

640 And blind authority beating with his staff
 The child that might have led him; emptiness
 Followed as of good omen, and meek worth
 Left to itself unheard of and unknown.

Of these and other kindred notices
 I cannot say what portion is in truth
 The naked recollection of that time,
 And what may rather have been called to life
 By after-meditation. But delight
 That, in an easy temper lulled asleep,
 650 Is still with innocence its own reward,
 This surely was not wanting. Carelessly
 I gazed, roving as through a cabinet
 Or wide museum (thronged with fishes, gems,
 Birds, crocodiles, shells) where little can be seen
 Well understood, or naturally endeared,
 Yet still does every step bring something forth
 That quickens, pleases, stings – and here and there
 A casual rarity is singled out
 And has its brief perusal, then gives way
 660 To others, all supplanted in their turn.
 Meanwhile amid this gaudy congress, framed
 Of things by nature most unneighbourly,
 The head turns round and cannot right itself,
 And though an aching and a barren sense
 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
 With few wise longings and but little love,
 Yet something to the memory sticks at last
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

Thus in submissive idleness, my friend,
 670 The labouring time of autumn, winter, spring –
 Nine months – rolled pleasingly away; the tenth
 Returned me to my native hills again.

And blind Authority beating with his staff
 The child that might have led him; Emptiness
 610 Followed as of good omen, and meek Worth
 Left to herself unheard of and unknown.

Of these and other kindred notices
 I cannot say what portion is in truth
 The naked recollection of that time,
 And what may rather have been called to life
 By after-meditation. But delight
 That, in an easy temper lulled asleep,
 Is still with Innocence its own reward,
 This was not wanting. Carelessly I roamed
 620 As through a wide museum from whose stores
 A casual rarity is singled out
 And has its brief perusal, then gives way
 To others, all supplanted in their turn;
 Till 'mid this crowded neighbourhood of things
 That are by nature most unneighbourly,
 The head turns round and cannot right itself;
 And though an aching and a barren sense
 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
 With few wise longings and but little love,
 630 Yet to the memory something cleaves at last,
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

Thus in submissive idleness, my Friend!
 The labouring time of autumn, winter, spring,
 Eight months! rolled pleasingly away; the ninth
 Came and returned me to my native hills.