inference good.⁸

Yes, in those wanderings deeply did I feel 205
How we mislead each other, above all
How books mislead us—looking for their fame
To judgements of the wealthy few, who see
[210] By artificial lights—how they debase 210
The many for the pleasure of those few,
Effeminately level down the truth
To certain general notions for the sake
Of being understood at once, or else
[215] Through want of better knowledge in the men 215
Who frame them, flattering thus our self-conceit
With pictures that ambitiously set forth
The differences, the outside marks by which
Society has parted man from man,
[220] Neglectful of the universal heart.⁹

Here calling up to mind what then I saw 220
A youthful traveller, and see daily now
Before me in my rural neighbourhood—
Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
[225] To Nature, and the power of human minds, 225
To men as they are men within themselves.
How oft high service is performed within
When all the external man is rude in shew,
Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
[230] But a mere mountain-chapel such as shields 230
Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.
'Of these,' said I, 'shall be my song. Of these,
If future years mature me for the task,
Will I record the praises, making verse
[235] Deal boldly with substantial things—in truth 235
And sanctity of passion speak of these,
That justice may be done, obeisance paid
Where it is due. Thus haply shall I teach,
Inspire, through unadulterated¹ ears
[240] Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope, my theme 240
No other than the very heart of man
As found among the best of those who live

8. Lines 185–204 go back to *MS. J* of October–December 1800, and like the *Matron's Tale* (VIII, 222–311, above) are surplus material written for *Michael*.
9. Wordsworth told the diarist, Crabb Robinson, in 1837 that “he did not expect or desire from posterity any other fame than that which would be given him for the way in which his poems ex-

hibit man in his essentially human character and relations—as child, parent, husband, the qualities which are common to all men as opposed to those which distinguish one man from another” (*On Books and Their Writers*, ed. E. J. Morley, II, p. 535).

1. Uncorrupted, innocent.

And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed. 205
 —Yes, in those wanderings deeply did I feel
 How we mislead each other; above all,
 How books mislead us, seeking their reward
 From judgments of the wealthy Few, who see
 By artificial lights; how they debase 210
 The Many for the pleasure of those Few;
 Effeminately level down the truth
 To certain general notions, for the sake
 Of being understood at once, or else
 Through want of better knowledge in the heads 215
 That framed them; flattering self-conceit with words,
 That, while they most ambitiously set forth
 Extrinsic differences, the outward marks
 Whereby society has parted man
 From man, neglect the universal heart.⁹ 220

Here, calling up to mind what then I saw,
 A youthful traveller, and see daily now
 In the familiar circuit of my home,
 Here might I pause, and bend in reverence
 To Nature, and the power of human minds, 225
 To men as they are men within themselves.
 How oft high service is performed within,
 When all the external man is rude in show,—
 Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
 But a mere mountain chapel, that protects 230
 Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.
 Of these, said I, shall be my song; of these,
 If future years mature me for the task,
 Will I record the praises, making verse
 Deal boldly with substantial things; in truth 235
 And sanctity of passion, speak of these,
 That justice may be done, obeisance paid
 Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,
 Inspire, through unadulterated¹ ears
 Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope,—my theme 240
 No other than the very heart of man,
 As found among the best of those who live,

- Not unexalted by religious faith,
 Nor uninformed by books (good books, though few),
- [245] In Nature's presence—thence may I select
 Sorrow that is not sorrow but delight, 245
 And miserable love that is not pain
 To hear of, for the glory that redounds
 Therefrom to human-kind and what we are.
- [250] Be mine to follow with no timid step
 Where knowledge leads me: it shall be my pride 250
 That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
 Speaking no dream but things oracular,
 Matter not lightly to be heard by those
- [255] Who to the letter of the outward promise
 Do read the invisible soul,² by men adroit 255
 In speech and for communion with the world
 Accomplished, minds whose faculties are then
 Most active when they are most eloquent,
- [260] And elevated most when most admired.³ 260
 Men may be found of other mold⁴ than these,
 Who are their own upholders, to themselves
 Encouragement, and energy, and will,
 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
- [265] As native passion dictates.⁵ Others, too, 265
 There are among the walks of homely life
 Still higher, men for contemplation framed,
 Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase,
 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
- [270] Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse:
 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power, 270
 The thought, the image, and the silent joy;
 Words are but under-agents in their souls—
 When they are grasping with their greatest strength
- [275] They do not breathe among them.⁶ This I speak 275
 In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
 For his own service, knoweth, loveth us,
 When we are unregarded by the world.'

2. I.e. those who judge a man's inner worth strictly on the evidence of outward appearances.

3. 1805, 231–59 (1850, 232–60) contain several striking echoes of Wordsworth's poetic manifesto of 1800, the Prospectus to *The Recluse* (CW, III, pp. 100–106).

4. The earth from which the human body was regarded as having been formed, as at 1805, IX, 295, above.

5. Wordsworth's thoughts have moved from the Prospectus to that other great statement of his belief (also of 1800), the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: "Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of

the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language . . ." (*Prose Works*, I, p. 124).

6. "Them" refers back to "words." Wordsworth almost certainly had in mind the deep but inarticulate response of Michael (described in *MS. J*, from which he had drawn lines 185–204, above; see *Oxford Wordsworth*, II, pp. 482–83), and of his own brother John, "the silent poet," who was drowned on February 5, 1805, three months after these lines were composed in *MS. Y*.

Not unexalted by religious faith,
 Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,
 In Nature's presence: thence may I select 245
 Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight;
 And miserable love, that is not pain
 To hear of, for the glory that redounds
 Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.
 Be mine to follow with no timid step 250
 Where knowledge leads me: it shall be my pride
 That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
 Speaking no dream, but things oracular;
 Matter not lightly to be heard by those
 Who to the letter of the outward promise 255
 Do read the invisible soul;² by men adroit
 In speech, and for communion with the world
 Accomplished; minds whose faculties are then
 Most active when they are most eloquent,
 And elevated most when most admired.³ 260
 Men may be found of other mould⁴ than these,
 Who are their own upholders, to themselves
 Encouragement, and energy, and will,
 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
 As native passion dictates.⁵ Others, too, 265
 There are among the walks of homely life
 Still higher, men for contemplation framed,
 Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase;
 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
 Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse: 270
 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
 The thought, the image, and the silent joy:
 Words are but under-agents in their souls;
 When they are grasping with their greatest strength,
 They do not breathe among them:⁶ this I speak 275
 In gratitude to God, Who feeds our hearts
 For His own service; knoweth, loveth us,
 When we are unregarded by the world.

- Also about this time did I receive
- [280] Convictions still more strong than heretofore
 Not only that the inner frame is good, 280
 And graciously composed, but that, no less,
 Nature through all conditions hath a power
 To consecrate—if we have eyes to see—
- [285] The outside of her creatures, and to breathe
 Grandeur upon the very humblest face 285
 Of human life. I felt that the array
 Of outward circumstance and visible form
 Is to the pleasure of the human mind
- [290] What passion makes it; that meanwhile the forms
 Of Nature have a passion in themselves 290
 That intermingles with those works of man
 To which she summons him, although the works
 Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;
- [295] And that the genius of the poet hence
 May boldly take his way among mankind 295
 Wherever Nature leads—that he hath stood
 By Nature's side among the men of old,
 And so shall stand for ever.⁷ Dearest friend,
 Forgive me if I say that I, who long
 Had harboured reverentially a thought 300
- [301] That poets, even as prophets, each with each
 Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
 Have each for his peculiar dower a sense
 By which he is enabled to perceive
- [305] Something unseen before—forgive me, friend, 305
 If I, the meanest of this band, had hope
 That unto me had also been vouchsafed
 An influx,⁸ that in some sort I possessed
 A privilege, and that a work of mine,
- [310] Proceeding from the depth of untaught things, 310
 Enduring and creative, might become
 A power like one of Nature's.

To such mood,
 Once above all—a traveller at that time
 Upon the plain of Sarum—was I raised:⁹

7. Wordsworth in this important passage, as in *1805*, 231–64 (*1850*, 232–65) is seen defining his rôle as a poet, and the nature of his subject-matter. As M. H. Abrams remarks, "*The Prelude* is a poem which incorporates the discovery of its own *ars poetica*" (*Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 78).

8. Inspiration.

9. Wordsworth crossed Salisbury Plain ("the plain of Sarum") alone and on

foot, in a vividly imaginative frame of mind (see *1805*, 318–36 below) in late July or early August 1793 en route from the Isle of Wight to Wales. He was without money or prospects, was parted from Annette Vallon, and for the previous month had watched the British fleet off Portsmouth preparing for a war that went against all his deepest feelings, personal, patriotic, and political (see *1805*, X, 229–306, above).

Also, about this time did I receive
 Convictions still more strong than heretofore, 280
 Not only that the inner frame is good,
 And graciously composed, but that, no less,
 Nature for all conditions wants not power
 To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
 The outside of her creatures, and to breathe 285
 Grandeur upon the very humblest face
 Of human life. I felt that the array
 Of act and circumstance, and visible form,
 Is mainly to the pleasure of the mind
 What passion makes them; that meanwhile the forms 290
 Of Nature have a passion in themselves,
 That intermingles with those works of man
 To which she summons him; although the works
 Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;
 And that the Genius of the Poet hence 295
 May boldly take his way among mankind
 Wherever Nature leads; that he hath stood
 By Nature's side among the men of old,
 And so shall stand for ever.⁷ Dearest Friend!
 If thou partake the animating faith/
 300
 That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
 Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
 Have each his own peculiar faculty,
 Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive
 Objects unseen before, thou wilt not blame 305
 The humblest of this band who dares to hope
 That unto him hath also been vouchsafed
 An insight that in some sort he possesses,
 A privilege whereby a work of his,
 Proceeding from a source of untaught things 310
 Creative and enduring, may become
 A power like one of Nature's. To a hope
 Not less ambitious once among the wilds
 Of Sarum's Plain, my youthful spirit was raised;⁹

- [315] There on the pastoral downs¹ without a track : 315
 To guide me, or along the bare white roads
 Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,
 While through those vestiges of ancient times
 I ranged, and by the solitude o'ercome,
 I had a reverie and saw the past, 320
- [321] Saw multitudes of men, and here and there
 A single Briton in his wolf-skin vest,
 With shield and stone-ax, stride across the wold;²
 The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear
- [325] Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength 325
 Long mouldered, of barbaric majesty.
 I called upon the darkness, and it took—
 A midnight darkness seemed to come and take—
 All objects from my sight; and lo, again
- [330] The desert visible by dismal flames!³ 330
 It is the sacrificial altar, fed
 With living men—how deep the groans!³—the voice
 Of those in the gigantic wicker thrills
 Throughout the region far and near, pervades
 The monumental hillocks,⁴ and the pomp 335
- [335] Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.
 At other moments, for through that wide waste
 Three summer days I roamed, when 'twas my chance
 To have before me on the downy plain
 Lines, circles, mounts, a mystery of shapes 340
 Such as in many quarters yet survive,
 With intricate profusion figuring o'er
 The untilled ground (the work, as some divine,⁵
 Of infant science,⁶ imitative forms
 By which the Druids covertly expressed 345
- [341] Their knowledge of the heavens, and imaged forth
 The constellations), I was gently charmed,
 Albeit with an antiquarian's dream,
- [345] And saw the bearded teachers, with white wands :
 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky, 350
 Alternately, and plain below, while breath

1. Open hills used only for grazing sheep.

2. A poetic, unspecific word for countryside, here meaning "plain."

3. Wordsworth is drawing heavily—verbatim in these last two lines—on his early poem *Salisbury Plain*, perhaps begun during his wanderings, and certainly completed by April 1794 (see *CW*, I, pp. 26–27). In both poems Wordsworth accepts the common, but false, beliefs that the Druids (1805, 345; 1850, 340) performed human sacrifice, and that Stonehenge was a Druid temple.

4. "The gigantic wicker" (also referred to in *Salisbury Plain*) had been described

by Aylett Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata* (1676), p. 104: "They made a Statue or Image of a MAN in a vast proportion, whose limbs consisted of Twigs, weaved together in the nature of Basketware: These they fill'd with live Men, and after that, set it on fire, and so destroyed the poor Creatures in the smook and flames."

"Monumental hillocks": Bronze Age burial mounds, of which there are many on the Plain.

5. Conjecture (a verb).

6. Science in its early stages.

There, as I ranged at will the pastoral downs¹ 315
 Trackless and smooth, or paced the bare white roads
 Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,
 Time with his retinue of ages fled
 Backwards, nor checked his flight until I saw
 Our dim ancestral Past in vision clear; 320
 Saw multitudes of men, and, here and there,
 A single Briton clothed in wolf-skin vest,
 With shield and stone-axe, stride across the wold;²
 The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear
 Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength, 325
 Long mouldered, of barbaric majesty.
 I called on Darkness—but before the word
 Was uttered, midnight darkness seemed to take
 All objects from my sight; and lo! again
 The Desert visible by dismal flames; 330
 It is the sacrificial altar, fed
 With living men—how deep the groans!³ the voice
 Of those that crowd the giant wicker thrills
 The monumental hillocks,⁴ and the pomp
 Is for both worlds, the living and the dead. 335
 At other moments (for through that wide waste
 Three summer days I roamed) where'er the Plain
 Was figured o'er with circles, lines, or mounds,
 That yet survive, a work, as some divine,⁵
 Shaped by the Druids, so to represent 340
 Their knowledge of the heavens, and image forth
 The constellations; gently was I charmed
 Into a waking dream, a reverie
 That, with believing eyes, where'er I turned,
 Beheld long-bearded teachers, with white wands 345
 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,
 Alternately, and plain below, while breath

Of music seemed to guide them, and the waste
Was cheared with stillness and a pleasant sound.⁷

- [350] This for the past, and things that may be viewed,
Or fancied, in the obscurities of time. 355
Nor is it, friend, unknown to thee; at least—
Thyself delighted—thou for my delight
Hast said,⁸ perusing some imperfect verse
Which in that lonesome journey was composed,
- [355] That also I must then have exercised 360
Upon the vulgar forms of present things
And actual world of our familiar days,
A higher power—have caught from them a tone,
An image, and a character, by books
- [360] Not hitherto reflected.⁹ Call we this 365
But a persuasion taken up by thee
In friendship, yet the mind is to herself
Witness and judge, and I remember well
That in life's everyday appearances
I seemed about this period to have sight 370
- [370] Of a new world—a world, too, that was fit
To be transmitted and made visible
To other eyes, as having for its base
That whence our dignity originates,
That which both gives it being, and maintains 375
- [375] A balance, an ennobling interchange
Of action from within and from without:
The excellence, pure spirit, and best power,
Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

7. The transition from Wordsworth's creative reverie of 1805, 312–36 (1850, 312–35) to the merely “antiquarian's dream” of 1805, 337–53 (1850, 336–49) reproduces exactly the progression in *Salisbury Plain* (see *CW*, I, p. 27).

8. Lines 356–58 are very difficult to construe. “It” (“Nor is it * * * unknown to thee”) has no antecedent, but presumably refers to the situation in general—“You know about *all this*.” “At least / Thyself delighted” can be interpreted, “YOU, at least, were pleased”; but more probably “Thyself delighted” is in parenthesis: “You, being pleased yourself, gave me pleasure by saying.” No version of *Salisbury Plain*, the “imperfect verse” of line 358, was published until 1842. See 1805, 365*n*, below.

9. It is doubtful whether much of *Salis-*

bury Plain was composed during Wordsworth's journey in August 1793, but the extant faircopy belongs to the following April. In its revised and extended form, *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* of ca. November 1795, the poem was read to Coleridge, and 1805, 360–65 (1850, 355–60) suggest that his early reaction was very similar to the famous assessment in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), chapter iv, where Coleridge recollects having been impressed above all by: “the original gift of spreading the tone, the *atmosphere* and with it the depth and height of the ideal world, around forms, incidents and situations of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew-drops” (*Biographia*, pp. 48–49).

Of music swayed their motions, and the waste
Rejoiced with them and me in those sweet sounds.⁷

This for the past, and things that may be viewed 350
Or fancied in the obscurity of years
From monumental hints: and thou, O Friend!
Pleased with some unpremeditated strains
That served those wanderings to beguile, hast said
That then and there my mind had exercised 355
Upon the vulgar forms of present things,
The actual world of our familiar days,
Yet higher power; had caught from them a tone,
An image, and a character, by books
Not hitherto reflected.⁹ Call we this 360
A partial judgment—and yet why? for *then*
We were as strangers;¹ and I may not speak
Thus wrongfully of verse, however rude,
Which on thy young imagination, trained
In the great City, broke like light from far. 365
Moreover, each man's Mind is to herself
Witness and judge; and I remember well
That in life's every-day appearances
I seemed about this time to gain clear sight
Of a new world—a world, too, that was fit 370
To be transmitted, and to other eyes
Made visible; as ruled by those fixed laws
Whence spiritual dignity originates,
Which do both give it being and maintain
A balance, an ennobling interchange 375
Of action from without and from within;
The excellence, pure function, and best power
Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

1. Wordsworth and Coleridge had met in September 1795, but did not come to know each other well until June 1797.

Book Thirteenth

Conclusion

- In one of these excursions, travelling then
Through Wales on foot and with a youthful friend,
I left Bethkelet's huts at couching-time,
[15] And westward took my way to see the sun
Rise from the top of Snowdon.¹ Having reached 5
The cottage at the mountain's foot, we there
Rouzed up the shepherd who by ancient right
Of office is the stranger's usual guide,
[10] And after short refreshment sallied forth.
- It was a summer's night, a close warm night, 10
Wan, dull, and glaring,² with a dripping mist
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky,
Half threatening storm and rain; but on we went
Unchecked, being full of heart and having faith
In our tried pilot. Little could we see, 15
Hemmed round on every side with fog and damp,
[16] And, after ordinary travellers' chat
With our conductor, silently we sunk
Each into commerce with his private thoughts.
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself 20
[20] Was nothing either seen or heard the while
Which took me from my musings, save that once
The shepherd's cur did to his own great joy
Unearth a hedgehog in the mountain-crag,
Round which he made a barking turbulent. 25
[25] This small adventure—for even such it seemed
In that wild place and at the dead of night—
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set 30
[30] Against an enemy, I panted up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts,
Thus might we wear perhaps an hour away,

1. The Ascent of Mount Snowdon (1805, 1-65; 1850, 1-62), made when he was twenty-one, had a climactic importance for Wordsworth. In its original version the account was written for the five-Book *Prelude* at the end of February 1804, to form the opening of the last Book; and despite the rearrangement of other five-Book materials, it has the equivalent position in 1805. The "youthful friend" was Robert Jones, with whom Wordsworth made a walking-tour of North Wales, June-August 1791, the year after their

tour through France (see 1805, VI, 342n, above).

"Cambria" (1850, 3): Wales. "Huts": "old rugged and tufted cottages," according to a letter of 1824, in which Wordsworth laments changes at Beddgelert (LY, I, p. 154). "Couching-time": bedtime.

2. Maxwell suggests that Wordsworth in his use of "glaring" was influenced by northern dialect "glairy," "glaurie," meaning (when applied to the weather) dull or rainy.

Book Fourteenth

Conclusion

In one of those excursions (may they ne'er
Fade from remembrance!) through the Northern tracts
Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,
And westward took my way, to see the sun 5
Rise from the top of Snowdon.¹ To the door
Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base
We came, and roused the shepherd who attends
The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;
Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth. 10

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
Wan, dull, and glaring,² with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round, 15
And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked 20
Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher,³ who, among the crags,
Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased
His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it seemed 25
In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before. With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I panted up 30
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,

3. Mongrel.

- Ascending at loose distance each from each,
 And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band— 35
- [35] When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
 And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
 Nor had I time to ask the cause of this,
 For instantly a light upon the turf
 Fell like a flash. I looked about, and lo, 40
- [40] The moon stood naked in the heavens at height
 Immense above my head, and on the shore
 I found myself of a huge sea of mist,
 Which meek and silent rested at my feet.
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved 45
 All over this still ocean,⁴ and beyond,
- [45] Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
 Into the sea, the real sea, that seemed
 To dwindle and give up its majesty, 50
 Usurped upon as far as sight could reach.
- Meanwhile, the moon looked down upon this shew
 In single glory, and we stood, the mist
 Touching our very feet; and from the shore
 At distance not the third part of a mile 55
 Was a blue chasm, a fracture in the vapour,
 A deep and gloomy breathing-place, through which
 Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
- [60] Innumerable, roaring with one voice.⁵ 60
 The universal spectacle throughout
 Was shaped for admiration and delight,
 Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
 Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
 That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged
 The soul, the imagination of the whole. 65
- A meditation rose in me that night
 Upon the lonely mountain when the scene
 Had passed away, and it appeared to me
- [70] The perfect image of a mighty mind,
 Of one that feeds upon infinity, 70
 That is exalted by an under-presence,

4. Compare the account of the Creation, *Paradise Lost*, VII, 285–87, “the mountains huge appear / Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave / Into the clouds * * *”

5. For Wordsworth’s first account of this scene (interestingly by sunlight), see *Descriptive Sketches*, 492–505, composed in summer 1792, a year after his walking tour in Wales. Almost all the details of the Snowdon landscape are present in

this original picturesque scene. Their relationship to Wordsworth’s personal experience, however, is not easy to assess, as *Descriptive Sketches* draws very heavily on a literary source, James Beattie’s *Minstrel*, Book I (1771), stanza 23. A probable further source, in James Clarke’s *Survey of the Lakes* (1787), p. 73, has been suggested by Z. S. Fink, *Early Wordsworthian Milieu*, pp. 45–48.

Ascending at loose distance each from each,
 And I as chanced, the foremost of the band;
 When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten, 35
 And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
 Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
 For instantly a light upon the turf
 Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,
 The Moon hung naked in a firmament 40
 Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
 Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
 All over this still ocean;⁴ and beyond,
 Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched, 45
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
 Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
 To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
 Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
 Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none 50
 Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
 Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
 In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
 Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
 Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay 55
 All meek and silent, save that through a rift—
 Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
 A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place—
 Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
 Innumerable, roaring with one voice 60
 Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
 For so it seems, felt by the starry heavens.⁶

When into air had partially dissolved
 That vision, given to spirits of the night
 And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought 65
 Reflected, it appeared to me the type
 Of a majestic intellect, its acts
 And its possessions, what it has and craves,
 What in itself it is, and would become.
 There I beheld the emblem of a mind 70
 That feeds upon infinity, that broods
 Over the dark abyss,⁷ intent to hear

6. None of the other great passages of *The Prelude*—indeed of Wordsworth's poetry as a whole—suffered in revision as did the Ascent of Snowdon. From the earliest reworkings (1850, 50–53, e.g., belong to 1816/19) to the final concession to orthodoxy in 61–62 (1839 or

later), alterations are consistently for the worse. Note also the elaboration of 1805, 66–73 that results in 1850, 63–77.

7. Lines 71–72 are a reminiscence of *Paradise Lost*, I, 20–22, in which the Holy Spirit brooding over Chaos makes it fruitful.

- The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim
 Or vast in its own being⁸—above all,
 One function of such mind had Nature there
 Exhibited by putting forth, and that
- [80] With circumstance most awful and sublime:⁹
 That domination which she oftentimes
 Exerts upon the outward face of things,
 So moulds them, and endues, abstracts, combines,
 Or by abrupt and unhabitual influence
 Doth make one object so impress itself
 Upon all others, and pervades them so,
- [85] That even the grossest minds must see and hear,
 And cannot chuse but feel. The power which these
 Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
 Thrusts forth upon the senses, is the express
 Resemblance—in the fullness of its strength
 Made visible—a genuine counterpart
 And brother of the glorious faculty
- [90] Which higher minds bear with them as their own.¹
 This is the very spirit in which they deal
 With all the objects of the universe:
 They from their native selves can send abroad
 Like transformation, for themselves create
- [95] A like existence, and, when'er it is
 Created for them, catch it by an instinct.²
- [100] Them the enduring and the transient both
 Serve to exalt. They build up greatest things
 From least suggestions,³ ever on the watch,

8. The spatial quality of Wordsworth's language serves to link his "meditation" back into the central experience: the grandeur of Snowdon now evokes an inner vastness (see 96*n*, below), the "dark deep thoroughfare" (line 64) becomes an "under-presence" within the individual mind.

9. Lines 66–76 do not appear in *MS. W*, and belong probably to May 1805. For the series of six further analogies between the mind of man and Nature, written late February–early March 1804 to follow line 65, see *MS. Drafts and Fragments*, 3(a), below. The sequence appears to have been cut before the five-Book scheme was abandoned.

1. Nature, as the sea of mist, has transformed the Snowdon landscape, usurping upon the sovereignty of the "real sea," the Irish Channel (1805, 42–51; 1850, 41–49). In the process she has demonstrated by analogy ("Exhibited by putting forth" (1805, 75) the power of the human imagination. Compare Coleridge's definition of the secondary imagination, which "dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in

order to re-create" (*Biographia*, chapter xiii, p. 167).

2. For Wordsworth and Coleridge imagination was at once creative and receptive of what is apprehended through sense experiences. Among many statements that emphasize this central belief, see especially the *Infant Babe of 1805*, II, 267–75 above (1799, II, 297–305), who "as an agent of the one great mind" is "creator and receiver both," and Coleridge's definition of the primary imagination as "the living power and prime agent of all human perception" but also "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation" (*Biographia*, chapter xiii; p. 167). In his imaginative acts, the individual who is endowed with a "higher" mind is at once godlike, and perceptive of the existence of God, draws on the dim and vast in his own being, and experiences "an under-presence, / The sense of God" (1805, 71–72, above).

3. "Imagination, by which word I mean the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements" (note to *The Thorn, Lyrical Ballads*, 1800).

Its voices issuing forth to silent light
 In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
 By recognitions of transcendent power, 75
 In sense conducting to ideal form,
 In soul of more than mortal privilege.
 One function, above all, of such a mind
 Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,
 'Mid circumstances awful and sublime, 80
 That mutual domination which she loves
 To exert upon the face of outward things,
 So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed
 With interchangeable supremacy,
 That men, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive, 85
 And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all
 Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
 To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
 Resemblance of that glorious faculty
 That higher minds bear with them as their own.¹ 90
 This is the very spirit in which they deal
 With the whole compass of the universe:
 They from their native selves can send abroad
 Kindred mutations; for themselves create
 A like existence; and, whene'er it dawns 95
 Created for them, catch it, or are caught
 By its inevitable mastery.²
 Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound
 Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.
 Them the enduring and the transient both 100
 Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things
 From least suggestions;³ ever on the watch,

- Willing to work and to be wrought upon. 100
 They need not extraordinary calls
- [105] To rouse them—in a world of life they live,
 By sensible impressions not enthralled,
 But quickened, roused, and made thereby more fit
 To hold communion with the invisible world. 105
 Such minds are truly from the Deity,
 For they are powers; and hence the highest bliss
 That can be known is theirs—the consciousness
- [115] Of whom they are, habitually infused
 Through every image,⁴ and through every thought,
 And all impressions; hence religion, faith,
 And endless occupation for the soul, 110
- [120] Whether discursive or intuitive;⁵
 Hence sovereignty within and peace at will,
 Emotion which best foresight need not fear, 115
 Most worthy then of trust when most intense;
 Hence cheerfulness in every act of life;
 Hence truth in moral judgements; and delight
 That fails not, in the external universe.
- [130] Oh, who is he that hath his whole life long 120
 Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself—
 For this alone is genuine liberty.
 Witness, ye solitudes, where I received
- [141] My earliest visitations (careless then
 Of what was given me), and where now I roam, 125
- [143] A meditative, oft a suffering man,
 And yet I trust with undiminished powers;⁷

4. I.e., through all they see. The “highest bliss” of 1805, 107 (1850, 113) is self-awareness, “consciousness / Of whom they are.”

5. Wordsworth is echoing a distinction made in *Paradise Lost*, V, 487–90, between “discursive” reason (belonging chiefly to man) and the higher “intui-

tive” reason to which man may aspire, but which is normally angelic.

7. Written in early March 1804, shortly after the completion of the *Intimations Ode*, with its similar concerns, and probably a day or two before XI, 335–36 (“the hiding-places of my power / Seem open, I approach, and then they close”).

Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
 They need not extraordinary calls
 To rouse them; in a world of life they live, 105
 By sensible impressions not enthralled,
 But by their quickening impulse made more prompt
 To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,
 And with the generations of mankind
 Spread over time, past, present, and to come, 110
 Age after age, till Time shall be no more.
 Such minds are truly from the Deity,
 For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss
 That flesh can know is theirs—the consciousness
 Of Whom they are, habitually infused 115
 Through every image⁴ and through every thought
 And all affections, by communion raised
 From earth to heaven, from human to divine;
 Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
 Whether discursive or intuitive,⁵ 120
 Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,
 Emotions which best foresight need not fear,
 Most worthy then of trust when most intense.
 Hence, amid ills that vex and wrongs that crush
 Our hearts—if here the words of Holy Writ 125
 May with fit reverence be applied—that peace
 Which passeth understanding, that repose
 In moral judgments which from this pure source
 Must come, or will by man be sought in vain.⁶

Oh! who is he that hath his whole life long 130
 Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself?
 For this alone is genuine liberty:
 Where is the favoured being who hath held
 That course unchecked, unerring, and untired,
 In one perpetual progress smooth and bright?— 135
 A humbler destiny have we retraced,
 And told of lapse and hesitating choice,
 And backward wanderings along thorny ways:
 Yet—compassed round by mountain solitudes,
 Within whose solemn temple I received 140
 My earliest visitations, careless then
 Of what was given me; and which now I range,
 A meditative, oft a suffering man—
 Do I declare—in accents which, from truth
 Deriving cheerful confidence, shall blend 145
 Their modulation with these vocal streams—

6. Lines 124–29 are produced by a revision of 1838/39, and the similarly pious phrasing of line 114, “That flesh can

know,” is probably 1832 (Wordsworth tried first “man,” then “earth,” before arriving at “flesh”).

- Witness—whatever falls my better mind,
 Revolving with the accidents of life,
 May have sustained—that, howsoe'er misled, 130
- [150] I never in the quest of right and wrong
 Did tamper with myself from private aims;⁸
 Nor was in any of my hopes the dupe
 Of selfish passions; nor did wilfully
 Yield ever to mean cares and low pursuits; 135
- [155] But rather did with jealousy shrink back
 From every combination that might aid
 The tendency, too potent in itself,
 Of habit to enslave the mind—I mean
 Oppress it by the laws of vulgar sense, 140
- [160] And substitute a universe of death,
 The falsest of all worlds, in place of that
 Which is divine and true.⁹ To fear and love
 (To love as first and chief, for there fear ends)
 Be this ascribed, to early intercourse 145
- [165] In presence of sublime and lovely forms
 With the adverse principles of pain and joy—
 Evil as one is rashly named by those
 Who know not what they say.¹ From love, for here
 Do we begin and end, all grandeur comes, 150
 All truth and beauty—from pervading love—
- [170] That gone, we are as dust. Behold the fields
 In balmy springtime, full of rising flowers
 And happy creatures; see that pair, the lamb
 And the lamb's mother, and their tender ways 155
 Shall touch thee to the heart; in some green bower
 Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
- [178] The one who is thy choice of all the world—
 There linger, lulled, and lost, and rapt away—
 Be happy to thy fill; thou call'st this love, 160
- [175] And so it is, but there is higher love
 Than this, a love that comes into the heart
 With awe and a diffusive sentiment.²

8. Wordsworth's meaning—that he never attempted to buy off his conscience—is established by *1850*, 151.

9. Wordsworth's "universe of death" (in *Paradise Lost*, II, 622, the phrase is used to describe Hell) is one in which the individual is enslaved by unimaginative reliance on the senses and on purely habitual perception.

1. A reference back to *1805*, I, 305–6, above: "Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up / Fostered alike by beauty and by fear * * *" In *1805*, 143–49 (*1850*, 162–68), "beauty" is assimilated to the principles of joy and love, and "fear" is related to pain. Wordsworth, however, denies that fear and pain are in them-

selves "evil," since, subordinated to the ultimate principle of love, these aspects of human experience are necessary to the formation of the mature and imaginative mind. Wordsworth's justification of pain and fear as ultimately serving love is parallel to Milton's justification of God's ways to men, *Paradise Lost*, XII, 469 ff: "goodness infinite, goodness immense! / That all this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good."

2. Probably an emotion that is diffused—"Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart," *Tintern Abbey*, 29. "Diffusive" at times has the implication of bountiful dispensing (*NED*).

That, whatsoever falls my better mind,
 Revolving with the accidents of life,
 May have sustained, that, howsoe'er misled,
 Never did I, in quest of right and wrong, 150
 Tamper with conscience from a private aim;
 Nor was in any public hope the dupe
 Of selfish passions; nor did ever yield
 Wilfully to mean cares or low pursuits,
 But shrunk with apprehensive jealousy 155
 From every combination which might aid
 The tendency, too potent in itself,
 Of use and custom to bow down the soul
 Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,
 And substitute a universe of death 160
 For that which moves with light and life informed,
 Actual, divine, and true.⁹ To fear and love,
 To love as prime and chief, for there fear ends,
 Be this ascribed; to early intercourse,
 In presence of sublime or beautiful forms, 165
 With the adverse principles of pain and joy—
 Evil as one is rashly named by men
 Who know not what they speak.¹ By love subsists
 All lasting grandeur, by pervading love;
 That gone, we are as dust,—Behold the fields 170
 In balmy spring-time full of rising flowers
 And joyous creatures; see that pair, the lamb
 And the lamb's mother, and their tender ways
 Shall touch thee to the heart; thou callest this love,
 And not inaptly so, for love it is, 175
 Far as it carries thee. In some green bower
 Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
 The One who is thy choice of all the world:
 There linger; listening, gazing, with delight
 Impassioned, but delight how pitiable! 180
 Unless this love by a still higher love
 Be hallowed, love that breathes not without awe;
 Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer,
 By heaven inspired; that frees from chains the soul,
 Bearing, in union with the purest, best, 185

Thy love is human merely: this proceeds
More from the brooding soul, and is divine.³

165

This love more intellectual cannot be
Without imagination, which in truth
[190] Is but another name for absolute strength
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And reason in her most exalted mood.⁵ 170
This faculty hath been the moving soul
Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
From darkness, and the very place of birth
[195] In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard
The sound of waters; followed it to light
And open day, accompanied its course
Among the ways of Nature, afterwards
Lost sight of it bewildered and engulfed,
[200] Then given it greeting as it rose once more
With strength, reflecting in its solemn breast
The works of man, and face of human life;
And lastly, from its progress have we drawn
The feeling of life endless, the one thought
[205] By which we live, infinity and God.⁶

170

175

180

Imagination having been our theme,
So also hath that intellectual love,
For they are each in each, and cannot stand
Dividually.⁷ Here must thou be, O man,
[210] Strength to thyself—no helper hast thou here—
Here keepest thou thy individual state:
No other can divide with thee this work,
No secondary hand can intervene
To fashion this ability.⁸ 'Tis thine,

185

190

3. At this point in the five-Book *Prelude* Wordsworth turned to consider the factors which in practice conspire to thwart the "divine" love of lines 161–65. The passage is not fully legible in *MS. W* (see *MS. Drafts and Fragments*, 3[b], below), but leads into a version of XI, 175–83 and on, through drafts that may never have reached a final shape, into the "spots of time" sequence that formed the climax of the five-Book poem; see *Composition and Texts: 1805/1850*, Introduction, below, and XI, 128*n*, above.

5. I.e., the higher reason—as opposed to understanding—later to be associated with the primary imagination in *Biographia Literaria*, and already by 1805 reinforced for Coleridge (and thus presumably for Wordsworth): by the Kantian distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand*. "Intellectual" (1805, 166): spiritual, as elsewhere in *The Prelude*.

6. Wordsworth's use of the river to image the progress of his mind appears as early as 1799, II, 247–49, and is recurrent in

1805; see e.g., III, 10–12, IV, 39–55, VI, 672–80, IX, 1–9. "Life endless" (1805, 183; 1850, 204): a reference to the after-life which emerges very suddenly in the context of the poem as a whole, but which is explained by Wordsworth's urgent need to believe in the survival of his brother John, drowned on February 5, 1805, some three months before these lines were written (*EY*, p. 556).

7. Spiritual love for Wordsworth, as for Coleridge, is the principle which unites an individual man both to other men and to Nature; it is experienced as joy, and empowers the imagination. The point is made most clearly in *Dejection* (April 1802), 231–42, 296–323, but is everywhere implicit in the work of both poets. "Dividually": separately, apart; a reminiscence of *Paradise Lost*, XII, 85.

8. The reference in 1805, 188–93 (1850, 209–14) is consistently to spiritual love, which the individual must develop within himself, and by himself.

Of earth-born passions, on the wings of praise
A mutual tribute to the Almighty's Throne.⁴

This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
Without Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power 190
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And Reason in her most exalted mood.⁵
This faculty hath been the feeding source
Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
From the blind cavern whence is faintly heard 195
Its natal murmur; followed it to light
And open day; accompanied its course
Among the ways of Nature, for a time
Lost sight of it bewildered and engulfed:
Then given it greeting as it rose once more 200
In strength, reflecting from its placid breast
The works of man and face of human life;
And lastly, from its progress have we drawn
Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought
Of human Being, Eternity, and God.⁶ 205

Imagination having been our theme,
So also hath that intellectual Love,
For they are each in each, and cannot stand
Dividually.⁷—Here must thou be, O Man!
Power to thyself; no Helper hast thou here; 210
Here keepest thou in singleness thy state:
No other can divide with thee this work:
No secondary hand can intervene
To fashion this ability;⁸ 'tis thine,

4. Wordsworth's redefinition of the "higher love" of 1805, 161, in specifically Christian terms takes place as early as 1816/19: "Passion from all disturbing influence pure, / Foretaste of beatific sen-

timent / Bestowed in mercy on a world condemned / To mutability, pain and grief, / Terrestrial nature's sure inheritance" (*A* revisions).

- [215] The prime and vital principle is thine
 In the recesses of thy nature, far 195
 From any reach of outward fellowship,
 Else 'tis not thine at all. But joy to him,
 O, joy to him who here hath sown—hath laid
- [220] Here the foundations of his future years—
 For all that friendship, all that love can do, 200
 All that a darling countenance can look
 Or dear voice utter, to complete the man,
 Perfect him, made imperfect in himself,
- [225] All shall be his. And he whose soul hath risen
 Up to the height of feeling intellect 205
 Shall want no humbler tenderness, his heart
 Be tender as a nursing mother's heart;
 Of female softness shall his life be full,⁹
- [230] Of little loves and delicate desires,
 Mild interests and gentlest sympathies. 210

Child of my parents, sister of my soul,
 Elsewhere have strains of gratitude been breathed
 To thee for all the early tenderness

- [235] Which I from thee imbibed.¹ And true it is
 That later seasons owed to thee no less; 215
 For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch
 Of other kindred hands that opened out
 The springs of tender thought in infancy,
- [240] And spite of all which singly I had watched
 Of elegance, and each minuter charm 220
 In Nature or in life, still to the last—
 Even to the very going-out of youth,
 The period which our story now hath reached²—
 I too exclusively esteemed that love,
- [245] And sought that beauty, which as Milton sings
 Hath terror in it.³ Thou didst soften down 225
 This over-sternness; but for thee, sweet friend,
 My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had been
 Far longer what by Nature it was framed—
- [250] Longer retained its countenance severe— 230
 A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds

9. Compare *Michael*, 162–68, where the old shepherd is praised for doing “female service” to Luke when he was a baby.

1. Wordsworth had often expressed “strains of gratitude” to Dorothy—in 1805, VI, 210–18, X, 908–15, above, for instance, as well as *Tintern Abbey* and *Home at Grasmere*—but the reference to imbibing early tenderness suggests that he has in mind the lyrics of spring 1802; see especially *The Sparrow's Nest* (quoted

at 1850, 230) and *To a Butterfly*.

2. Though the recent experience in the reader's mind will be the Ascent of Snowdon in 1791, and the journey across Salisbury Plain in 1793 (1805, XII, 312–53; 1850, XIII, 312–49), Wordsworth regards his story as having reached the period of 1796–97; see 246n, below.

3. Rather surprisingly it is the serpent who, at *Paradise Lost*, IX, 490–91, remarks “though terror be in love / And beauty * * *.”

The prime and vital principle is 'thine 215
 In the recesses of thy nature, far
 From any reach of outward fellowship,
 Else is not thine at all. But joy to him,
 Oh, joy to him who here hath sown, hath laid
 Here, the foundation of his future years! 220
 For all that friendship, all that love can do,
 All that a darling countenance can look
 Or dear voice utter, to complete the man,
 Perfect him, made imperfect in himself, 225
 All shall be his: and he whose soul hath risen
 Up to the height of feeling intellect
 Shall want no humbler tenderness; his heart
 Be tender as a nursing mother's heart;
 Of female softness shall his life be full,⁹
 Of humble cares and delicate desires, 230
 Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

Child of my parents! Sister of my soul!
 Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere
 Poured out for all the early tenderness
 Which I from thee imbibed:¹ and 'tis most true 235
 That later seasons owed to thee no less;
 For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch
 Of kindred hands that opened out the springs
 Of genial thought in childhood, and in spite
 Of all that unassisted I had marked 240
 In life or nature of those charms minute
 That win their way into the heart by stealth
 (Still to the very going-out of youth),²
 I too exclusively esteemed *that* love,
 And sought that beauty, which, as Milton sings, 245
 Hath terror in it.³ Thou didst soften down
 This over-sternness; but for thee, dear Friend!
 My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood
 In her original self too confident,
 Retained too long a countenance severe; 250
 A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds

- Familiar, and a favorite of the stars;
 But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
 Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
 [255] And teach the little birds to build their nests 235
 And warble in its chambers. At a time
 When Nature, destined to remain so long
 Foremost in my affections, had fallen back
 Into a second place, well pleased to be
 [260] A handmaid to a nobler than herself— 240
 When every day brought with it some new sense
 Of exquisite regard for common things,
 And all the earth was budding with these gifts
 Of more refined humanity—thy breath,
 [265] Dear sister, was a kind of gentler spring 245
 That went before my steps.⁴
- [275] With such a theme
 Coleridge—with this my argument—of thee
 Shall I be silent? O most loving soul,
 Placed on this earth to love and understand,
 And from thy presence shed the light of love,
 [280] Shall I be mute ere thou be spoken of? 250
 Thy gentle spirit to my heart of hearts
 Did also find its way; and thus the life
 Of all things and the mighty unity
 In all which we behold, and feel, and are,
 [288] Admitted more habitually a mild 255
 Interposition, closelier gathering thoughts
 [290] Of man and his concerns,⁶ such as become
 A human creature, be he who he may,
 Poet, or destined to an humbler name;
 And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
 The rapture of the hallelujah sent
 [295] From all that breathes and is, was chastened, stemmed,
 And balanced, by a reason which indeed
 Is reason, duty, and pathetic truth—⁷ 265
 And God and man divided, as they ought,
 Between them the great system of the world,
 Where man is sphered, and which God animates.

4. With *1805*, 236–46 (*1850*, 256–66), compare *Tintern Abbey*, 73–94, in which Nature, once “all in all,” gives place to other gifts, among them the ability to hear “the still, sad music of humanity.” Wordsworth’s reference is to the period between his moral crisis (whatever its actual strength) in spring 1796, and July 1798 when he and Dorothy left Alfoxden. “Humanity” is more refined than the “common things,” being quiet and serious (“sad”), and nobler than the mere

handmaid Nature.

6. I.e., were gently and more habitually mediated to me, bringing more close to me thoughts of man and his concerns. Wordsworth had already paid tribute to Coleridge at *1805*, X, 904–7.

7. Reason in its most exalted mood may be imagination (lines 167–70, above), but in its chastening personal aspect, it is “duty, and pathetic truth”—truth, to, and of, the emotions.

Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:
 But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
 Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
 And teach the little birds to build their nests 255
 And warble in its chambers. At a time
 When Nature, destined to remain so long
 Foremost in my affections, had fallen back
 Into a second place, pleased to become
 A handmaid to a nobler than herself, 260
 When every day brought with it some new sense
 Of exquisite regard for common things,
 And all the earth was budding with these gifts
 Of more refined humanity, thy breath,
 Dear Sister! was a kind of gentler spring 265
 That went before my steps.⁴ Thereafter came
 One whom with thee friendship had early paired;
 She came, no more a phantom to adorn
 A moment, but an inmate of the heart,
 And yet a spirit, there for me enshrined 270
 To penetrate the lofty and the low;
 Even as one essence of pervading light
 Shines, in the brightest of ten thousand stars,
 And, the meek worm that feeds her lonely lamp
 Couched in the dewy grass.⁵

With such a theme, 275

Coleridge! with this my argument, of thee
 Shall I be silent? O capacious Soul!
 Placed on this earth to love and understand,
 And from thy presence shed the light of love, 280
 Shall I be mute, ere thou be spoken of?
 Thy kindred influence to my heart of hearts
 Did also find its way. Thus fear relaxed
 Her overweening grasp; thus thoughts and things
 In the self-haunting spirit learned to take 285
 More rational proportions; mystery,
 The incumbent mystery of sense and soul,
 Of life and death, time and eternity,
 Admitted more habitually a mild
 Interposition—a serene delight
 In closelier gathering cares, such as become 290
 A human creature, howsoe'er endowed,
 Poet, or destined for a humbler name;
 And so the deep enthusiastic joy,
 The rapture of the hallelujah sent

5. Wordsworth's tribute to his wife, with the allusion in lines 268–9 to "She was a phantom of delight," 1–4, was added in

1816/19, but later considerably revised. "Worm": glowworm.

- And now, O friend, this history is brought
 To its appointed close: the discipline 270
 And consummation of the poet's mind
- [305] In every thing that stood most prominent
 Have faithfully been pictured. We have reached
 The time, which was our object from the first, 275
 When we may (not presumptuously, I hope)
 Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such
- [310] My knowledge, as to make me capable
 Of building up a work that should endure.⁹
 Yet much hath been omitted, as need was—
 Of books how much!¹ and even of the other wealth 280
 Which is collected among woods and fields,
- [315] Far more. For Nature's secondary grace,
 That outward illustration which is hers,
 Hath hitherto been barely touched upon:
 The charm more superficial, and yet sweet,
 Which from her works finds way, contemplated² 285
 As they hold forth a genuine counterpart
 And softening mirror of the moral world.³

Yes, having tracked the main essential power—
 Imagination—up her way sublime, 290
 In turn might fancy also be pursued
 Through all her transmigrations, till she too
 Was purified, had learned to ply her craft
 By judgement steadied. Then might we return,
 And in the rivers and the groves behold 295
 Another face, might hear them from all sides
 Calling upon the more instructed mind
 To link their images—with subtle skill
 Sometimes, and by elaborate research—
 With forms and definite appearances 300
 Of human life, presenting them sometimes
 To the involuntary sympathy
 Of our internal being, satisfied
 And soothed with a conception of delight
 Where meditation cannot come, which thought 305
 Could never heighten.⁴ Above all, how much
 Still nearer to ourselves is overlooked

9. Among Wordsworth's earlier statements of his poetic intention, see especially 1799, I, 459–64, and 1805, I, 123–271, written ca. December 1798 and January 1804 respectively.

1. A reference to the inadequacies of Book V, where scanty treatment is given to the influence of literature; see 1805, V, 179*n*, above.

2. Scansion: cōntēplātéd.

3. Wordsworth did not share Coleridge's

fondness for viewing the objects of Nature as symbolic of moral truths. See, e.g., Coleridge's *Destiny of Nations*, 18–20: "For all that meets the bodily sense I deem / Symbolical, one mighty alphabet / For infant minds * * *."

4. The drift of Wordsworth's thought is clearer if one remembers that fancy (line 291) is described at VIII, 590–91 as the power that turns "itself / Instinctively to human passions."

From all that breathes and is, was chastened, stemmed 295
 And balanced by pathetic truth, by trust
 In hopeful reason, leaning on the stay
 Of Providence; and in reverence for duty,
 Here, if need be, struggling with storms, and there
 Strewing in peace life's humblest ground with herbs, 300
 At every season green, sweet at all hours!⁸

And now, O Friend! this history is brought
 To its appointed close: the discipline
 And consummation of a Poet's mind,
 In everything that stood most prominent, 305
 Have faithfully been pictured; we have reached
 The time (our guiding object from the first)
 When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,
 Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such
 My knowledge, as to make me capable 310
 Of building up a Work that shall endure.⁹
 Yet much hath been omitted, as need was;
 Of books how much!¹ and even of the other wealth
 That is collected among woods and fields,
 Far more: for Nature's secondary grace 315
 Hath hitherto been barely touched upon,
 The charm more superficial that attends
 Her works, as they present to Fancy's choice
 Apt illustrations of the moral world,
 Caught at a glance, or traced with curious pains.³ 320

8. This revised, and (especially in lines 285–87) far less accurate, assessment of Coleridge's influence belongs probably

to 1838/39, nearly five years after his death in July 1834.

- In human nature and that marvellous world
 [325] As studied first in my own heart, and then 310
 In life, among the passions of mankind
 And qualities commixed and modified
 By the infinite varieties and shades
 Of individual character. Herein
 It was for me (this justice bids me say)
 No useless preparation to have been 315
 The pupil of a public school,⁵ and forced
 In hardy independence to stand up
 Among conflicting passions and the shock
 [335] Of various tempers, to endure and note 320
 What was not understood, though known to be—
 Among the mysteries of love and hate,
 Honour and shame, looking to right and left,
 Unchecked by innocence too delicate,
 [340] And moral notions too intolerant, 325
 Sympathies too contracted. Hence, when called
 To take a station among men, the step
 Was easier, the transition more secure,
 More profitable also; for the mind
 [345] Learns from such timely exercise to keep 330
 In wholesome separation the two natures—
 The one that feels, the other that observes.

- Let one word more of personal circumstance—
 Not needless, as it seems—be added here.
 [349] Since I withdrew unwillingly from France, 335
 The story hath demanded less regard
 To time and place; and where I lived, and how,
 Hath been no longer scrupulously marked.
 Three years, until a permanent abode
 Received me with that sister of my heart
 Who ought by rights the dearest to have been 340
 Conspicuous through this biographic verse—
 Star seldom utterly concealed from view—
 I led an undomestic wanderer's life.
 In London chiefly was my home, and thence
 Excursively, as personal friendships, chance 345
 Or inclination led, or slender means
 Gave leave, I roamed about from place to place,
 Tarrying in pleasant nooks, wherever found,
 Through England or through Wales.⁶ A youth—he bore

5. Hawkshead, where Wordsworth was a pupil May 1779–June 1787, was a Free Grammar School—i.e., an endowed foundation, open (theoretically at least) to able pupils, whether rich or poor. “Public” is thus used in its original (and

logical) sense, which survives in American, but not in modern British usage.

6. Wales was the home of Robert Jones (see 1805, VI, 342*n*, above). “Cambrian” (1850): “Welsh.”

Finally, and above all, O Friend! (I speak
 With due regret) how much is overlooked
 In human nature and her subtle ways,
 As studied first in our own hearts, and then
 In life among the passions of mankind, 325
 Varying their composition and their hue,
 Where'er we move, under the diverse shapes
 That individual character presents
 To an attentive eye. For progress meet,
 Along this intricate and difficult path, 330
 Whate'er was wanting, something had I gained,
 As one of many schoolfellows compelled,
 In hardy independence, to stand up
 Amid conflicting interests, and the shock
 Of various tempers; to endure and note 335
 What was not understood, though known to be;
 Among the mysteries of love and hate,
 Honour and shame, looking to right and left,
 Unchecked by innocence too delicate,
 And moral notions too intolerant, 340
 Sympathies too contracted. Hence, when called
 To take a station among men, the step
 Was easier, the transition more secure,
 More profitable also; for, the mind
 Learns from such timely exercise to keep 345
 In wholesome separation the two natures,
 The one that feels, the other that observes.

Yet one word more of personal concern—
 Since I withdrew unwillingly from France,
 I led an undomestic wanderer's life, 350
 In London chiefly harboured, whence I roamed,
 Tarrying at will in many a pleasant spot
 Of rural England's cultivated vales
 Or Cambrian solitudes.⁶ A youth (he bore

- [355] The name of Calvert; it shall live, if words 350
 Of mine can give it life—without respect
 To prejudice or custom, having hope
 That I had some endowments by which good
 Might be promoted, in his last decay
 From his own family withdrawing part 355
- [360] Of no redundant patrimony,⁷ did
 By a bequest sufficient for my needs
 Enable me to pause for choice, and walk
 At large and unrestrained, nor damped too soon
 By mortal cares.⁸ Himself no poet, yet 360
- [365] Far less a common spirit of the world,
 He deemed that my pursuits and labors lay
 Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
 Perhaps to necessary maintenance,
 Without some hazard to the finer sense, 365
- [370] He cleared a passage for me, and the stream
 Flowed in the bent of Nature.

Having now

- Told what best merits mention, further pains
 Our present labour seems not to require,
 And I have other tasks.⁹ Call back to mind 370
- [375] The mood in which this poem was begun,
 O friend—the termination of my course
 Is nearer now, much nearer, yet even then
 In that distraction and intense desire
 I said unto the life which I had lived, 375
- [380] ‘Where art thou? Hear I not a voice from thee
 Which ’tis reproach to hear?’ Anon I rose
 As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched
 Vast prospect of the world which I had been,
 And was; and hence this song, which like¹ a lark 380
- [385] I have protracted, in the unwearied heavens
 Singing, and often with more plaintive voice
 Attenuated to the sorrows of the earth—
 Yet centring all in love, and in the end
 All gratulant² if rightly understood. 385
- [390] Whether to me shall be allotted life,
 And with life power to accomplish aught of worth
 Sufficient to excuse me in men’s sight

7. I.e., an inheritance which was not in excess of his needs.

8. Raisley Calvert was the brother of the school friend, William Calvert, with whom Wordsworth spent a month on the Isle of Wight in July 1793 (see 1805, X, 290–306, above). Raisley died of con-

sumption in January 1795, leaving Wordsworth £900.

9. Primarily the philosophical section of *The Recluse*.

1. Unsupported alternative reading, “for.”

2. Expressive of joy.

The name of Calvert—it shall live, if words
 Of mine can give it life) in firm belief 355
 That by endowments not from me withheld
 Good might be furthered—in his last decay
 Withdrawing, and from kindred whom he loved,
 A part of no redundant patrimony,⁷ 360
 By a bequest sufficient for my needs
 Enabled me to pause for choice, and walk
 At large and unrestrained, nor damped too soon
 By mortal cares.⁸ Himself no Poet, yet
 Far less a common follower of the world, 365
 He deemed that my pursuits and labours lay
 Apart from all that leads to wealth, or even
 A necessary maintenance insures,
 Without some hazard to the finer sense;
 He cleared a passage for me, and the stream 370
 Flowed in the bent of Nature.

Having now

Told what best merits mention, further pains
 Our present purpose seems not to require,
 And I have other tasks.⁹ Recall to mind
 The mood in which this labour was begun, 375
 O Friend! The termination of my course
 Is nearer now, much nearer; yet even then,
 In that distraction and intense desire,
 I said unto the life which I had lived,
 Where art thou? Hear I not a voice from thee 380
 Which 'tis reproach to hear? Anon I rose
 As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched
 Vast prospect of the world which I had been
 And was; and hence this Song, which like¹ a lark
 I have protracted, in the unwearied heavens 385
 Singing, and often with more plaintive voice
 To earth attempered and her deep-drawn sighs,
 Yet centring all in love, and in the end
 All gratulant,² if rightly understood.

Whether to me shall be allotted life, 390
 And, with life, power to accomplish aught of worth,
 That will be deemed no insufficient plea

- For having given this record of myself,
Is all uncertain;³ but, beloved friend, 390
- [395] When looking back thou seest, in clearer view
Than any sweetest sight of yesterday,
That summer when on Quantock's grassy hills
Far ranging, and among the sylvan coombs,
- [400] Thou in delicious words, with happy heart, 395
Didst speak the vision of that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;⁴
And I, associate in such labour, walked
- [406] Murmuring of him, who—joyous hap—was found, 400
After the perils of his moonlight ride,
Near the loud waterfall, or her who sate
In misery near the miserable thorn;⁵
- [410] When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,
And hast before thee all which then we were, 405
To thee, in memory of that happiness,
It will be known—by thee at least, my friend,
Felt—that the history of a poet's mind
- [415] Is labour not unworthy of regard:
To thee the work shall justify itself. 410

- The last and later portions of this gift
Which I for thee design have been prepared
In times which have from those wherein we first
- [420] Together wandered in wild poesy 415
Differed thus far, that they have been, my friend,
Times of much sorrow, of a private grief
Keen and enduring, which the frame of mind
That in this meditative history
Hath been described, more deeply makes me feel,
- [425] Yet likewise hath enabled me to bear 420
More firmly; and a comfort now, a hope,
One of the dearest which this life can give,
Is mine: that thou art near, and wilt be soon
Restored to us in renovated health—

3. "This Poem will not be published these many years, and never during my lifetime, till I have finished a larger and more important work to which it is tributary," Wordsworth to De Quincey, March 1804 (*EY*, p. 454). He never changed the view that the egocentricity of *The Prelude* could be justified only by its position as part of *The Recluse*; hence the postponement of its publication until after his death in 1850.

4. Only Part I of *Christabel* was written among the "sylvan coombs" (wooded valleys) of the Quantocks. Wordsworth

is looking back to the period of his and Coleridge's closest relationship, at Alfoxden in Somerset in the spring and early summer of 1798—the period of *Lyrical Ballads*, and of the drawing up of the scheme of *The Recluse* (*EY*, p. 212).

5. Coleridge would enjoy the humour and self-mockery of Wordsworth's allusion to *The Thorn*, and Martha Ray's "doleful cry": "Oh misery! oh misery! / Oh woe is me! oh misery!"

It was Johnny of *The Idiot Boy* (line 442) who was found "Near the loud waterfall."

For having given this story of myself,
 Is all uncertain:³ but, beloved Friend!
 When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view 395
 Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
 That summer, under whose indulgent skies,
 Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
 Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan coombs,
 Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart, 400
 Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
 Didst utter the Lady Christabel;⁴
 And I, associate with such labour, steeped
 In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours, 405
 Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,
 After the perils of his moonlight ride,
 Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate
 In misery near the miserable Thorn;⁵
 When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts, 410
 And hast before thee all which then we were,
 To thee, in memory of that happiness,
 It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend!
 Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
 Is labour not unworthy of regard: 415
 To thee the work shall justify itself.

The last and later portions of this gift
 Have been prepared, not with the buoyant spirits
 That were our daily portion when we first
 Together wantoned in wild Poesy, 420
 But under pressure of a private grief,
 Keen and enduring, which the mind and heart,
 That in this meditative history
 Hath been laid open, needs must make me feel
 More deeply, yet enable me to bear 425
 More firmly; and a comfort now hath risen
 From hope that thou art near, and wilt be soon
 Restored to us in renovated health;

- When, after the first mingling of our tears, 425
 [430] 'Mong other consolations, we may find
 Some pleasure from this offering of my love.⁶
- Oh, yet a few short years of useful life,
 And all will be complete—thy race be run,
 Thy monument of glory will be raised. 430
- [435] Then, though too weak to tread the ways of truth,
 This age fall back to old idolatry,
 Though men return to servitude as fast
 As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
 By nations sink together, we shall still 435
- [440] Find solace in the knowledge which we have,
 Blessed with true happiness if we may be
 United helpers forward of a day
 Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work—
 Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe— 440
- [445] Of their redemption, surely yet to come.⁷
 Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
 A lasting inspiration, sanctified
 By reason and by truth; what we have loved
 Others will love, and we may teach them how: 445
- [450] Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
 A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
 On which he dwells, above this frame of things
 (Which, 'mid all revolutions in the hopes
 And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged) 450
- [455] In beauty exalted, as it is itself
 Of substance and of fabric more divine.⁹

6. For the pleasure given to Coleridge by *The Prelude*, the "offering" of Wordsworth's love, see *To William Wordsworth*.

7. "Their redemption" (1850, "deliverance"): that of mankind. The millennial optimism of this passage is based on the conclusion of 1799; see 1799, II, 484*n*, above, for its original source.

9. Though speaking as "Prophets of Nature" (1805, 442; 1850, 446), Wordsworth and Coleridge will instruct their readers about the mind of man, which is

not just more beautiful than the natural world, but inherently more divine, in that it can—through an act of the creative and responsive imagination—perceive the existence of God. Compare Wordsworth's most deliberately challenging statement of this central theme, in the Prospectus to *The Recluse* (*CW*, III, 100 and 102, lines 973–90), where the mind of man is offered not only as "the main haunt and region" of the poet's song, but as a replacement of the subject-matter of Milton's Christian epic.

When, after the first mingling of our tears,
 'Mong other consolations, we may draw 430
 Some pleasure from this offering of my love.⁶

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,
 And all will be complete, thy race be run,
 Thy monument of glory will be raised;
 Then, though (too weak to tread the ways of truth) 435

This age fall back to old idolatry,
 Though men return to servitude as fast
 As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
 By nations sink together, we shall still
 Find solace—knowing what we have learnt to know, 440

Rich in true happiness if allowed to be
 Faithful alike in forwarding a day
 Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work
 (Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe)
 Of their deliverance, surely yet to come.⁷ 445

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
 A lasting inspiration, sanctified
 By reason, blest by faith:⁸ what we have loved,
 Others will love, and we will teach them how;
 Instruct them how the mind of man becomes 450

A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
 On which he dwells, above this frame of things
 (Which, 'mid all revolutions in the hopes
 And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
 In beauty exalted, as it is itself 455
 Of quality and fabric more divine.^{9,1}

8. The last substantial change in the *Pre-*
lude text, belonging probably to 1832.

1. Both *D* and *E* conclude in a state-
 ment, "The Composition of this Poem
 was finished early in the year 1805—it

having been begun about 1798." Below
 this in *E* is written: "The Life is brought
 up to the time of the Composition of the
 first Edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*."