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The Romantic Revival in English Poetry during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, Illustrated in the Works of Wordsworth and Shelley, ~~and Keats~~.

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota by Elizabeth M. Gill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, May first, 1910.

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"By nothing is England so great
as by her poetry".

Herford.

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I.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMS.

Before beginning definitely the discussion of the Romantic Revival, I hasten to disclaim any thought of having made, or even approached an exhaustive study of the subject. No period of our literary history has proved more attractive to scholars; probably no period has been looked at from a greater variety of standpoints, or been productive of a greater difference of opinion. The study of its product, of the influences which were operative, and of the impress which the period made on succeeding writers, has been the subject of thought and reading on the part of such men as Beers, Phelps, Brandes, Wernaer, and others, who have devoted years to research and investigation. After such extensive and intensive study, they have still felt that their work was partial and incomplete. In the face of these recognized conditions, I offer no apology for my presumption. A year's close study of the Romantic period must give a broader view of life, of the relation existing between life and literature, and of the influence of the forces which are at

at work today.

I shall not attempt a close, detailed study of the many phases of the movement, but shall endeavor to give a comprehensive view of the entire period, dealing with its causes, its development, its prevailing characteristics, and its great leaders. This done, Wordsworth, and Shelley, ~~and Keats~~ as representative writers, and as writers whose influence is still strong, will receive special attention.

In the discussions of this subject, definitions have been as many and as various as the individuals who have made it a study. Possibly no term has proved more misleading, or productive of more vexatious confusion. In the earliest use of the terms classic and romantic, writers were concerned chiefly with a difference of race. Students of art discovered in the product of Mediaeval times a different tone, a new view point from that to which they had become accustomed in the expression of the Greeks and Romans. To this new character, or, better, quality the term "Romantic" was applied. From this

distinction, doubtless, has arisen the later tendency on the part of some writers to define modern romanticism in terms of a Mediaeval revival. So we find Prof. H. A. Beers approaching the subject from this angle and accepting the "simple dictionary definition,'pertaining to the style of the Christian and popular literature of the Middle Ages'", which he prefers to any of the more inclusive definitions. Walter Pater asserts that "Romanticism and Classicism indicate opposite tendencies or elements present in varying proportion in all good art. The essentially classical element is that quality of order in beauty; the romantic temper adds strangeness to beauty". Mr. Pater adds that it is but accidental that the satisfaction of curiosity was found to a great extent in the Middle Ages.

It is not becoming that one should question the results of the studies of such men as Mr. Beers and Mr. Phelps, who follows closely Mr. Beers' theory; and yet, is there not something narrowing in thus confining a world wide movement that has sounded the deeps of man's

nature, to the "revival of Mediaeval life" and thought? Studied with the twentieth century perspective, has not the movement something wholly modern about it? Are we not belittling the great expansion of human thought and sympathy that is the result of wholly modern forces, if we find in it only, or even chiefly, the echo of the Middle Ages?

We find in Romantic literature and art a distinctively new spirit that pervades the modern world in every direction,-we find a new attitude toward life, an attitude that refuses to accept tradition, an attitude of questioning, of seeking explanations. No order, no metes and bounds could contain this literature. While it seems at first a mere begging of the question, since it really defines by failing to define, yet Victor Hugo's terse "liberalism in literature", because of its very inclusiveness, most nearly satisfies the moment's need. It was a breaking away from the iron bound theories of the Augustans and the adopting of a new attitude toward everything in life or affecting life.

So far as the movement affected subject matter and form, authorities differ almost as widely as they do in the matter of definition. Some writers find that the term must be limited to the subject matter. A poet who writes a "Hymn to Apollo" or "to Pan" or a "Song of Proserpine" must of necessity be a Classic poet because, forsooth, he has gone to the ancient world to find his subject. It matters little or nothing that the poem teems with suggestion, is full of imaginative pictures, is lyric in its piercing sweetness, and that running through it from its first word to its last, like a subtle, haunting melody, is that peculiar individuality or subjectivity, which marks it romantic. It is not to be denied that this savors of the classic, but here, within certain limitations, the theory which Henry James applies to fiction might be thought to hold good. Let a poet choose his subject where he will, in Ancient, Mediaeval, or Modern world as he sees best: our distinction is concerned with his attitude toward his material.

If Shelley, having selected Prometheus as attractive material gives to the world that greatest of lyrical dramas, based upon the deeply underlying philosophical principles of the modern world, we claim him for the Romantic school. The romantic writer as a rule seeks his subject within the range of the new spirit of literature; he finds there his inspiration, and his use of the Classic subject is more by way of showing the new spirit through the medium of old ideas and ideals.

II.

CAUSES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

It is not by any means necessary today to defend the Romantic Movement. It is its own best excuse for being. We but accept it, realize its breadth and power, and try to account for it,-trace its descent and ask always what has produced such a change in attitude. It is not sufficient to seek the causes of such a phenomenon in that century alone in which it is most prominent. Deeply underlying the expression of the moment are to be found those changes in a nation, physical, mental, and spititual, which make inevitable not only a changing response to the environment, but a consistent reaction against an environment that is not adequate. So it is that in all national histories are to be found times when storm and stress are characteristic; they may be periods when war and blood shed are rife; when the foundations of nations tremble: when the map of the world is being made over. Again, there are times when mind is the disturbing force; when man is questioning, experimenting, wandering; times when development, not political,

but social, economic, or spiritual, is carrying a nation beyond its old bounds. During such periods national literature faithfully records all conditions, disclosing far more truly the springs of action, than the actions themselves could disclose. At such times as this, men refuse to accept those dicta that have sought to govern thought and particularly expression during the immediate past: they must have a new medium through which others may learn the joy of soul growth and development.

So it is that through out our literary history are to be found periods when bold, strong creative power pours itself over the world with an insistence and force that cannot be resisted. Wavelike movements they are, and each one has gathered up in its development, what was noblest and most worth while in previous like periods, and in some measure rises higher as it builds upon that advantage. Alternating with such periods are those times of depression, when "respect for authority, the love of order and decorum, the disposition to follow rules

and models, the acceptance of academic and conventional standards, overbalance the desire for strangeness and novelty".

As we study more and more closely the controlling forces of the eighteenth century, what at first seemed simple and easy to analyse, develops under our eyes into a condition of complexity such as is seldom to be found. In two directions the period is reactionary; to two preceding influences, it was equally opposed. Elizabethan literature stood for unbounded and unchecked enthusiasm. The joy of living, of telling to the world that life was rich and deep and free, sounded insistently through every note of Elizabethan poetry. Over against this was sounded that stern, unrelenting note of Puritanism, calling to duty, to renunciation, to sorrow and sadness because of the evil in the world. The Augustans were as incapable of the one as of the other. Self respect, decency, order, and convention, all in moderation in every phase of life, these were the controlling motives of their life and work.

The Restoration had brought French influence into play in every phase of national expression. In life, respectability was exalted over morality; in letters, form above material; in everything, established law above the development and expression of individuality. Imagination was strangled, and every incipient departure from recognized form, every suspicion of independent thought was castigated so severely that only one who had the courage of his convictions would dare to offend again.

In spite of conditions such as these that tended to destroy utterly nationality, that would bring everything to the dead level of imitation, other forces were at work which later were strong enough not simply to neutralize this deadening influence, but to overthrow it and to establish on its ruins a national expression as rich and deep in its own way as the Elizabethan had been. Science was doing for the eighteenth century what exploration and discovery had done for the seventeenth.

The complete repression of emotion and feeling in an age when men were keen and intellectual, would turn ability wherever found into channels of investigation. Men were thinking, questioning, speculating. They no longer somewhat blindly accepted conditions as they found them: they were not content until Nature had yielded up her secrets. Nor did these men realize that such study was leading them gradually, but none the less certainly, away from the accepted standards of the day toward a new statement of those old principles so much despised.

While the influence of science at this time was to an extent detrimental, since it led men a long way into materialism, developing in many that passion for facts alone which tends to destroy idealism, at the same time it was far more largely beneficial, for it revealed the presence of force and of unity, of energy everywhere. True it wrought havoc with traditions long accepted, and men found it again necessary to adjust themselves to a wholly new outer world. A new philosophy was growing

up, one of spiritual energy interpenetrating every atom of the universe, uniting and binding it together. Hence the poets of the nineteenth century must re-assert the claims of the spirit, they must harmonize the old faith with the new; they must show the unity of all creation, binding into one, Nature, Man, and God. As the scientist saw only the fact, the poet must see and emphasize the truth behind the fact.

Closely allied with the scientific movement in working out the change of attitude which makes itself felt early in this century, is the new democracy, in itself a very complex factor in the production of the new literature. It was based upon the growing sense of the worth of man as man. The industrial and economic revolutions which were changing the entire face of England were stirring her conscience as it had never before been stirred. In 1738 Wesley and Whitfield were at work. At a time when religion was an empty form or a matter of close and definite reasoning, when heart and conscience had seemingly atrophied, when the filling of church

offices was carried on with as much and as shameful intrigue as the filling of government offices, it would seem the height of folly to appeal to any motive but greed and selfishness. Fortunately these men had faith in Englishmen, and the outcome proved their wisdom. The middle class which had so grown in numbers during the past few years and was beginning to feel its power and to make it felt, was at heart religious; it had retained much that was best in the old Puritanism. These were the people who made ready response to the preaching of Wesley; and the real, enduring response that they made was that increasing sense of the brotherhood of man which was the very heart and core of the new democracy. It found its broad expression in the efforts that were put forth for the melioration of the conditions in which the lower classes were existing, and for the recalling of the higher classes to a sense of their responsibility to society at large. This new awakening of thought and feeling initiated the great reform movement which began under Pitt as Premier, and has not yet worn itself out.

During all this time two currents have been clearly discernible in the stream of English letters. One clearly defined, narrow, is distinctively of the period. Beginning with Dryden, it grows constantly narrower as we trace it through the time of Pope, who most completely represented it, and of Samuel Johnson, who most venomously defended it, until as a separate current it disappears about the time of Wordsworth. In spite of its painful self-conciousness this is generally spoken of as the classical tendency, since the whole effort of the time was directed toward perfection of form. It mattered little or nothing whether the writer had any thought to express, or at least any new thought. He who could best march in the lock-step of the heroic couplet, was awarded the chaplet, too appropriately, alas, composed of artificial flowers, for Nature yielded none of her secrets to scoffers and skeptics. Perhaps in no one thing are the restrictions of the age more apparent than in the attitude maintained by its leaders toward the great writers of the past. Neither Shakespeare nor Milton was exempt from

the abuse which was heaped upon those who in their genius departed most widely and daringly from their petty rules. Only mediocrity was applauded. "A pretty little time", in Dr. Burton's very apt phraseology.

Moving strongly, purely beneath the main stream, is the undercurrent of freedom and originality, which as it gathered strength, rose gradually until it overwhelmed the surface current; that, as it gave way, surrendered its best elements to the new irresistible force. Though it had been buried for years, the romantic impulse had never been destroyed. Intellectuality, coldness, formalism, had, indeed driven it from recognized literature, but it was still present, gathering power and depth through the very means that had been taken to destroy it. Why should it reappear just at this time? Certainly no time could have been less auspicious. Yet, in spite of seeming contradiction, no time was more thoroughly favorable. Undue repression and forced obedience to arbitrary law ultimately destroy themselves. Either extreme inevitably wears itself out. The note of dissatisfaction,

of vague, only half understood discontent with the prevailing standards of poetry appeared early in the first quarter of the century. There was no leader, no combining of forces toward a recognized end. Nor was there any sudden outburst of great genius. Here and there, in various parts of literary England men were experimenting, testing, reaching out tentatively, almost unconciously for a new method of expressing a newly revived sense of the spiritual significance of life. There was a certain sub-conscious recognition of the utter lack of true power in the literature of the period. The life of the spirit cannot be expressed in terms of intellect. A man's nature, his inner life, is a union of intellectual with spiritual forces, so poetry which "is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth", (Shelley), can never divorce these elements.

In this very dissatisfaction with prevailing standards lies one of the fundamental characteristics, as well as causes, of the reaction. Impressionism, the one thing not tolerated by the adherents of Pope,

came to be a controlling factor in the reaction. The poet's own nature, his entire self, was aroused; the forces which he felt in Nature with out understanding them, appealed to his curiosity; he could not help seeing in them forces akin to those which were at work in his own being. As this relationship grew clearer to him, he came more and more to interpret Nature according to his own individuality. It is to the poet of this movement that we owe the recognition of the personality of Nature carried even into the so called "pathetic fallacy". Who is to say the last word on a subject of this kind? All through the ages the poet has been recognized as the great high priest of Nature. More gifted than other men, more keenly sensitive, more responsive to influences, less under the domination of the world which is too much with the rest of us, he not only can put into speech what other common men have only thought, but he, through his deeper sympathy, knows more of that unseen, intangible connection which binds man to the earth about him. To

paraphrase Browning a little;-

"God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear:
The rest may reason and welcome; it is we poets
who know".

So he sees the sympathetic response of Nature to his every mood. His aspiration, his longing, his stormy, rebellious reaching out for what is just beyond his grasp, are these not reflected in the world about him? In the obedience of all Nature to inexorable law, he learns to recognize and to bow to the same law in his three fold environment.

That right here is dangerous ground for the theorist cannot be denied. Carried beyond bounds, this interpretation of Nature must lead into mysticism, drawing the poet insensibly away from the love of truth, the corner stone of his mission, and into that intemperance toward which a romantic movement tends and in which it usually ends.

Closely akin to the subjective element in roman-

ticism is the recognition of mystery where ever we come into close contact with life. This too, is one of the most definite points of departure from the pseudo-classical. The Augustan poetry set forth only such abstract facts as were recognized as universal and permanent. They avoided the individual, the personal, as they would the plague. The romanticist boldly accepted the mysterious as an element in life; he finds it all about him, portrays it, but does not attempt to explain it away. He fairly revels in it. In the addition of strangeness, of unaccustomedness, to beauty, the birth right of the poet, he finds the most attractive material for his imagination to work on. He loves the picturesque, the ruined castle, ivy-mantled, from whose gloomy tower the "moping owl doth to the moon complain", the deep recesses of the primeval forest within whose shadows lurked the dryads of the romantic Greeks.

It is easy to see how, in the prose work of the day this love of the picturesque could be carried to the extreme of picturing that which is unnatural and

and horrible, running into the grotesque. As we turn from the extreme romanticism of the early years of the nineteenth century to the saner, and according to some critics, the more really artistic product of the last half, when we find the best elements of both tendencies uniting to form the great poetry of today, we are not shocked, nor even surprised, to find the most virile writer of the day, not opposing the romantic to the realistic, but by combining them, strengthening both.

By many critics, what I have discussed as but one phase of the romantic revival, has been made to stand for the movement entire. In fact the term Mediaeval Revival is used as synonymous with Romantic Revival. Naturally the poets who found the chief satisfaction of their desire for the picturesque, turned for background to the past. Mediaeval Europe, viewed from the vantage ground of the mid-eighteenth century, was rich in the material needed. Feudalism with its machinery of castles, knights, fair and good women, tournaments, troubadours, and whatever could be idealized, was

sufficiently distant for its stronger lines to seem to stand for its all. Each of these words calls up to the more imaginative mind, pictures not quite clear in detail, but infinitely rich in suggestion. But is it not true that in almost every instance a wholly modern ideal is presented through a mediaeval atmosphere? When this is true, is it not the ideal, after all, which is immortal? This is but an accidental phase of a movement which laid hold at first upon that which was most helpful to expression. Discontent with the present led the poet to seek a substitute in distant and vastly different life. To assume that this constitutes the movement, however, seems to me to ignore that which was strongest and sweetest in all its product.

The first stage of such a reaction is necessarily tentative: it means a getting away from the immediate present by experiment, by imitation of distant literature, literature that is as unlike as possible the product of the present. In the earlier literary history of England, Spenser was as certainly the poet of the Romanticists as

Pope was later of the pseudo-classicists. No poetry is richer in imagery, in pictures of wonderful tone and color. "His is a world of enchantment: we lose all sense of time, of space: we walk in an atmosphere of constant surprise and delight".

The re-awakening of the romantic impluse after a period characterized by artificiality and insincerity, is almost always first seen in a new appreciation of Nature, so the poet who would most surely invite study and imitative effort would be the one who most lovingly interpreted physical nature. While imitation and love of Spenser was farthest from the spirit of the century, yet for few choice spirits who read and loved him, no revolution of ideal was necessary. Second only to Spenser as a recognized master to those who represented the new tendency, Milton had a large and reverent following. Generally we think of Milton as England's great classic writer of all time, because we always associate his name in our first thought with his epic work, and with that alone. Nowhere, however, in all our litera-

ture, can there be found poems more truly romantic, poems that show more clearly the man's love for the world about him, its beauty, its sweetness, its strength, than the early poems of Milton. Does it matter that the imagery is classic? That the subject matter is only in part modern? Every influence of nature upon man comes to us, uplifting, inspiring.

Possibly no one element in literature itself did more at this time to aid in the renewal of its deeper life and spirit than did the revival of interest in the old ballad and folk song. True ballad poetry cannot exist without spontaneous, unaffected feeling, and throughout all England there is no question that there still existed, in spite of all the pedantry and conceit of the age, or, perhaps, because of it, who knows? a genuine love for this poetry of old England. One cannot measure the value and importance of such a work as Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry". Such a voice straight from the heart of sturdy, strong old England and Scotland, untouched by the restrictions of civilization

and artificial life, called forth a response not only from England, but from France and Germany as well, that proved that the heart of the world was not yet wholly dominated by her head.

We have seen how under French influence the whole intellectual force of the Augustans had been directed toward the development of perfection of form, which should lend itself to the expression of wit, satire, argument, or philosophic truth. The heroic couplet was the product of this effort. In the hands of a master, such as Dryden or Pope, it became a mighty weapon; but worse than doggerel when essayed by any weaker. And as the baser metal drives out pure gold, the couplet, good only as a medium of exchange, killed utterly those forms of true expression, the lyric, the sonnet, and blank verse. Milton's great blank verse had kept that form alive during a period devoted to rhyme and couplet and it was ready as inspiration and even a model for imitation, when the awakening called it forth. Only strong impassioned feeling can be the

inspiration of the lyric; through it the personal experience of the writer is given to the world. The sonnet, too, was wholly inadequate for the use of the Augustans; its limitation, yet perfection of form, precluded its use for wit or satire.

It is to be expected that as our poetry yielded more and more to the influence of beauty and truth, as more and more, feeling and sympathy permeated and deepened and enriched the inner life, expression would come in a flood of song that thrilled the whole world with its sweetness. It must have seemed as if the spring time of the world were come again and man were listening to the melody of Nature's songsters long silenced by the cold and snow of winter. Not only do the lyric, sonnet, and blank verse return in the work of the new writers, the very camp of the enemy is invaded and their own heroic couplet carried off. When after a time it reappeared, it was so deepened, so enriched, that its own manufacturers failed to recognize it.

One of the chief distinctions of the age is to

be found in the new vocabulary. Responding to the demand made upon it, the Augustan vocabulary became fixed, hard, and unyielding; poverty stricken in idiom. The new world called for a language, rich, flexible, expressive: a language with a suggestive power equal to the manifold suggestion of nature. So once again our literature is glowing with warmth and color. Image after image rises before us until our senses are tingling and the whole world is alive with the joy that floods our own souls.

III.

THE GREAT LEADERS.

While throughout the seventeenth century the reactionary tendency was developing power and influence, its action was for the most part unconcious and uncertain. As early as 1726 James Thomson in his "Seasons", and a little later in the "Castle of Indolence" showed clearly the trend of creative power. Out-of-door nature in varying moods, described by one who loved it, heralded the revolution. Growing in power because in concious courage, it can be followed through the "Night Thoughts" of Young, the "Odes" of Collins, strongly lyrical, subdued and soft in coloring; through that "Il Penseroso Masterpiece"of any age, Gray's"Elegy"; we reckon with the influence of Chatterton and McPherson; count it an honor to have met with Cowper, with Blake, most wonderful of all, with Robert Burns; and hear its music burst in fullness of power and genius at the opening of the nineteenth century. Romanticism reached out into every phase of the world's literature, affecting "equally and similarly, though not identically " both prose and poetry.

Science, history, theology, criticism, essays, all showed the change which had taken place in English thought. The novel, that pure product of democracy, reached in the work of Jane Austin on the one hand, and of Sir Walter Scott on the other, a perfection of expression unsurpassed. "But", as Professor C. H. Herford in his "Age of Wordsworth", says, "by nothing is England so great as by her poetry". So by the works of ~~three~~ two of the greatest, if not the ~~three~~ two greatest poets of the movement, would we show England's share in the great work.

Considering the limitations of this paper and writer, it is impossible that the study of Wordsworth, and Shelley, ~~and Keats~~ should be other than superficial. To know a poet requires years of intimate companionship; to judge him, requires, in addition, the trained critical mind which is developed by those years of study. It is not sufficient that one should love the poet: that in itself may prove a hinderance. Though the impressionistic type of criticism will probably predominate in this dis-

cussion, I shall endeavor to show these impressions as the outcome of the principles laid down in the early part of the paper. Freedom, both in form and in subject matter is essential: the use of imagination as a tool: the recognition of wonder and mystery in nature; the recognition of the physical world as the expression of God, and as the link between God and Man; insistence upon the value of the individual man or nation; play upon all the emotions that well up in the man who looks out upon life and finds the "mere living" good. Many or all of these qualities appear in the Romantic poet, and he is king of them all, who best interprets for man the life that all may live.

In the same work quoted above (The Age of Wordsworth), Mr. Herford finds that the poetry of the age had three locales, each represented by a distinctive leader, each possessing marked characteristics and culminating in years a little separated from the others. The earliest of the three divisions centered in the north of England, in the mountain glens and forests

and among the lakes.. This was the poetry of nature and of man, when and where he was found in most complete harmony with nature. Into this poetry the mystical or meta physical element enters strongly; locality, as such, does not appeal; history is without attraction. Contemplation, lofty and profound reflection, result in quietness of tone and soberness of color. Wordsworth stands as the acknowledged leader of this group; close to him, Coleridge.

The second division, represented by Scott, while grouped near are Southey, Campbell, and Moore, ~~are~~ is associated with the old historical borderland of England, both Saxon and Celtic. This was the birthplace and home of a poetry without speculation, steeped in the atmosphere of tradition, careless of man and of nature in the abstract, but reflecting with extraordinary vivacity the rich diversity of individual men and places; abounding in a certain lyrical quality and incomparable in narrative..

With the third group, Shelley, Keats, Byron and

Landor, we first enter the Revolutionary atmosphere. The true Classic was their deepest inspiration, and the lyric, often of piercing sweetness and power, sometimes of unquestioned wildness and intemperance, their supreme faculty.

These, then are the divisions, one might call them schools, into which the writers of the first half of the century naturally fall. Between the leader of the first division and the two greatest writers of the last there is a far greater difference than the lapse of ten or twelve years which occurs between their periods of greatest achievement, would account for. Wordsworth lived and wrote until 1850, but his most fruitful years, the years that best represented the ideal that his name suggests today, were those between 1789 and 1806. Shelley's work culminated during the years from 1818 to 1822 (Herford).

While it is true that much literary work has deep significance apart from the life of the author, yet, to understand an author's message, we must know him. Often

and often a man's life is far greater than his work: not always is the poetic faculty given to a man. Sometimes a man's work is even greater, nobler, higher than his life. What does this suggest more than the limitations of the flesh? Once in a great while, a man is found whose life and work move in such perfect accord, that one rests in the feeling that here the true relation is expressed at last. Such an one was Wordsworth. In a strong sense there were no periods in his life, no times when individual influences controlled and when particular characteristics were most evident. His long life was one of steady, quiet contemplation. To be sure, the early years were somewhat stormy: his changing view of the political and social conditions of the time carried him through a season of storm and uncertainty;early enthusiasm had to be cooled by hard facts. Not all at once could his faith in the people be adjusted to the disappointments; but by degrees he reached that secure height where, during the years that followed, he was able to stand and endure, until a tardy people brought to him the recognition that

Can you divorce the two?

was his due.

Almost I wish that I had spent my time in a careful analysis of the evolution of the poet in Wordsworth, given us so wonderfully in "The Prelude". In such study one must certainly come to know him, both man and poet. In this autobiographical study he has given us "the greatest poem of its kind in any language, free from every taint of vanity, a biography minute and authentic, which can be read with implicit confidence". (A. J. George). Clearly in the early life of Wordsworth there were two different attitudes toward nature: such views as would be expected at the times when they were most evident. Wordsworth was never an inactive dreamer. To him, even as to Browning, life "meant intensely and meant good". His boyhood was the active healthy life of any average boy. He delighted in out of door sports, had all of youth's love of activity, rapid motion, and noise. Nature was then the mere background for his joy, yet it was insensibly molding his ideals.

"Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!

Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood dids't thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul:
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things-
With life and nature-purifying thus
The element of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart".

"The Prelude". Bk.I; 401-414.

With all the "wild joy of living", one hears, like a deep minor undertone, suggestions that awe and fear were strangely intermingled with joy; that solitude and shadow called insistently, even when he was surrounded by life and sunshine.

"In November days,

While vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon, and mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude".

Prelude Bk. I: 416-422.

Genuine fear of sentient nature, perhaps not recognized as such, permeated his joy in life. After a boyish trick, he tells us:-

"I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of indistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod".

Bk. I: 322-325

Again, in the same connection, we learn that in the midst of the shrieks and yells of delight incident to competitive games on the ice.

"the far distant hills

Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy," (442-444)

and while the poet mentions "the orange sky of evening", one is certain that the "shadowy banks on either side" mean far more, for they suggest so much that lies partly concealed, not alone by the thick growth, but by the shadows themselves. Then he "hastens on to tell

How Nature, intervenient till this time
And secondary, now at length was sought
For her own sake", (Bk.II: 200-203)

and then "'Twere long to tell

What spring and autumn, what the Winter snows,
And what the summer shade, what day and night,
Evening and morning, sleep and waking, thought
From sources inexhaustible poured forth
To feed the spirit of religious love
In which I walked with Nature". (352-358)

What pleasure it would be to trace through the lines of this frank self-study, the development of the

poet whom we love. But, as there are times when one moves forward by bounds, not by steps, so we must move to the point where (Bk.XIII: 221-278) we find the full-grown man giving utterance to his mature creed, and all his attitude toward life. Wonderful, indeed, is the calmness of purpose and high courage that can hold a man to his work, that can lead him to assert his theme, "the very heart of man", in the face of the scorn of the literary world.

From this on we learn to know what Wordsworth knew through what he tells us, in his attitude toward Nature and the things of Nature. In my study of the poetry, I have not kept to the chronological order, for that ill-suited my purpose and seemed to me a strangely illogical method. So far as subject matter goes, every phase of Romantic thought, save only the Mediaeval, has found its place in Wordsworth's poetry. In form, he has given generously both lyric and sonnet, those two distinctive marks of the new life in literature: a drama of unquestioned power, "The Borderers", is sufficient to give him a

place: among his long poems is that one-"The Prelude", introspectively psychological: he has given us poems of quiet meditation, and poems of passion: poems descriptive and poems narrative. What more is needed to give this man a place among the Romantic poets of the first rank? Nay, what can be said if I assert that he out ranks them all, and in his glorious freedom stands alone? To the detraction so often urged, that so much of what Wordsworth wrote is worthless, may it not be urged that men are not required to stand or fall by the measure of all their words. Statesmen are talking all the time, but are great only by that speech which turned the tide of a great disaster. Certainly, if a winnowed edition of Wordsworth's poetry will bring to more people the grand sweet music of his singing, let us have it by all means, only let no one lay profane hands on the other poems. Wordsworth thought in poetry: it came from his inmost being so naturally that those things which appeal to his critics as "puerile" or "infantile" and unworthy of any consideration, show the poet in the quiet enjoyment of trivial incidents of his

daily walks. But to what heights of passionate understanding can he not rise, carrying with him his powers of expression. As we read and re-read, how he impresses upon us the dignity of manhood regardless of station.

Walter Pater, in his essay on Wordsworth says of poets like him:- "Their work is not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends: but to withdraw the thoughts for a little while from the mere machinery of life, to fix them with appropriate emotions, on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects: on the great and universal passions of men; the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature; on the operations of the elements, and appearances of the visible universe, on storm and sunshine, on the revolution of the seasons, on cold and heat, on the loss of friends and kindred, on injuries and resentments, on gratitude and hope, on fear and sorrow". Had Wordsworth had all this consciously in mind, and written to fulfill it, he could not have accomplished more.

Wordsworth means to us three things, Man, Nature, God. Man and Nature are the word of God, or, possibly, Nature is the connecting link between Man and God. In the lines on "Tintern Abbey", the poet rises to a height both in thought and form, that places him with England's greatest. Here, in a few lines he has packed thoughts that furnish food for a life time, as they were the fruit of his years of study and receptivity. How beautifully he tells us that our vision "into the life of things" is conditioned by the body: that complete insight is possible only when the life of sense has been laid asleep, even breathing and the "motion of the human blood almost suspended"; that then we "became a living soul":

"While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things".

His early feeling for Nature he describes as an "appetite":

"a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye".

It was an "ecstasy", and "aching joy", A "dizzy rapture". Yet, for its loss, "abundant recompense" is found in the growth of a new understanding, of a broader, more inclusive nature,

"Hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue".

How many of our poets have heard and been profoundly moved by that "still, sad music of humanity"! None more than Wordsworth. "Quiet contemplation" does not mean shutting one'sself away from all outside one's self. Many times it but intensifies one's sensitiveness to the cry of the world.

As the poem continues, we reach the core of Wordsworth's belief:-

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things".

It seems an insult to analyze such lines as these, full of a noble mysticism, suggestive, yet perfectly simple in expression. What wonder that his love grew and deepened with the development of his character until he could say that he recognized

"In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul,
Of all my moral being".

Having gone with him thus far, we should be disappointed were the effect of this close companionship less in the least degree than he portrays it. We trust him when he

tells us that it can "so inform the mind", so "impress with quietness and beauty", "so feed with lofty thoughts", that all "the dreary intercourse of daily life shall not prevail against the "cheerful faith that all which we behold is full of blessing".

Scarcely second in power and beauty of expression as well as in its grasp of the eternal verities is the wonderful "Ode on Intimations of Immortality". Discussion of the philosophic theory presented here would lead to nothing that has not been said by many wise and accredited thinkers. The central thought of "Tintern Abbey" is continued in a slightly changed form in the "Ode". There are again the two periods reflecting the influence of Nature; but here the first comes to us as a revelation of peculiar sweetness and meaning. Who that has read it, ever forgets the suggestion that comes with the "trailing clouds of glory"! While we realize that nothing can bring back that hour so radiant, yet

"We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind:

In the primal sympathy

Which having been, must ever be:

In the soothing thoughts that spring

Out of human suffering:

In the faith that looks through death,

In years that bring the philosophic mind".

So the interpretation of the revelation is made by the mature mind.

A complete treatment of this phase of Wordsworth's work must include the analysis of the "Ode to Duty", considered by many the most perfect and complete expression of his power, having a "sustained dignity and grandeur that remind one of Milton", and his "Thanksgiving Odes" which have stood with Tennyson's great Ode. Certainly, if fundamental thought coupled with perfection of form suffice to give a poet place, Wordsworth's fame, resting upon this group of poems alone, would be secure.

But there is a broad field yet untouched in this discussion, a field of common things which Wordsworth loved because they were common. Prominent among the

poems of this class, are those that, without any attempt at accuracy of classifications, may be called the Nature poems, the bird, flower, and tree poetry that show the writer at his best in the treatment of these simple subjects. One may read the poetry of Wordsworth for hours at a time, interest keen, mind wide awake, and imagination stimulated, and not realize, until suddenly aroused, that these effects have been produced by no tricks of language or schemes of rhetoric. The three poems which form the daisy-chain carry one inevitably to country fields, wet with morning dew, and starred with this "unassuming commonplace of Nature". Not once does the wording of these poems attract attention from the picture: in every line and stanza it is perfectly adequate.

Closely related to the daisy chain is that inimitable little lyric" I wandered lonely as a cloud". Here there is more life, more movement, than in the others, yet always the contemplative mood, the receptive mind. The three poems on the celandine and the one on the "Primrose of the Rock" show, step by step, the deep sensitiveness

of this man to the beauty and sweetness of nature, finding every where and in everything a linking of the human soul to the works of nature.

"And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes".

In the "Yew-Trees" there is a bit of description that challenges criticism. How often one sees a magnificent tree, and feels the utter futility of all words at command. Here we have a poem based upon an understanding of the possibilities of Nature, written by one whose imagination enables him to see the changes wrought by all the cycles of ages. The poem is full of pictures suggested sometimes in a few words-the tree stands "single, in the midst of its own darkness:" or

"a pillard shade
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged perinnially.".

Then those suggestive last lines continuing the above for complete thought:-

"beneath whose sable roof

Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked

With unrejoicing berries-ghostly Shapes

May meet at noon tide: Fear and trembling Hope,

Silence and Foresight: Death the Skeleton

And Time the Shadow: there to celebrate,

As in a natural temple scattered o'er

With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,

United worship: or in mute repose

To lie, and listen to the mountain flood

Murmuring from Glenamara's inmost caves".

Although Wordsworth believed in the use of common-place, everyday English, yet, he appreciated the effect of geographical names, their "full-mouthed sound."

We have showed that one of the strongest features of the Romantic movement is its democracy. Man as man, not as King or Knight, must show himself worthy of a place in the consideration of the world. Wordsworth finds a place in the divine plan for all who meet the possibilities of their best selves. The "Leech-Gatherer", humble, not

mean, stands as a type of majestic, indomitable spirit, a man who could not be cowed by insistent misfortune. Wordsworth find in him a divinely sent minister of strength and encouragement.

Closely allied in subject and purpose to the "Leech-Gatherer"is the poem "The Old Cumberland Beggar". Strongly does Wordsworth bring out here the fundamental thought that nothing in nature can exist divorced from good:-

> 'Tis Nature's law
>
> That none, the meanest of created things,
> Or forms created the most vile and brute,
> The dullest or most noxious, should exist
> Divorced from good, a spirit and pulse of good,
> A life and soul, to every mode of being
> Inseparably linked".

The old beggar, creeping feebly from door to door, keeps alive in those grown selfish by years of prosperity "the kindly mood". He, and such as he, prove beyond question the inherent good in human nature, that "man is dear to man", and that even "the poorest poor" long to share their

little with those who have less. And so this "Poor Traveller", as he passes on toward death, is looked upon, not with distaste and withdrawal, but as if in himself he showed the inevitable process of decay.

Not always is the poem of human interest one descriptive or mainly expository. Some have definite story value. So close was Wordsworth's sympathy with the sorrow and disappointments of all with whom he came in contact, that all of this poetry is crowded full of suppressed but passionate feeling. It is not the detail and accuracy of facts that make the "Matthew" cycle of value. The character study, the picture of the sturdy yet lonely old age, of that "wiser mind" that

"Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind,"
and yet can "wear a face of joy, because
He has been glad of yore."

This it is that stirs the heart and brings the tear of sympathy to the eye.

Genuine story interest attaches to the pastoral

poem "Michael", written in simple, unaffected style. Plainly, here Wordsworth was attracted by the life relations of the man and their influence upon him. The motive power of the story is deep, passionate father-love. Life was monotonous, dun-colored:
Michael and his wife were

> "neither gay, perhaps,
> Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
> Living a life of eager industry".

All through the story there are hints, and often words that suggest the life of struggle and privation that the old man and his wife had lived; all their work directed toward a single definite end; the irony of fate breaking down the results of all their work; the old people in their best wisdom sending out their boy into the world that he was so ignorant of and so ill fitted to face; then the inevitable end. Then the unfinished Sheep fold standing as the symbol of broken hopes. What more is needed to complete this tragedy of the common people?

By no means is this treatment of Wordsworth's

poetry more than suggestive, but enough has been given to make good the assertion that Wordsworth holds easily his place at the head of Romanticists. In conclusion, I quote again from Mr. Pater's Essay:- "The office of the poet is not that of the moralist, and the first aim of Wordsworth's poetry is to give the reader a peculiar kind of pleasure. But through his poetry and through this pleasure in it, he does actually convey to the reader an extraordinary wisdom in the things of practice. One lesson, if men must have lessons, he conveys more clearly than all, the supreme importance of contemplation in the conduct of life."

SHELLEY.

To move suddenly and without interlude from the poetry of Wordsworth with its atmosphere of quiet contemplation, to that of Shelley, is like passing from the perfect, quiet, drowsy noon-tide of a summer day into the sudden tempestuous stir and confusion of the mid-summer storm. While Wordsworth is not without emotion, even, at

times, passion, it is introspective emotion; always the position of man in the universe, the relation between outer, physical nature and man, is emphasized. Wordsworth is full of suggestion: he cannot be read without thought and sympathy. There is nothing negative about Shelley,-the reader must go with him, feel with him, not for him, or his poetry must be laid aside.

One aspect only of Shelley's work will be considered here,-one might almost say that there is but one side, the lyrical, but that would not be strictly true. There is, of course, the deeply philosophical side, the humanitarian, the personal, etc.; but, after all, the expression is almost wholly lyrical, so we must come back to first principles again.

Shelley is truly the poet of the Revolution. Generally speaking, that place is given without question to Byron, who does, truly, impersonate the rebellious, intolerant phase of that period; he was among the destructive writers. Shelley on the other hand, sees through all the turmoil and failure of that time of confusion, a time when

right must triumph, since right is right. "The Prometheus Unbound" is one of the strongest, most intense expressions of this ideal that any poet could possibly give. As a drama, it is not easy to read: it demands on the part of the reader not only the "subtle and penetrating mind" of Shelley, a mind capable of grasping his idealism even in faintest suggestions of thought; he must have, too, quickness and lightness of thought, must be capable of rising with Shelley in those "flights of fire" from which even he descended with the cry,

"I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire"!

Looking at the "Prometheus" from the point of view of poetical machinery, whole volumes might be written. Never was the elastic, suggestive vocabulary, and the rich imagery of the Romantic movement better displayed. In scene three of Act two,- the first long speech of Asia is fairly illuminated by single expressions that carry the thought of whole sentences; many are in the form of compounds,- "twilight-lawns", "stream-illumined caves": "wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist"; "sky-cleaving mountains";

"lamp-like dew-drops"; "thaw-cloven ravines": "heaven-defying minds". At the end of the speech comes that figure that Prof. Woodbury calls, "one of the few sublime images in English poetry":-

"Hark! the rushing snow!
The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now".

Shelley shows great fondness for the clouds as a basis of imagery. Some of his most suggestive figures are based upon them.

" a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air".

"As the bare green hill,
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water

To the unpavillioned sky!"

Probably the best of the cloud figures is one which Mr. Brooke speaks of as a genuine myth of the new world:-

"And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind":

From "Adonais" is the following:-

"She faded, like a cloud that had out wept its rain".

From "Hellas";-

"When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah,
Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind,
Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock
Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm".

"emblazoned
Upon that shattered rag of fiery cloud
Which leads the rear of the departing day".

One central idea of the "Prometheus", in fact, of nearly all of Shelley's poetry, is the power of thought in the scheme of the universe: this is instanced once in

that sublime figure quoted above; thought piled on thought loosens some great truth which shakes the world: again Shelley speaks of "thought which pierces this dim universe like light", and, "thought which is the measure of the universe". From the "Hellas" the same idea comes;-

"But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity."

Ahasuerus says that the universe is a vision and

"Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
The future and the past are idle shadows
Of thought's eternal flight".

"Thought alone, and its quick elements ***cannot die".

Sound appeals to Shelley equally with color; odours, too, are often suggested:-"thunder mingled with clear echoes",

"Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?"

"Crimson air, intense, yet soft".

"Blue meteors cleansing the dull night,"

"Like lutes, touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,"

"Rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,"
"Every pause is filled with under notes,
"Clear, silvery, icy, keen awakening tones,"
"Sweet as the singing rain of silver dew".

These illustrations taken at random from three or four pages of Shelley's poetry, show how crowded full it is of sense appeals.

With all this beauty of language and form, once in a great while Shelley moves in the direction of intense realism, approaching, even as does a later poet, the borders of the grotesque or repulsive,

"and on the slimy shores
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapped deluge round it like a cloke, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished".

Here and there through the drama are evidences

of the influence of both Shakespeare and Milton. The songs of the Echoes and of the Spirits suggest the lyrics of the "Tempest". Milton is heard more in phrase and thought,-

> "Even now thy Torturer arms
> With the strange might of unimagined pains
> The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
> And my commission is to lead them here,
> Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
> People the abyss, and leave them to their task".

> "But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
> Against the Omnipotent."

In various places there are found such expressions as "impalpable thin air", "frore vapors", "its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire".

The passage in "Hellas" beginning "Ominous signs are blazoned broadly on the noon-day sky", shows a likeness to Shakespeare's "Caesar". In the "~~Cerice~~ Cenci", Beatrice shows the same attitude, and uses methods and words much

like Lady Macbeth's:-

"Ye conscience stricken cravens, rock to rest
Your baby hearts,"

and later,

"Oh, fear not
What may be done, but what is left undone:
The act seals all."

Later in the play, in the words of Beatrice:-

"Plead with the swift frost
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:
Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch
Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free:"

there is strong suggestion of the "Merchant of Venice".

Yet, in spite of all these evidences of influence, it is Shelley whom we find in every word and line, Shelley speaking his own message to the world. The conclusion of the third act of "Prometheus, gives through the "Spirit of the Hour" the prophecy of Shelley---stated completely again near the close of Act IV.

"Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,

Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea:
Familiar acts are beautiful through love:
Labor, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts: none knew how gentle they
could be!"

Three things are especially to be noted in this message:- The perfect harmony of life, growing out of self control, love the controlling force, and labor present even in this millenial existence.

The Prometheus is really a drama of three acts, for the climax comes in the third, in the liberating of Prometheus after the over-throw of tyranny in the person of Jupiter. Whatever may be the criticism of the poem from the dramatic standpoint, there remains nothing to be said when it is looked at from the lyrical. Even the blank verse of the drama is so perfect, so instinct with beauty and passionate feeling, that it often rises to lyric sweetness. The climax of the lyric, both in

music and power, is easily found in the song sung in adoration of Asia,

"Life of Life, thy lips enkindle",

and in Asia's response,

"My soul is an enchanted boat".

The fourth act, however is a perfect revel in lyrics and lyrical blank verse. It shows Shelley as complete master of his art: metre, language, thought, imagery, every point perfect and fitted into one unified whole. To use the poet's words:-

"Language is a perpetual Orphic song;
Which rules with daedal harmony a throng
Of thought and forms, which else senseless and
shapeless were".

Classical in suggestion as the "Prometheus" is, it is so passionately modern in thought and sympathy, that the superstructure, not the frame work stands out. Similar in this respect is the " Adonais". The first few stanzas have the classical appeal of Milton's "Lycidas". As the lament progresses, it passes from

the classical aloofness, through the grief of Nature, to the personal loss and that of friends. In stanzas thirty six and thirty seven, the poet calls dawn a curse, lasting and bitter, upon those whose narrowness of vision and cruelty of criticism had caused Keat's death. Then he enters the more general, philosophical mood. Here we gain a clear insight into Shelley's ideas of God, immortality, and Nature. These three are intermingled, even as in the thought of Wordsworth. In stanza thirty eight, he cries,-

"Dust to the dust! the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same".

In the forty second stanza,-

"He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird:
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,

Spreading itself where'ere that Power may more
Which has with drawn his being to its own:
Which wields the world with never wearied love."

Here we have as strongly as any where in English poetry the teaching of the immanence of God, of his presence in in every phase of Nature. Present day philosophy accepts the theory that God speaks thru Nature; Shelley says, "in all her music": he suggests that God's sweetest singers may still be so heard. This does not preclude the possibility of individual immortality,- nor need we see in his expression any thing at all un-Christian.

As a drama the "Hellas" is ranked distinctly lower than the "Prometheus". In the latter, while one realizes that the characters are superhuman and that he is dealing with allegory, yet in the rapid movement and passion of the work, that is forgotten and the onward sweep is irresistable. The characters of the "Hellas", however, are human, but they are far from convincing. Hassan, for instance, has been set up to give utterance to beautiful pictures and narratives. Mahumd is present to bring others

into action. Political theory and lyrical expression constitute the valuable part of this work: the conflict of nations, the power of the past to control the present and make future; America, "the Evening land," the hope of freedom and peace; these, and the power of thought over the destiny of the world, show the trend of Shelley's thought.

In his short lyrics, Shelley spends himself in pure music. Not that thought is ever lacking, Shelley was too serious for that; but so intensely, so passionately are we carried forward by sound and sense, that the music seems its own excuse for being; not that it is needed to express the thought. Through out all of this work, Shelley has showed himself master of every point of technique. "The Cloud"," To a Skylark" , and the"Ode to the West Wind" are all perfect examples of this power of his. In general, the metre of "The Cloud" suggests lightness, the evanscence of the cloud; there is no possibility of any thing stationary about the cloud-every thing suggests movement; at first the cloud floats lightly in the

breeze, bringing "fresh showers", "light shade", and dew. The movement changes suddenly with the "flail of the lashing hail", and again in the "laugh passing in thunder". And so, throughout the poem, with every change in the theme there is a corresponding change in metre, subtle, it may be, but not to be lost for a second. For beauty of thought and imagery, it seems to me that the two stanzas picturing the earth under the light of moon and sun could not be surpassed.

This same command of metre is a characteristic of the poem "To a Skylark". Here in general the metre suggests the light poising of the bird above the earth, its darting to and fro; the last line of each stanza seems almost as the connecting link between the bird and the earth. Every suggestion of the poem is of intense life, individual, conscious life, of the lark. One could not write as Shelley does, of a being which he believed had no conscious existence.

In the "Ode to the West Wind" there is recognition of a force, at first physical, which grows as the thought

develops, into purely spiritual force. The five divisions of the poem are natural and mark the growth of the thought. In the first division the "Wild Spirit" is seen in its double mission of "Destroyer and Preserver". The dead leaves, "pestilence-stricken multitude", are driven "like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing", from its unseen presence. At the same time, the "winged seeds", symbols of life, are carried to "their dark wintry bed", there to lie until spring winds shall come with life-giving warmth. The 2d section takes up the figure of the Destroyer, and we see the "loose clouds", "shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean", driven like "earth's decaying leaves". Here the wind becomes the "dirge of the decaying year", and the poem ends with the shriek of the wind. The third section takes up first the more hopeful note in the description of the wind arousing the Mediterranean "from his summer dreams". As the picture becomes more and more sweet and langourous; the sinister note creeps in, suddenly the peace is destroyed, and fear and trembling prevail. The fourth and fifth divisions are intensely personal and

show why the image and symbolism of the power has appealed to Shelley. He finds in the wind, "tameless, swift and proud " the image of his own spirit, chained and bowed by the heavy weight of hours". Here the transition is made to the idea of the wind as a spiritual force with a mission to mankind, and the lyric ends with the cry of hope, almost of triumph -

"O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

Strong throughout this poem is that noble discontent with present conditions so characteristic of Shelley and his intense desire to "quicken to a new birth" mankind wherever found.

The metre here is again the servant. The prevailing foot seems to be the iambus, but so various is the movement, the subtle change of thought and emotion, that scarcely any two consecutive lines convey the same rhythmical effect. Most wonderful of all is Shelley's handling of the pause. Strong, impetuous, passionate, the thought is carried from one line to another, from onestanza on

through another, often two, three, or four, as if on the very wings of the wind.

Shelley is pre-eminently the poet of the reformer and the idealist, of the men who have faith and at the same time courage to work and wait. Shelley was always hopeful. He was a man of intense personality which can be felt in almost every line he wrote. To know him a little is to crave to know him better.

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