

IX

Conclusion

During the period of ten years, Wordsworth wrote poetry, expressing all the ideas that he had to express, and about all things that he was interested in. The power with which he expressed his thoughts was at its height. All that he wrote after 1808 is the repetition of what he wrote during this decade, except that it was not so well done. The work of that short period, as compared to his long life of eighty, enables us to know the real poet that he was. It is said that if he had stopped writing poetry in 1808, he would not deserve less honour. Some go so far even as to say that it would be better if he had not written at all after 1808 because his power during this decade makes the inferiority of the later work too obvious.

Wordsworth said in his "Preface" that a poet is one who has stronger sensibility than ordinary men. If poetry needs only sensibility, no one would be a truer poet than he is. All his poems are the result of his intense feeling. His eyes watched an object, all his feelings centered on it. He described these feelings and, as a result, a poem was composed. Everything appealed to him and he was able to write about all subjects, from man's immortality to a spade of a friend, with a feeling of reverence for his subject. We cannot say that he exaggerated the importance of the subjects because his sincerity is evident in every poem. He simply could not help expressing what he really felt. Some readers may feel that it is ridiculous to read a story about a mad woman or an old beggar. But we must remember that we are able to enjoy poems only when we read them in the spirit in which the poet wrote them. Readers try to point out that certain poems of his are better than other poems but their opinions are never the same. For example, of the two ballads, "Lucy Gray" and "Alice Fell", the first appeals to some people and the second to others. But Wordsworth treated the two subjects with equal interest. The girl

in the first poem and her solitude and the other girl and her poverty cannot be more or less important than each other. He believed equally in both "Alice Fell" and "Lucy Gray". One poem wins more admiration than another because of the way in which it is related.

However, we cannot deny that sometimes he wasted his sensibility on some very unpoetic things.

His strong sensibility brings about another virtue of his poetry, the realistic and minute observation of all that he sees. Wordsworth observed minutely what he was interested in. His eyes were very keen and penetrating and this results in his effective imagery which wins the reader's admiration. He was able to see the wreaths of smoke rising above the green trees and the water splashing away from the hare's feet when it ran. He saw even the swollen ankles of an old man. Such extremely minute observation sometimes made him appear to be prolix. We can notice this in some passages in The Prelude.

Another virtue of Wordsworth is his simplicity. He described his thought and feeling in the most simple way, using common words we use in conversation. He removed dead things such as imitated expressions and fixed comparisons from his poetry. Therefore his poetry is full of vividness, freshness and originality. His simplicity makes his subjects interesting and realistic. We can see this from his poems about common people. If in these poems, he had used the worn-out expressions of the eighteenth century, the subjects might have seemed ridiculous. But Wordsworth used the language which was as simple as human his subjects, and by doing so he was able to reveal true/feeling and character very successfully. While studying his life, we can see that he did not pay much attention to books and was hardly influenced by them. This is good for his poetry because everything comes directly from him with strength.

All these characteristics enabled Wordsworth to produce such poetry as no poet before or after him could. This does not mean that his is the best, it only means that it is the most original.

After having considered how good he is as a poet, it is interesting to consider what kind of poet he is.

First of all, he is a poet of nature. He praises nature with all his heart. To him, nature is always good and beneficent. His optimistic belief in nature never changes. Nature never does any harm to men. It always gives strength, teaches moral lessons and restores. Nature in his poetry is always calm, beautiful and pleasant. He never deals with the harsh side of nature such as destructive flood or wrecking storm. His strong faith in nature brings about his excellent nature poems with which other poets' works cannot compare. Moreover, it makes his works lasting. "As long as there is nature, his poetry can be enjoyed. This is the reason why his work is timeless.

His poems about common people cannot be dated either. They concern the essential feelings of those who lead natural and simple lives. They express their feelings in a direct way and they react to all things in a human way. The human heart is as lasting as nature itself.

Wordsworth is a poet of recollection. He always tells us about what he recollects, not what he sees. Recollection of natural scenery has as much influence on him as the actual scenery. His recollections are vivid when he recollects in tranquillity. Wordsworth loved silence because it enabled him to see vividly what he had seen in the past. He did not only recollect the scenes but also the emotion he had when he saw them. Tranquillity added strength to the emotion recollected and he was inspired to write poetry. Wordsworth said himself that his poetry took its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity.

Though he cannot be called a love poet because he repressed love in his poetry, his sympathy with fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters and their love for each other contributes to another important part of his poetry.

Moreover, he is one of the most political poets. Only Milton's sonnets on politics can compare with his. During his youth, he was a strong supporter of the French Revolution. He was closely involved with the Girondists. When the Revolution for the people

changed into the means to power for certain individuals, he was deeply disillusioned and felt desperate for a while.

National independence is what he wrote much about in his later years. He criticized Napoleon's use of his power in a way that other poets never did.

Another remarkable characteristic of Wordsworth is his love for his country. His love of England is as pure and as strong as a lover's feeling. It is not patriotism but real and profound love. He wanted his country to be good always. He worried when she did wrong. He wanted his country to be virtuous, to improve and to prosper. He was critical of the bad people in England and he was proud of the great men that England had had.

Above all he is a poet who teaches his readers the way to live. He always stand for "plain living and high thinking" both in theory and in practice. He was bitter when he felt that English people gave themselves to wealth, fame and luxury. He wanted them to lead simpler but wiser lives. He said that we can learn from every humble object around us. We would have real peace of mind if we could follow his ideas. He teaches us to be passive and endure whatever may happen. He set an example of finding a comforting solution to life by finding strength to suffer from a poor old man.

After having studied his poetry, when we hear Wordsworth's name, we think of a man with intense feeling, leading a quiet, simple but intelligent life and writing excellent poetry in a way as simple as his way of living. We think of a poet who has strengthened and enriched our lives with thoughts and imagery:

"The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,"

"A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!"

"sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;"

"plain living and high thinking"

"From well to better, daily self-surpass:"

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

"the round ocean and the living air"

"the ever-living universe"

"Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

"The still sad music of humanity"

"the bliss of solitude"

"inward happiness"

"silent joy"

"A grandeur in the beatings of the heart"

"the sense
Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,"

"comfort in the strength of love"

"There is
One great society alone on earth:
The noble Living and the noble Dead."