A STUDY OF THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

IN

English Literature

BY

KETURAH E. SIM

THESIS

For the Degree of M. L.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1895
Contents

I. Introduction .......................... Page 1

II. The Pseudo-Classicists .......... 9

III. The Early Romanticists ........... 16

IV. The Post-Revolution Writers ...... 46

V. Wordsworth .......................... 58

VI. Bibliography .......................... 77
Introduction

In literature, as in any realm of life, satiety causes dissatisfaction, ennui. Even perfection is not satisfying. When perfection is attained, and there is nothing higher in this field to be striven for, a change must come and either a new, or a long neglected field of activity, opened up. Sometimes, the change assumes the form of a pronounced, predetermined revolt; sometimes it is simply an unconscious, imperceptible development or transition. The reaction from classicism to romanticism assumes the latter form. It was so gradual, so unconscious, so unlooked for, that what is now known as the Romantic Movement was not recognized as such, until it had culminated in the
passionate writings of the nineteenth century.
Now was it a reaction toward an entirely new growth, but rather toward that which had already existed in the literature of the past; for Romanticism had never become wholly extinct in English Literature, although it had lain in a dormant chrysalis state for many years.

Various attempts have been made to define Romanticism, but with little success. One cause for this failure lies, I think, in the fact that the definers attempt to fit their definition to one or more phases of Romanticism, as these appear in literature, instead of comprehending in it only the spirit of Romanticism, for, in its outward manifestations, Romanticism is as varied as thought, as many-sided as life and as complex as human character.

Scott was a romanticist, so was Byron, and yet how differently this principle works in each! Shelley and Wordsworth, each in his way, is a good representative of
Romanticism, but could greater differences exist in its workings than occur in the writings of these two men? Why this difference? Is it not due to the fact that Romanticism is an element, a principle, a force in man's nature, if you please, the resultant of which is dependent upon the medium through which it acts. As such, Romanticism must have ever existed in English Literature, be it in its most obscure form as in Pope, or in its bold, revolutionary form as in Byron, or in unconsciousness as in Gray.

Then Romanticism is not a thing of spontaneous growth, but a tendency, an element of man's nature, which is influenced by the physical, moral and mental make-up of the individual and by his outer surroundings. Place it in favorable conditions and the plant will spring up and bear blossom and fruit. But as the arts are only the mirror of life, so romanticism in literature is only the expression of...
the effect produced in the soul by this principle. The romantic tendency, with which man is endowed by nature, is a longing for the infinite, the limitless, a striving after the inexpressible and unattainable, a search for the satisfying. It is nourished by feeling, passion, love, imagination, nature and when deprived of these, ekes out a miserable existence or dies of inanition.

Romanticism in literature is always a relative term and is used in contradistinction to Classicism, whether it be the true classicism of the Greeks and Romans of which we speak, in distinction from the romanticism of the Middle Ages, or the pseudo-classicism of Pope and his followers as distinguished from the modern romanticism of Wordsworth, Byron, Scott, Shelley, Keats and others. He cannot comprehend the full meaning of the one term without an understanding of the other. While the very essence of romantic poetry is feeling, passion, love for
humanity, (irrespective of class or rank), imagination, emotion, fondness for animals, interest in the past, an ascribing to nature personal attributes, on the other hand we find in the poetry of the pseudo-classicists, form exalted over matter, reason over feeling, all classes, but the rich and learned, despised, external nature ignored, imagination and passion wanting and the intellect given full sway.

One seems the opposite, the entire contradiction of the other and yet we see the one continually overlapping the other for while, on the one hand, we may find in a writer one or two characteristics of his poetry, which show that the romantic tendency has been developed to a certain degree, on the other hand, we may find three or four traits which are purely classic in their tone and nature, or we may find that which is classic and that which is romantic excising side by side in the same poem.

Although all laws governing romanticism are arbitrary.
and the romantic tendency operates through each individual in an individual and characteristic way, nevertheless, we must admit that there are some effects produced by the operating of this force which are common to nearly all romanticists and their literary works. PHelps, in “The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement,” states that “romantic literature will generally be found to show three qualities: I Subjectivity, II Love Of the Picturesque and III a Reactionary Spirit.” He goes on to say that by the first he means that the aspiration and vague longings of the writer will be manifest in his literary production, by the second, that element of strangeness added to beauty, which may appear mildly, as where the writer is fond of ivy-mastled towers and moonlit water, or may turn into a passion for the unnatural and the horrid, as in tales of ghosts and deeds of blood. By the third, it is meant that the Romantic Movement, in any country, will
always be reactionary from what has immediately preceded; it may be gently and unconsciously reactionary as in England, or proudly and fiercely rebellious, as in France.

In studying the forces that have been operative in a literary production, somewhat the same method of analysis can be applied as to a substance, of which we desire to obtain its chemical constituents. Certain results obtained prove the existence of certain elements. For instance, if in studying Scott we find that one of his strongest tendencies is to turn to the picturesque:ness of the past for inspiration and life, we say he is a romanticist; or if in turning to Wordsworth we find that he ascribes to Nature human attributes and endows her with a soul, we say he is romantic, and when we find in Byron that subjectivity, which constantly breathes into his writings his vague aspirations and longings, him too we must call romantic. Heine in "Die Romantische Schule" sums up the
difference between the mission of classic and romantic art in the following: Classic art had only the finite, the limited to represent, and its form could be identical with the idea of the artist. Romantic art had the infinite, the unlimited, and altogether spiritualistic relations to represent, or rather, to signify and it took refuge in a system of traditional symbols or rather in the parable. As Christ himself sought to make plain his spiritual ideas by means of all kinds of beautiful parables. Therefore, the mysterious, enigmatic, the wonderful and transcendental in the works of art of the Middle Ages. Phantasy makes fearful exertions to represent the purely spiritual by sensuous images and it invents colossal foolishness, it places the Pelion on the Ossa, the Parcival upon the Tutirel in order to attain heaven. We shall see later, how this is repeated in the writings of the modern romanticists.

1. Translated from the German.
The Pseudo-Classiciists.

To all outward appearances, Alexander Pope, poet and essayist, who lived from 1688 to 1744, reigned supreme in the realm of literature during the first third of the 18th century. He was a rhetorician of the first rank and polished and refined his metaphors and similes to a height of perfection. Cleanness of thought and correctness of expression were of the greatest importance to him. There were certain rules, which must be observed, even at the expense of imagination and passion. A high degree of intelligence was his birthright, a large fund of knowledge his acquisition. "He has no romance, no spirituality, no mystery and the highest regions of poetry he never so much as dreams of; but in the lower provinces there is perhaps no single writer, who showers fine things about him with such a prodigality of wit.
or dangle we so much with the mere exercise of his intelligence.

Pope was a product of the time in which he lived. His age was an age of controversy and criticism. In England the Thugs and Tories were in constant conflict and literature became their tool. Criticism and satire were frequent and severe. Society and city-life were so carefully scanned and portrayed, that country life and scenes received no notice, whatever in literature.

Intellectual and scientific problems were studied eagerly and enthusiasm for reason and intellect made itself felt in the literary writings of the day. Criticism, which was prevalent in other realms, extended to the form of writing, making it superbly exquisite, but often at the expense of the real essence of poetry—imagination, feeling, passion.

"Respectability, decent Conformity were the watchwords of the Augustans. 2. Fashion made rules and laws to which all conformed. Respectability was cultivated and fostered, because..."

1. Ussher's "Eighteenth Century Literature" Page 133.
it was thought manly; enthusiasm was controlled and subdued, because it was thought childish. Mystery was ridiculed and hated. Pope went with the tide and because of superior intelligence, soon lead the throng.

Another force at work, which helped to effect the exaltation of form over matter, clearness above force, raiment above body and brilliancy above depth, was the French influence upon English Literature. In France, two elements entered into the life and literature of this century, deciding its character and trend. The first was Scientific Acquisition and research and the second was the Classic Spirit.

Science, by the practice of the analytical method, made rapid strides in this century. In the realm of the natural sciences, in mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, mineralogy and geology vast discoveries were made. Even in the field of organic matter, the most untiring research was carried on and many demonstrations and inventions
were worked out. Twenty years were devoted by one man to the study of the willow-caterpillar, and the cellular theory was approximately solved.

This method of analysis was carried, likewise, into the moral and political sciences and the natural history of the soul was evolved in like manner. To do away with vague notions and theories and to substitute in their place, by a process of analytical reasoning, the definite, the precise was the attempt of the philosophers and scientists of France at that day. There was there room for vague imagination, for shadowy mystery, for passionate strivings toward the unknown, when cold analytical reasoning was applied to the most minute as well as the greatest object, to the most concrete as well as the most abstract subject, when the depths of matter and mind, the understanding, even the soul were probed for with microscope and dissecting tools?

As to the second element, the classic spirit, we may say
that it originated with the monarchy and polished discourse. The aristocracy of France, composed of a large class, who had leisure hanging heavy on their hands, devoted their time to cultivating refined and polished intercourse. It was this class, those who were educated, well brought up, but above all elegant, refined, polished conversationalists, which formed the flower of society and for entrance into which men put forth every effort. Hence the classic mould, formed out of the habit of speaking, writing and thinking for a drawing-room audience. They aimed especially at plainness, conciseness and correctness of language. The vocabulary was shorn of technical terms, of words that were picturesque or expressive, or too frank or familiar, of those which expressed passion or feeling. "Neither the Bible, nor Homer, nor Dante, nor Shakespeare could be translated with this style."  

France being the literary and social leader of Europe, it is not strange that Pope and his followers were influenced by

2. " " " " 192. 
these conditions.

The pseudo-classicists copied the everyday life and manners of polite society and called that following nature. They were extremely self-conscious in their writings and were classical by imitation rather than by inspiration. They treated with disgust anything that savored of romanticism, as they had come to use the term; for to them a story or a poem was romantic when it was wildly improbable or highly sentimental. But the term widened in its meaning until it included in its category anything that was highly imaginative, picturesque or passionate.

These so-called classicists assumed an attitude of indifference toward the Old English writers. Shakespeare was considered the greatest, but even his great masterpieces did not receive in any measure, due consideration and respect. Chaucer and Spenser were not considered of much importance and Milton was neglected, but the day was fast approaching when
in the course of the development of romanticism, men would turn to these very authors, as a thirsty deer to a stream of water, to slake their thirst, and revive their souls.

Even so highly respectable a gentleman as Pope writes to Lady Mary in 1716, "The more I examine my own mind, the more romantic" (sentimental) "I find myself. Let them say I am romantic; so is every one said to be that either admires a line thing or praises one; it is no wonder such people are thought mad, for they are as much out of the way of common understanding as if they were mad, because they are in the right." These words plainly signify two things: 1st, that the attitude of the pseudo-classicists toward romanticism was not one prompted by natural impulse or feeling in the matter, so much as it was an artificiality which came into vogue and by long practice became so deeply grounded in them that unconsciously it had become their second nature; 2nd, that
when Pope, the foremost, examined himself he became conscious that by nature he was romantic and sentimental and that classicism was only a garb with which he had bedecked himself to smother but romantic tendencies and in which he might appear pleasing to the literary world.

The Early Romanticists

Living along side of Pope, were men, who followed their literary inclinations, because of the real pleasure and joy they could gain in so doing, men, who had gained no enviable position and hence had none to lose, men who were not tied to Fashion's apron strings. These were the lesser lights in literature and may be likened to the field daisy or the butter-cup. Their names were little known beyond their circle of friends and acquaintances, and yet it is in
the writings of these men, that reactionary tendencies are first displayed. Unconsciously, they were out of sympathy with the Augustans, or if conscious, they had not the strength to throw off the yoke under which they had been reared.

Phelps, in his book on the English Romantic Movement, mentions such writers as Samuel Croxall, Lady Winchelsea, Thomas Parnell, Allan Ramsay and William Hamilton of Bangour as belonging to this class.

Parnell's "Vight Piece" and "Hymn to Contentment" savor of the romanticism of Wordsworth. Aside from the fact that his verse contains, in a measure, the spirit and subject matter of romanticism, it is written in a verse form which is very frequently employed by the romanticists, but seldom by the classicists. Parnell's poetry not only reflects a love of nature, but his Fairy Tale gives us "one of the first faint echoes of Mediaevalism."

Lady Winchelsea (died 1720) in her ode "To the Nightingale"
and in her poems, "The Tree" and "A Nocturnal Reverie," and Samuel Croxall in his poems, "The Vision," (pub. 1715) and "The Fair Circassian" (pub. 1720?) show strong tendencies toward romanticism. Mr. Gosse says that Croxall described his aim in poetry as being "to set off the dry and insipid stuff of the age by publishing a whole piece of rich glowing scarlet." So Croxall, at least, was conscious of his attitude toward the Augustans.

Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," though mingled with artificiality, has many touches of genuine naturalness and some of his songs are forerunners of Burns' songs. William Hamilton's (1704-1754) "The Braes o' Yarrow" and "Contemplation" are decidedly romantic in tone, the latter revealing somewhat the spirit of Wordsworth.

Thus we see, in every one of this list of writers, much of the spirit of romanticism. Sometimes it is unconscious and would, perhaps, be an unwelcome guest, if recognized, as in 1. Gosse's "Eighteenth Century Literature" Page 139.
the case of Lady Winchelsea. Sometimes, it is conscious and pronounced as in Croxall and sometimes, it is forceful, but repressed and subdued, partly for lack of a sympathetic age and partly, because of personal shame as in William Hamilton, or as in Allan Ramsay, assuming courage and remaining loyal and true "to the manner, the simple every-day life, the rural character, and the scenery of his native land."

There are some minds to whom the embodiment or outward manifestation of a thought is the full import of the thought, or the outward form of a spirit, the only comprehension they have of the spirit. They cannot separate the one from the other, consequently they do homage to the form, revere it and imitate it, regardless of the fact that the form of expression is only the garment of the thought. To some, the stiff, stereotyped form of the classicist (almost always the Heroic Couplet) was the first thing to be rebelled
against and so they dressed up Classicism in new clothes.

He may study, for a time during the transition, the reaction in form, apart from the reaction in subject-matter.

Freedom, liberalism was that for which the romanticists strove. Instinctively, they turned to the freer forms of poetry. The verse form of Spenser came into vogue and was studied and imitated by many, while Milton's sonnets exerted a powerful influence in the use of blank verse and octosyllabics.

In this connection, Thomson's "Seasons," which appeared from 1726-1730, is the most significant. It is written in blank verse, for which Thomson had an especial liking. Although the form of "The Seasons" would give it place among the writings of the romanticists and the subject is one that Wordsworth might choose, nevertheless, its treatment savor strongly of classicism. For instance, some of the lines are simply unrhymed couplets and the poem concludes with a reflex...
Thomson writes in his preface to "Winter": "I know no subject more elevating, more amusing, more ready to awake the poetical enthusiasm, the philosophical reflection and the moral sentiment than the works of Nature." In this, we see that Thomson studied and wrote about Nature for its own sake and not, as Pope had done, only to use it as a background to set off his lordly men and idyls. But we do not find that passionate, ardent love for nature, that ascribing of personal attributes to her and endowing her with a soul, that going to her for help and consolation, when overpowered by a passionate longing for better things, which we find in the later romanticists.

Thomson realizes he has departed from established custom. He is conscious of his discovery, for himself at least, that the beauties and inspiration of nature are of more value to the poet than all the shame of society and city life.
However, running through his remarks, is an undertone of apology for choosing such a theme. His preface is a sort of defense against the criticism that might be pronounced against the poem, a plea for respect. He feels that nature is a proper theme for a poet, because his poetical and artistic nature has been aroused and stirred by her; and he endeavors to impress the fact upon his readers. He writes:

"Where can we meet with such variety, such beauty, such magnificence? — all that enlarges and transports the soul? That more inspiring than a calm, wide survey of them? In every dress Nature is greatly charming; whether she puts on the crimson robes of the morning, the strong effulgence of noon, the sober suit of the evening, or the deep rables of blackness and tempest. How gay looks the Spring, how glorious the Summer, how pleasing the Autumn, and how venerable the Winter! But there is no thinking of these things without breaking out into poetry, which lies, by the by, a plain and
undeniable argument of their superior excellence. For this reason the best, both ancient and modern poets, have been passionately fond of retirement and solitude. The wild, romantic country was their delight. And they seem never to have been more happy than when lost in unfrequented fields, far from the little busy world, they were at leisure to meditate and sing the works of Nature." In these remarks, he rises to a climax at the close, growing warmer, bolder and almost passionate in the few last lines. The expressions, "passionately fond of retirement and solitude" and "The wild romantic country was their delight," might have been written many years later and been in perfect keeping with the spirit of the new school.

Then in the course of the poem, the author pictures a man who perishes in the driving snow and reflects on the wants and miseries of human life. He seems actuated by the spirit of humanitarianism, which is developed so strongly in the later romanticists. In his description of a winter evening, he include
country people as well as philosophers, and city people showing his universal love for mankind.

The publication of "The Seasons" marks the beginning of a new era in the history of English Literature. The poem has more of the general characteristics of romanticism than anything that had hitherto appeared or that was to appear for some time. It came out squarely on the side of romanticism by proclaiming that nature, in itself, is all sufficient to interest and inspire a poet.

Many writers soon imitated Thomson in the use of blank verse. Young's "Night Thoughts" appeared in 1743, Robert Blair's " Grave" in 1743 and Dr. Mark Akenside's "Pleasures of Imagination" in 1744, all written in blank verse. Other poems followed. Blank verse became the fashion and although the couplet did not drop entirely out of use, the former increased in popularity for long poems, while the octosyllabic, in imitation of L'Allegro and Il Penseroso
was used for short poems. Young went so far as to wish to
expel rhyme altogether, except for lesser poetry.

During the reign of the pseudo-classicists, the sonnet was
little used, there being only one sonnet preserved from the
period from Milton to Gray. About the middle of the 18th cen-
tury, the sympathizers with the Romantic Movement began to
make use of the sonnet, which continued to grow in favor and
popularity.

He cannot pass by this stage of romanticism without
making mention of the influence the Old English writers
had upon the literature.

Edmund Spenser, the poet of fairy-land and dreams
was called forth from the dark, musty corner of neglect and
indifference to which he had been long consigned and read
with aversion. He supplied an inexpressible, an indefinable
want. His poems were rich in all that Pope's lacked.
The change from the intellectual, didactic Pope to the poet
of fairies and woods, was too decided for the public to read and digest Spenser seriously. He had an exhilarating effect upon them and they read him for amusement and recreation. Their freedom under Spenser contrasted so strongly with their imprisonment under Pope, that they became drunk with the excess and thought to imitate Spenser in half-comic verse and satire. But on the whole, Spenser’s influence was wholesome and life-giving and steadily gained in power and breadth. Many who read and imitated him at first, for amusement, later, loved him and were filled with his spirit.

An imitation of Spenser appeared as early as 1706, the work of Matthew Prior, who may be termed "the originator of the pseudo-Spenserian stanza". The imitation consisted simply in the use of the familiar couplet with the rhyming scheme changed. Various imitations followed from time to time, during the first half of the century. Some of the most noteworthy were produced by William
Thompson, but by far the best poem of the whole Spenserian school, "The Castle of Indolence," was written in 1748, by James Thomson, the author of "The Seasons." Although Dr. Johnson strove to suppress the numerous imitations of Spenser, they increased and multiplied in numbers. Editions of Spenser's work were also demanded by the public, the first appearing in 1715.

While Spenser exerted a powerful influence on the literature of the 18th century, in affording it just the freshness and etherealness of which Classicism had so long deprived it, John Milton not only supplied it with blank verse and the octosyllabic, but breathed into it a new spirit, a new mood, the "Penseroso" mood. It is that fondness for comfortable melancholy, twilight scenes, autumnal tints, shadows, solitude, drooping boughs, muffled music, murmuring streams, churchyard reflections, ruined castles and communion with nature, that Milton has induced in the "Poetry of the 18th Century."
Joseph Harton (1740-1760) and his younger brother, Thomas, are perhaps the ones who show most plainly the influence of Milton in their writings. Joseph Harton's most remarkable poem is "The Enthusiast; or the Lover of Nature." His volume of odes, published in 1746, contains much of the Il Penseroso mood, especially the "Ode to Fancy". To show the resemblance of this ode to Milton's poems, I have gathered the following phrases. In "Il Penseroso" I find "pensive nun", "fleecy cloud", "turfew sound", "murmuring waters", "sweet music", "cloisters" and in L'Allegro", care for "lon", "Flooding Darkness", "night raven", "iron shades", "low browd rocke". In Harton's ode we have "matron Melancholy", "Goddess of the tearful eye", "silent footsteps", "channels", "house of woe", "Gothic churches", "vaulted tombs", "sad night", "throbbeing breast", "faded cheek". The Harton brothers have done romanticism great service, simply by studying and imitating romantic models. Death, Immortality and the Brave came into vogue as appropriate themes for poems, early in the second half of
the 18th century. Gray's Elegy (1751) is the most remarkable poem of this nature, because of the exquisite perfection of its poetic diction and the influence it has exerted on the poetry of all Europe. The author, Thomas Gray (1716-1771), is in some respects, the most noteworthy figure in the history of romanticism that appeared prior to the year 1785.

He is of especial importance for two reasons: 1st, his writings from the beginning to the end of his literary career, show a gradual growth and change, from classicism to romanticism; and 2nd, because of his great admiration and love for wild scenery, especially for mountaine; as is shown in his "Correspondence and Journal in the Lakes."

In Gray's early life, he was a pupil of Dryden. His "Ode on the Spring" written in 1742 is such a poem as a thorough Augustan might have written without having played the traitor to his school. The following verses taken from this ode, offer great contrast when compared with "The Progress of Poesy,"

Methinks I hear in accents slow
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joy's no glittering female meet.
To hive hast thou of hoarded sweets;
No painted plumage to display.
On hasty wings the youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy Spring is gone—
We frolic, while the May.

The Elegy, begun in 1742 and finished in 1750, occupies in this connection, a position mid-way between "The Ode on the Spring" and "The Progress of Poesy," since it is romantic in mood but classical in expression. As has already been intimated, this poem has not lived because of its romantic value, but because of the absolute perfection of its language.
"The Progress of Poesy," written in 1754 and "The Bard" begun the same year and finished in 1757 are decidedly romantic. "The Fatal Sisters" and "The Descent of Odin" from the Norse Tongue (1761) and "The Triumph of Odin" (1764) are wildly romantic in subject, language and spirit. The following quotation from "The Fatal Sisters," in its sensuousness, reminds one of Keats:

"Now the storm begins to lower,
(Haste, the doors of Hell prepare,)
Iron-sleet of arrowy shower
Hurles in the dark and air."

"Glittering lances are the doors,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a Soldier's doom,
Orkney's wool, and Randver's bone."

"See the griesly texture grow,
(Tis of human entrails made,)
And the weights that play below,
Each a gasping Warrior's head.

Gray's ardent admiration and love of mountains and
wild scenery, an element of modern growth in the history of
literature, speaks for itself in the following words, taken
from a letter written to his friend, the Rev. William Mason:
I am returned from Scotland, charmed with my expedition; it is
of the Highlands I speak; the Lowlands are worth seeing once,
but the mountains are ecstatic, and ought to be visited in pil-
grimage, once a year. None but those monstrous creatures of God
know how to join so much beauty with so much horror. A fig
for your poets, painters, gardeners and clergymen, that have not
been among them; their imagination can be made up of nothing
but bowling-greens, flowering shrubs, horse-ponds, fleet
ditches, shell-grottoes, and Chinese sails."
His descriptions in his Journal in the Lakes display a true spirit of
appreciation.
The writers of the 18th century, in their endeavors to satisfy the restless spirit of romanticism, returned not only to Spenser and Milton, but both revived and imitated the old English ballads. In the year 1765, Bishop Percy published his Reliques, a collection of ancient ballads. The work met with great success. The second edition appeared in 1767, the third in 1775 and the fourth in 1794. The influence of this collection upon the coming literature, not only of England, but of Germany as well, is difficult to measure. Scott owed much to it and Wordsworth testified to its powerful effect upon the literature.

Gottfried August Bürger (1747-1794) who introduced the ballad into Germany, was greatly influenced in his work by Percy's collection. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) who, thirteen years after the appearance of the Reliques, published his wonderful collection of old folksongs (Stimmen der Völker in Liedern) is certainly either directly or indirectly, indebted to Percy. These ballads, wherever they have appeared,
have done much to strengthen and develop the nationalistic side of romanticism.

William Collins's "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland" and Mallet's "Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarck" aroused much interest.

A passion for the wild and romantic in literature was steadily growing. In 1760 James Macpherson published his "Fragments of Ancient Poetry," purporting to be the poems of Ossian, a Celtic bard of the 3rd century. These poems created a great stir among the literary peoples of Europe and awakened a still greater interest in the writings of the past. "Herder and Goethe in Germany, Andre, Chenier, Chateaubriand and Napoleon in France, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott and Byron in England, have in turn had the Ossian fever."

That same melancholy and sentimentalism, which attracted so many to Herder in Germany, drew hosts of admirers to Ossian in England. Lord Byron is much indebted to Ossian, which he
read carefully and seriously. Phelps says: "Ossian belongs largely to the subjective side of Romanticism, which culminated in England in the poet Byron," and again: "Ossian points as directly to Byron as the chivalry and ballad revivals point to Scott."

There is still another phase of the return to the past, which is a strong feature of the Romantic Movement. During the Augustan age, Gothic was a term of reproach. It was applied to literature, as well as architecture, and art in this contemptuous sense, but, strange to say, Horace Walpole, the leader of fashion and the one whose sympathies were with the classicists, brought the term into good repute. Like a regular society fop, he was constantly on the lookout for a new fad. At that time Gothic cathedrals were crumbling and falling to decay all over Europe. Horace Walpole conceived the idea of building, in the country, a Gothic castle, patterned after those of Mediaeval times. On Jan. 10, 1750, he wrote to Sir Horace Mann: "I am going to build a little gothic castle at Strawberry Hill." In another letter, written
Feb. 25, 1750, he says that the Grecian is only proper for magnificent buildings; that he is fond of the Sharawaggi or Chinese want of symmetry in buildings as well as in grounds and gardens. Yes, public taste, even in matter of building and laying out gardens, was fast changing. The perfect symmetry in architecture and the stiff, artificial regularity of gardens and lawns was beginning to be superseded by the unsymmetrical and irregular, in imitation of wild nature.

But Horace Walpole's service to Romanticism did not end with his making Gothicism fashionable, for he further served literature by writing in 1764, the first romantic novel that acquired fame and popularity, 'The Castle of Otranto.' He wrote to Rev. H. Cole, concerning its origin: 'I waked one morning in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head like mine filled with Gothic story) and that on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase I saw a
gigantic hand in armour. In the evening, I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. In short, I was --- engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months. This all seems strange and difficult to understand or explain. This fondness of Walpole for the Mediaeval seems to be a natural product of his being, which was fostered and developed by a desire to lead the fashions of the day. The author was surprised at the manner in which the public received the "Castle of Otranto," for he had rather feared its wildness. But the public devoured it eagerly and then cried for more.

Clara Reeve's and Mrs. Radcliffe's sensational novels followed. They are filled with a crude gothicism and helped to create an interest in the past. Jane and Maria Porter succeeded these with their historical novels. Their characters are not the mere overwrought, imaginary creatures of the Radcliffe school, nevertheless, they are nothing more than modern men and
women "tricked out in the finery of their ancestors." Miss Porter's novels may be said to stand midway between those of Scott, on the one hand, and of Mrs. Radcliffe, on the other.

In the writings of Sir Walter Scott we have the culmination of this phase of the Romantic Movement. In him we find a far stricter adherence to truth than in any previous historical novelist. He visited the very scenes where his plots are laid, and with note-book and pencil in hand, he took the memoranda that did him such excellent service in his writings. While he has never attempted to reveal the hidden depths of individual character, he has brought before us a fair and good picture of the period of which he writes. All is great in the "Waverley Novels," says Goethe, "material, effects, characters, execution!"

On returning to the poets, we find that Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) in "The Deserted Village" and "The Vicar of Wakefield," took pure delight in picturing peasant, rural life, and his poetry is filled with emotion.
The poet, William Cowper, (1731-1800) is a very important figure in this literary movement, for he introduced, afterwards became the very back-bone and sinew of the literature of the Romantics.

The Task is the most significant poem, in the Romantic Movement, prior to the French Revolution, and in this sense inaugurates a new epoch in its history.

Cowper stands for certain distinct principles. He studied nature as a whole and conceived of all classes from the richest and most learned to the poorest and most ignorant, as belonging to one great, universal brotherhood. He dreamed of a time when union, peace and love would prevail on the earth, which is much the same dream that Shelley afterwards symbolized so artistically and effectively in his "Prometheus Unbound".

He loved nature for her own sake, which later became so strong an element in Wordsworth. He, also, conceived of nature as a distinct subject for poetical treatment, but in this he was not the first, for Thomson did as much in his Seasons, more than a
half-century before. He revived the old love poetry of the Eliza-
bethan age, which Byron and Shelley indulged in, in after years.
Cowper effected a great change in poetry in relation to the
subject of nature, but he effected an equally great change in
relation to the subject of man. The poets of the 19th century,
added much of splendor and passion to their poetry, but "they
worked on the thoughts he had laid down."

George Crabbe succeeded Cowper in the treatment of man,
but his poetry lacked humor, was stern and realistic and
consequently not very attractive.

Robert Burns (1759-1796) the Scotch poet, restored to poetry
the passion of love. His very words are pregnant with feeling
and passion and the Scottish dialect lends to them a sweetness
of melody that has never been surpassed. Burns was truly, by
nature, a poet. Is there anything in the language more endur-
ed with ineffable tenderness, sweetness and simplicity of emotion
than the lines "To a Mouse on turning up her nest with a plow."

or is there anything more stirring and soul-thrilling than the poem entitled "For a, that and a' that."

We have seen how, thus far, the literature of England during the 18th century has been in a continual state of change and growth. Conventionalities and forms, both in manners and customs, as well as literature have been gradually laid aside. The doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man has grown up and is now firmly grounded in the minds of the people. This doctrine teaches that all men are free and equal and that the dividing lines, set up by wealth, rank and caste, are only artificial boundaries and should not exist.

But while there had been a quiet, half-unconscious reformation going on in England in the realm of literature, there had been a much more aggravating and threatening condition of affairs in the political realm of France. The institutions of France had long ceased to supply the wants of the people. Society was corrupted and fast going to ruin. The government
was an ancient monarchy and the people were ruled as serfs. The Parliament only retained the semblance of authority. In most provinces the edicts of the king had the force of law. Taxes were imposed and subjects imprisoned without hope of redress. True national liberty had no room to grow. The securities for public and private rights, which England had long enjoyed, did not exist in France. Unparalleled splendor and magnificence revelled in the kingly palace, while many peasants existed in the lowest condition of penury. By the side of the Monarchy stood two other orders, her supposed props and support, the Church and the Nobility. The church had become immensely wealthy and possessed large estates, which were carried on by a system of feudal tenure. The nobles, which were distinctly marked off as a superior order of beings, had grown to be a haughty, overbearing, profligate class. The Crown, the Church and the Nobility were not always
in harmony, but quarrels and dissensions were frequent among them, so that the Monarchy, which appeared so strong, was weakening because of division.

The twenty-five millions of men, composing the House of Commons "counted as nothing in France." The Middle Class, composed of the professional men and merchants, formed a strong class which had succeeded in acquiring wealth and culture. This class disapproved of the condition of affairs maintained by the Crown, Church and Nobility.

The Peasants were heavily taxed and cruelly imposed upon. The cities and towns had been deserted and neglected until they swarmed with ignorance and vice.

The Literature "audacious, sceptical and unreflecting" treated every institution and the prevailing condition of affairs with contempt and sarcasm. Faith was scoffed at, the past decried, class distinctions ridiculed and the weak character of the King treated with contempt.
On the 14th of July, 1789, the bubble of discontent, which had swollen to such enormous proportions, broke and with the storming of the Bastille, a Revolution was inaugurated, which, ere its close, had shaken every institution of Europe and effected that absolute change which had been so long preparing.

On the following year, in the proclamation of the new Constitution, the principles, the ideas with regard to the rights of men, which had so long stirred England and France, were put into a popular and political form. Immediately they became living powers in the world, and it is round the excitement they kindled in England, that the work of the poets from 1790 to 1830 can best be grouped. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey accepted them with joy, but receded from them when they ended in the violence of the Reign of Terror and in the imperialism of Napoleon. Scott hated them and in disgust at the present turned to
write of the romantic past. Byron did not express them himself, but he expressed the whole of the revolutionary spirit in its action against old social opinions. Shelley took them up after the reaction against them had begun to die away, and reexpressed them. Two men, Rogers and Keats, were wholly untouched by them. One special thing these ideas did for poetry, they brought back, by the powerful feelings they kindled in men, passion into its style, into all its work about Man, and through that, into its work about Nature.
The Post-Revolution Writers.

The French Revolution, in inaugurating a new epoch in the history of English literature, does it by transmitting to the nineteenth century, in positive, outwardly pronounced form, those principles which had originated in the eighteenth century and had, until the outbreak of the Revolution, existed in thought rather than in action, in words rather than in deeds. These principles which were so long assuming a definite form, helped to mould the writings of every man of letters who wrote during the first half of the present century.

In sketching the literary growth of the eighteenth century we have seen four principles or forces asserting themselves: 1. The revolutionary or democratic spirit, which plays so important a part in the writings of Cooper, Crabbe,
and Burns and is reiterated with greater passion in the writings of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Byron, Shelley, Moore and Campbell. 2nd. The scientific element, which we saw originating and growing to considerable proportions, but which, did not effect literature proper in any great degree until the magnificent splendor of romantic literature had begun to wane. 3rd. The revival of the past, especially the mediæval life and custom, which attained its highest expression in English in the writings of Scott. 4th. The Transcendental Movement, which is a natural product of the revolutionary principles of the 18th century, but did not assert itself boldly until we see in Coleridge and Wordsworth.

These four elements, with the possible exception of the 3rd in England, are the chief elements which compose the Romantic Movement of the 19th century.
To Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, then in the
ardor and freshness of hopeful young manhood, the first outbreak of the Revolution appeared as a joyful sign of coming triumph, a triumph of right over wrong, of justice over oppression, a triumph of freedom of thought and action. "It was the dawn of a new day," the shackles were stricken from the slave; all men were free and all men were "brothers."

Coleridge gave expression to his hopes and aspirations in the "Fall of Robespierre," Southey gave vent to his feelings in the revolutionary drama, "Fat Tyler," and Wordsworth commemorated the event in the "Fall of the Bastille."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was not only a revolutionary poet in the democratic sense, but also, because of his relation to the Transcendental Movement which he introduced into England from Germany. In him, transcendentalism, which is always an appeal to an inner light and opposed to the empirical method of reasoning, is an
appeal from the understanding to the "reason," as he called it, to that something within, whose authority is higher than anything gained through the senses. Wordsworth called it an appeal to "imaginative faith," but, call it what we may, the transcendentalists believed that "in the natural order of things, a divine Presence is within us and around us, immanent in the world, not specially manifesting itself through consecrated places, consecrated persons, consecrated food, books, sites, ceremonies, but breathing through the universal frame of things, yet declaring itself in a more august style in the spirit of man."

While Wordsworth gave a stimulus in the direction of transcendentalism to imagination and contemplation, Coleridge gave an impulse in this direction to the intellect of his time.

In the "Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and "Kubla Khan" the supernatural, the weird, the mystic and the
fantastic are skillfully blended.

Robert Southey (1774-1843) combines in his writings the wild, the supernatural and the fanciful. The curse of Kehama is founded upon Hindu mythology. He lacked inspiration and his great oriental epics prove little better than roax work.

His hopes and aspirations in the French Revolution were cast to the ground and he became in later years an intolerant conservative.

Thomas Moore (1779-1852), an Irishman by birth, was aroused by the rebellion kindled in Ireland in 1798, by the French Revolution. He wrote songs to the Irish airs, the hidden theme of which is the struggle of Ireland against England. These helped to affect Catholic Emancipation. His poem, entitled 'Lalla Rookh' is composed of four oriental tales, which are rich, fantastic and airy.

Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) belongs to the new school in all but style, which in his early poems is half-classic.
In his feeling for nature he resembles Thomson and Gray, rather than Wordsworth or Shelley. His poem, "Gertrude of Wyoming" is founded on a tragedy of the Revolution. His lyrics are excellent specimens of the war poetry of England. In his later works he approaches to the natural style of Wordsworth.

The leading prose writers of the early part of the 19th century do not escape the influence of the Romantic Movement, but Lamb, De Quincey, Hazlitt and Hunt receive and impart romantic principles.

Lamb's relation with the movement consists in his strong emotional tendency, his revival of Elizabethan literature and his broad democratic spirit which causes him to seek his materials in the humble, often in the lowly walks of life.

William Hazlitt is connected with the Romantic Movement by his strong love for nature and the desire for a richer, fuller
life, which he manifests in his writings.

Thomas De Quincey, whose prose style is the most poetic of any writer of the century, charms us with his wonderful imagination, his keen sensibility, his powerful emotion and his delicacy of perception. His word pictures, his imagery, his rhetoric, his personality hold the reader spellbound.

To return to the poet, we have in Lord Byron, perhaps, the strongest personality of the entire Romantic School. Wordsworth has said, "the child is father of the man," and of no one can this more truly be said than of Lord Byron. Having inherited from his mother a haughty, violent temper and from his father profligate tendencies, he was through out life a wilful, spoiled child. To his irritable nature, a lameness in the foot added morbidness.

Born in 1788 he did not arrive at manhood until the last struggles of the Revolution, under the sway of military despotism, were stilled. He escaped the aggravation, the
turmoil, the exhaustion and chagrin caused by the Reign of Terror and the war with England. But he lived in time to feel that great void, that heart-sickening disappointment and dissatisfaction that comes with a sense of failure and wreck of one's faith; for the first effects of the Revolution were destructive rather than constructive. "The actual facts of external history" form only one of the elements of the revolution, for the "Intellectual doctrine", and the "revolutionary emotions, hopes, hates, fears, ardors, aspirations" are quite as worthy of consideration.

Childe Harold laid before the eye of the reader what is great and beautiful in the history of Europe and gave to travel a romantic interest. His tales of the Giaour, the Corsair, Lara and others gave highly colored pictures of eastern life, which superseded Scott's tales in interesting the public. The cause of the wonderful popularity of Byron's poetry lay
in the fact that the consuming world-weariness, "Weltschmerz", with which he was afflicted, was a common malady. In all of his writings we find this same tone of discontent, this revolt against hypocrisy, conventionality, against gossip, cant, and the existing institutions. Be the character who he may, he always acts as a spokesman for Lord Byron himself. It is always the feelings and thoughts of Lord Byron put into the mouths of his men and women. In him, we see subjectivity developed in its highest degree. A restless, melancholy gloom, a love of sea and wilderness pervade all of his writings. He has drunk to excess of all worldly pleasures and there is no longer a satisfying potion. Satiety produces ennui.

In Don Juan we have the effect of the revolutionary spirit portrayed. "It claimed for himself and for others absolute freedom of individual action and thought in opposition to that force of society, which tends to make all men after one pattern."
When, in his later years, he offered himself as a sacrifice to the cause of freedom, he began to look beyond the I, that always demanded first attention and struggled for man. Byron is apt to see nature to reflect his own feelings and moods. He loved most the storm, the wilderness and the sea. But occasionally he views nature apart from himself and it is then that his descriptions rise into the realm of the sublime and truly poetical.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) is the most spiritual, the most ethereal creation of the Romantic School. As a poet, he may be said to have two ideals: an ideal of the future perfection of mankind, when peace, love and joy will reign supreme on the earth, when that blessed state shall be attained described in Isaiah, as when the lion shall lie down with the lamb. This ideal is the theme of "Queen Mab." His other ideal, which is expressed with equal strength, in his works, is personal, is a some one, an infinite ego.
which he was ever seeking, but could never find, that would respond to the unsatisfied cravings of his soul. The poem entitled "Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude" is a presentation of this ideal.

"Prometheus Unbound" is his most remarkable poem. In this he represents Humanity bound to a rock in the form of Prometheus, and separated from "the all pervading Love" the universe of nature, which is impersonated by Asia. Evil or Jupiter has everything under his rule and it is only when he is overthrown and Prometheus is freed and united to Asia that "Man is wedded to the spirit in Nature and God is all in all."

Shelley believed, as did Wordsworth, that a living, active soul dwelt in Nature, but while to Wordsworth this soul in Nature was a thinking spirit, to Shelley it was a loving spirit. Shelley was as near a disembodied spirit as mortal can be. He desired to lose himself in Nature. In his
descriptions he heaped image on image, striving to attain the unattainable, until one is lost in the infinite maze.

"John Keats (1796-1821) marks the exhaustion of the impulse, which began with Burns and Cowper." Unlike Wordsworth, Byron or Shelley, he was undisturbed by the great questions of human life, made public and popular by the Revolution. The motive of his work is an intense passion and love for the beautiful, the absolute of beauty. To satisfy this craving, he went back to Greek and Mediaeval life. His poetry is sensuous and impassioned. "He is, above all things, the artist, with that love of the beautiful and that instinct for its reproduction which are the artist's divinest gifts"
When we examine the poems of Wordsworth we find that in writing them, he has had certain, clear-cut, well-defined aims, both in regard to subject matter and poetic diction. He has become so conscious of the necessity of a change, and so certain of the direction it should take, that he states in broad, bold terms his aims and his reasons for them.

In his preface to the second edition of the "Lyrical Ballad" he says, that the great national events, which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities are acting with combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, unfitting it for voluntary exertion, but creating in it a craving for extraordinary incident.
On the other hand, he feels that "the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants," and so his first aim is to bring Nature with her means of affording joy, peace, consolation and spiritual aid sensibly near to man. He had felt the powerful influence of Nature in his own being, for even in boyhood the sounding cataract had haunted him like a passion and "the tall rock, the mountain and the deep and gloomy wood, their colours and their forms" were then an appetite to him; "a feeling and a love.

But when he grew to be a man and the "dizzy raptures" of boyhood were no more, he came to believe that there was an active principle dwelling in Nature, a soul permeating it, which had the power to uplift, to chasten and subdue, or as he expresses it in "Tintern Abbey":

"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 thought,
And rolls through all things."

It was this presence, the Spirit of God in nature, which was Wordsworth's truest sympathizer and friend. With this
he communed; to this his heart went out in adoration; this
filled him with ecstatic joy and proved for him the satisfying
portion. What Shelley longed and sought for in vain, Wordsworth
found in the Spirit that rules the universe. For him, the mean-
est flower that grew was pregnant with thought and emotion;
because it reflected the mind of its Creator. To him, Nature,
with her blessed consolation and sympathy, afforded a balm for
every wound, a remedy for every heart-dole. He would offer
its health-giving properties to others and so his writings are
filled with narrations of the many instances, and the various ways in which Nature has helped him. He studies his own nature, the growth of his character and the enlargement of his soul, in order that he may prescribe for another.

He teaches that Man may receive the help and inspiration Nature has to offer, simply by opening his heart and mind to receive it. In receiving this aid, the union is effected between the mind of Man and the spirit of Nature, which he conceives as having been provided to bring about harmony and peace between Nature and Humanity.

His second aim was to choose characters and incidents from the common walks of life. He is prompted in this choice by two elements of his nature: first by a purely democratic spirit, a strong feeling of love for all men, regardless of caste and rank, and a desire to acquaint men who apparently had no interest in the great mass of uncultured and uneducated, with the hidden beauties of these natures.
Secondly by a revolutionary spirit, a tendency to revolt against old customs and habits in poetry, which had ceased to contain principles of life and good. But whatever elements went to compose it, his real reason for choosing such characters and incidents lay in his own statement found in the preface to the Ballads, which we may sum up thus: the conditions of humble life are better suited for the growth and development of the finer feelings of the heart; the manners and passions are more natural, more durable and less under restraint, and, because of their simplicity, can be contemplated more accurately and communicated more forcibly.

To me, it seems that the unstated reason for this is that to Wordsworth these characters somehow seemed to fit in with and form a part of inanimate nature. The rustic simplicity of the dalesmen was a complement of the vale, the lake, the rocks and the mountains among which they dwelt.
But, whatever the reason, we know that the pursuit of this aim has had results, which we would not alter, for from it have grown some of the most beautiful poems of the English language: "Michael," "To a Highland Shepherd" and "The Solitary Reaper" are filled with ineffable tenderness and simplicity.

His aim in poetic diction, to state it in his own words, was "to imitate, and, so far as is possible to adopt the very language of men." He further states, that for this reason, there will be found little of what is usually called poetic diction. "With his democratic feeling for what is best in human nature, corresponded his feeling for language considered as the instrument of his art." 1

There has been some question as to whether Wordsworth's practice has agreed with his theory of poetic diction. In defense of this, Dowden says, that however poorly, he may have stated his theory and however much he has been misunderstood,

1. Dowden's "Studies in Literature" page 144.
because of this, it cannot be said that his theory and practice were not in agreement. "It was not the language of the courtier or the philosopher, as such, which seemed admirable to him; it was the permanent and passionate speech of man, wherever to be found, which he sought after; and in the speech of simple men Wordsworth believed that there was more of such stuff to retain, and less matter to be rejected as belonging to merely local or occasional uses, than in the speech of over-cultivated, artificial refinement."

He must agree, that to his best poems — those composed under the spell of inspiration, the style of the language is an added charm to thought and artistic effect. It, unconsciously, creates an atmosphere for the characters and incidents, which the poet portrays.

From what has already been said, it is not difficult to determine why Wordsworth is called a Romanticist. In form, he broke away from all established rules and set up for 1. Dowden’s Studies in Literature page 144-5.
himself an entirely new code of laws. In spirit he was naturalistic, humanistic, revolutionary and transcendental.

Naturalism was the fundamental element of his being. His love for nature extended, not only to inanimate life, but to beasts, birds, and insects. In the poem entitled "Kestrel and Martin," the most tender emotion is called forth by the suffering and death of the young deer.

Wordsworth gives to the child a new significance, and a place in literature. Heretofore, children had received no mention and for the relief of enlightened society had been consigned to the nursery. In the poem entitled "We are Seven" he ascribes to the child nature a depth of feeling and insight that a sage might envy. Whatever his philosophy, he ascribes to the child a measure of the Divine Spirit, which enables it to grasp, as by intuition, what the aged and wise grope for with their empirical reasoning.

As a reaction from the deism and mechanical philos
The philosophy of the 18th century, appears the transcendentalism of Wordsworth. It teaches that there is a divine Presence in us and around us. It manifests itself, especially, in the spirit of man as an inner light, possessing a higher authority than any tribunal. Call it what you please, it is that which enables man to perceive the unknown realities; it is the communication of the spirit of God with the spirit of man. It is the "prophet's glow of revelation"; it is "the philosophy which enters, unawares, into the poet through his art."

It makes a man, "benefit of reason but filled with divinity," "peripient of an intelligence other and larger than his own." It teaches, that those conclusions, which the philosopher attempts to arrive at by the contemplation of abstract truths, either man or child may perceive by inspiration.

But this inspiration, this "prophet's glow" is influenced by the attitude of the recipient. For some a fine strain of music is the stimulus needed, for others a fine work of art, while
for others, words of eloquence will suffice, provided the spiritual nature is in a receptive mood.

For Wordsworth, the contemplation of Nature effected the union between his spirit and the spirit of God, between the divine in his nature and the great divine Spirit, which governs the universe. This was the message he had to deliver to man.

And, inasmuch as everything spiritualistic or transcendental is inexpressible in human speech, he conveys by description, by hint, by figures the truth he would make plain.

It is a difficult task. He penetrates into the depths of his own soul and what he gains by the introspection he attempts to give to the world. He heaps description upon description and goes into wearisome detail in order that he may make plain the spiritualistic. If he awakens in the mind of his reader a response, he has accomplished his end.

Since, for him, Nature is the stimulus needed for inspiration, the medium through which it comes, he endows her
with a soul, an active principle. It is this tendency in
Wordsworth, that forms a relation between his doctrine of
faith and Pantheism, which seeks for the supernatural
everywhere, but losing sight of it as such, envelopes it in
the natural.

From his love for Nature grew his love for man; first
for man as he saw him engaged in rural occupations and
forming a part of the scenery which surrounded him; then
extending to man in general and coupled with this, his
strong desire for his betterment. Out of this interest in
the welfare of humanity and the polluted condition of poli-
tics in France, sprang his enthusiasm for the Revolution.

To his young manhood, the Revolution promised great
things. He hailed it with joy, for "Bliss was it in that dawn
to be alive, But to be young was very heaven."

Hitherto, only Nature had been of vital concern to him, but
now the problem of Man entered as a new element into his
nature. When he visited France in 1791-2, and became aware of the change and progress there, his heart was thrilled and stirred. He felt that caste, hereditary nobility and the right of primogeniture must be abolished, that “the property qualification of voters must be set aside” and “suffrage must be universal.”

Just so long as the events of the Revolution justified his hopes, he continued to be its faithful exponent, and Man was the subject of his thoughts, his hopes and his fears. When affairs grew heart-sickening and his high ideals and hopes were being dashed to the ground, his mind was filled with conflict and struggle.

Soon all was over, his faith in man was shattered and his inmost being underwent a disruption and disintegration. Nothing was left but an aching void. Unlike Shelley, he could not thrive on ideas themselves, but only when the ideas were given a visible, plausible expression.
He could not live on the mere abstractions of a creed. Then the efforts of the Revolution were lured from their true object, then he was driven back upon himself.

It was, in this trying time, when faith in good was well-nigh gone, that his sister Dorothy drew him back into his early path and to his first love, Nature. When the wound had healed, it was found, that the very democratic spirit and love of man, which made him a sympathizer with the Revolution, still remained. The period of struggle proved to be a period of transition from youth to mature manhood. He now saw things in a broader light. He cared more for individual men and women and less for theories and abstractions concerning them.

The feeling of disgust for England, which had arisen, when she took up arms against France, was dissipated and, ere the Revolution closed, he clung to her as being the "one land in which a passionate sense of justice still survived."
"Wordsworth poured his adult strength, in comparison with which his youthful enthusiasm seems a shallow excitement, into this channel. Indignation and pity, a lofty sense of right, deep sympathy with the spiritual life of suffering nations, a consciousness of his own maturity, and larger force of intellect and of feeling—all these conjoined to lift the whole being of the poet into a nobler mood than it had yet attained."

His sonnets and prose writings on the French Revolution are the noblest and best productions that the English language offers on this subject. Though he became conservative in later years, he will ever be called the friend and poet of Man.

Notwithstanding the fact that, at times, Wordsworth's poetry is inevitable, as inevitable as Nature herself, or as Matthew Arnold expresses it, "Nature herself seems to take the pen out of his hand and to write for him," notwithstanding this, at times he falls short of producing that which is above the common-place.
There seem to be various reasons for this. The intense seriousness and earnestness, with which he pursues all of his work, seems to blind him to everything but his message and his ideal. Sometimes his aim or ideal is uppermost in his mind. Unconsciously he exaggerates it and an excess, which falls little short of the ridiculous, is the result.

Often, in his eagerness to choose simple objects and incidents, he oversteps the bounds set up by good taste and artistic sense. Such is the case with "Peter Bell" and the "Idiot Boy." Then he fell into a habit of composing a poem on every trivial incident that afforded him a theme for reflection and as a result of this we have such a poem as "On Seeing a Harp in the Shape of a Needle Case."

We must admit that inspiration is of vast importance in Wordsworth's case. When he is conscious of effort, he fails; when he loses himself in a wave of inspiration, then he succeeds. "No poet, perhaps, is so evidently filled with
a new and sacred energy when the inspiration is upon him; no poet, when it fails him, is so left weak, as is a breaking wave."

His was an uneventful life. There was no great stress of outside circumstances brought to bear upon him. Aside from the temporary shattering of youthful hopes caused by the French Revolution, his life was peaceful. The society of wife, sister, children and friends was congenial and soul-stirring. The needed means of financial support was always forthcoming. His life was suited to his genius, his nature and his destiny were in accord.

He, as enacted in his life, no great tragedy of soul, for he had faith enough in himself, in nature, in man and his God to enable him to ever press forward toward his one great mission: "to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight; by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think and feel."

1. Scherer's Essays in English Literature.
and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous.

If he is self-centered, it is only that he may understand the effect of the communion with Nature on his own soul, in order to be the better fitted to offer its help to others. If the "Prelude" and the "Excursion" are somewhat long and tedious and taken up, largely, with descriptions of personal feelings and reflections, nevertheless, the reflections are elevating and the effect of the entire is wholesome. He come from them, as from his other poems, with the burden of mystery lightened, with a feeling of satisfaction, because of the resources of joy in Nature and a surety that God reigns on earth.

While Shelley and Byron revolted against existing customs, conventionalities, cant, hypocrisy, lack of feeling, brutality, inhumanity and whole category of evils, which oppressed Mankind at this period, and would pull down and lay waste the whole structure of society, yet neither could offer anything in its place.

1. Wordsworth's words, in a letter to a friend, concerning the office of his poems.
Shelley's theories were extravagant and impracticable. He ignored the fact that society and the individual are governed, in their development, by natural laws, and that the work of centuries cannot be effected in a day or a year. Byron sees the wrong and rebels long and loud. The force of personality that he throws into this bugle-note of rebellion does much to stir up a feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent in many breasts. But in all this fault-finding and complaining, he does not offer a way of escape. Both are sensitive, perceptive, and intelligent in a high degree. They realize all the wrong and injustice. Like reeds in the wind, they are tossed to and fro by it. The agitation of mind is communicated to those about them, but equilibrium cannot be restored. The proper ballast is wanting.

Wordsworth saw the wrong and oppression; he saw the tendency of existing conditions, to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind. He loved his fellow-man and longed
that he might arouse him from the spiritual stupor, into which he was fast passing. But he did not attempt to effect his salvation by decrying existing institutions, but offered to him Nature, with her uplifting power, to carry him above his mere gross material existence into "that blessed mood, in which the burden of the mystery, in which the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world, is lightened."
Bibliography

Phelps' Early Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement.
Flyffe's History of Modern Europe.
Morris' History of the French Revolution.
 Carlyle's History of the French Revolution.
Scheler's History of German Literature.
Bernhardt's Deutsche Litteraturgeschichte.
Schmidt's Geschichte der Französischen Literature.
Heine's Die Romantische Schule.
Brooke's Primer of English Literature.
Phillips' English Literature.
Heleth's English Literature.
Beers' English Literature
Gosse's Eighteenth Century Literature
Dowden's Studies in Literature
Math. Arnold's Essays in Criticism
Scheler's Essays in English Literature
Morley's Studies in English Literature
Taine's Ancient Régime
Myers's Life of Wordsworth
Phelps' Tray
The Riverside Ed. of Thomson's works
" " " " Cowper's "
" " " " Macmillan " " Wordsworth's "
" " " " " Shelley's "
" " " " " Keats' "
" " Albion " " Byron's "