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The Study of the Child
in
The Romantic Poets:- Blake, Wordsworth, and Thompson.

by

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THE STUDY OF THE CHILD

IN

THE ROMANTIC POETS:- BLAKE, WORDSWORTH, AND THOMPSON.

Introduction.

INTRODUCTION.

Survey of treatment of the Child in Ancient Literatures and in the Literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

- The Bible.
- Chaucer: The Prioress' Tale.
- Shakespeare:
  - The Winter's Tale.
  - Macbeth.
  - King John.
  - Richard III.
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INTRODUCTION.

Our age has been called the Age of Children. Advancing civilization has brought us to this century which adds to the laurels of its many inventions and discoveries one which is most tender, most beautiful, that of having produced men who are capable of interpreting and revealing the child.

If it be true that literature reflects the spirit, thoughts, emotions, aspirations, not only of the writer but also of his times, there is much truth in the above saying. Literature is the history of humanity's soul; as its soul is so are its literary productions, and never before has so much been written "for" and "about" children. Just as some great artists have succeeded in immortalising the traits of beautiful children on canvas, so some of the great English poets have been able to reveal the poetic wealth in the child; and this sympathetic portrayal is the "motif" of their mystic songs of childhood.

The inventive powers of nations have turned out exquisite toys to amuse their children, and these are stamped by the individual characteristics of each: the American child has his little trunk; the French child, his doll, a soldier or a "grande demoiselle;" the German child, his pretty home-like play-house; but whatever may be the reason, is it through an

excessive love of out-of-doors sports, that the English have provided not playthings but books for the amusement of their children? Although other countries may boast of some juvenile works, yet English literature is especially rich in books "for" and "about" children. The English spirit has always retained a great love of childhood in spontaneous songs not easily understood by other nations. This love has flowed out and animated its poetry, contributing in no small degree to the result of bringing the child to "his own" in the appreciation of readers.

Now what is a child? One poet has defined the child as a thought of God:-

"God thought of you, so I am here."

He is one of those colors of that divine prism through which the Creator reveals Himself: He is hope, hope of heaven itself; in him are the germs of future greatness and goodness; he is humanity's priceless treasure, and he is destined to become some day its glory and its strength. Look into his eyes, and you there behold without cloud of suspicion, without gloom of deceit, without glare of knavery, the serene yet simple presence of a soul. He is innocent, and his pure joy is born of bliss unknown to the world; each morning his little soul quaffs long draughts of a new day where sorrows are unknown; his looks are signs of peace divine; his brow is cloudless; he knows no past, he smiles at an eternal present; the very world is at his feet.

O child loved by God himself, blessed by Him while yet on earth! In your eyes is mirrored the purity of heaven, for they seem to reflect the celestial dwelling whence you came.

O happy age, so easily influenced, so sweet to look at, so intensely interesting to study; the depth of your soul has not yet been sounded; your guileless and unsophisticated ways and sayings can not be understood even by the keenest psychologist, much less by the novelist who attempts to create your character out of his own imagination, making you act at times like grown-up men and women. But the poet whose soul is akin to yours, who is simple, who like you believes in God and love, in beauty and truth, can understand you, he can write about you and for you. You can be and have been the fountain source whence he will drink and then give to the world that which he has imbibed.

The beginnings of the world's written history show that always the child has held a sacred place. In the Bible, he plays a role exquisite and divine: young Samuel is made the messenger of God Almighty to the High Priest, Heli. Racine, the great French tragedian, has immortalized the infant king Joas who escapes the envenomed hatred of Athalia and receives the royal diadem on his infant forehead from the hand of Joiada. In the Sacred Gospels, where could be found a more sublime picture than that of the Child Christ sitting among

the Doctors and astonishing them by His wisdom? Brush and pen are here inadequate. We give the scene the humble tribute of admiring silence. Again what a charming picture in the young daughter of Jairus brought to life at the command of the Divine Physician! He it was who by the touching words, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not"! changed the attitude of this cold world towards the little ones. Before, they were tolerated, often sacrificed to the Moloch of ambition and lust; but since the coming of Christ, their lot, like that of women, has been improved and elevated until they have come into the possession of their inalienable rights.

Children were always a source of interest to their immediate relatives, as a result of nature's law; but they are not of central interest in the works of ancient literature. If we except Homer, the only poet who, like Shakespeare, seems to have had an intuitive knowledge of all types of humanity, who has given us the story of Hector's infant son, no other ancient writer has looked to the cradle or nursery for inspiration. When children are occasionally brought on the stage of life, it is merely as a contrast. "If they are introduced of set purpose, it seems to bring into prominence the fact that brave men can be tender-hearted and that women are at

their beat with children around them; or else to deepen the gloom of tragic sorrow." (1)

Leaving ancient literature and coming to our own, we find Chaucer in the Prioress's Tale describing school boys as they really are. They are true to life, but neither Chaucer nor his contemporaries looked upon the child as a supremely interesting being in itself nor as capable of prompting "Soul-animating strains." Shakespeare created the child in the English drama, but many worthy critics do not think it can be said that his children are the very children that dance around us to-day.

Nevertheless, we find that the master poet has delineated, with fine, delicate touch, a number of youthful portraits, though they are frequently over-shadowed by the great figures about them. All the children of Shakespeare are of noble birth and are placed in such exceptional and often tragic circumstances that they seem rather the victims of fate, and therefore are they no longer true to life. His child-characters are however, never puppets, and a careful reading of the plays reveals these figures as distinct individuals, who charm us "with their innocent archness and sweet-witted prattle." (2)

(1) Little's Living Age. H. Sutton. "Children in Modern Literature."
(2) Shakespeare. Hudson - P. 31.

Among those portraits, one of the most charming is that of little Mamillius in "Winter's Tale." He is a "gallant child, one that indeed physics the subjects, makes all hearts fresh." (1) He exhibits all the precocity of a highly strung temperament mingled with the spontaneity of the true boy, and he becomes the delightful hero of the scene wherein he appears with the gentle women. These flatter him and would play with him, but he is proudly disdainful of their attentions because one has kissed him! Is not this truly boyish? His mother's disgrace and banishment so affect the sensitive heart of the sympathetic child that

> "He straight declined, droop'd, took it deeply,
> Fasten'd and fix'd the shame on and in himself
> Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,
> And downright languished." (2)

In the little son of Lady Macduff, the student finds all the vivacity and simplicity of a true child. He, like most Shakesperian children, is quick-witted and worldly-wise and most loyal to his father.

Again, the little Princes in Richard III appear robed in all the glory befitting the sons of a great King.

(1) Winter's Tale, Act. I. Sc. I.
(2) Winter's Tale, Act.II. Sc. III. P. 350.

They are of noble birth; the little duke is bright and precocious; the Prince of Wales under an apparent childish humor, gives vent to his dislike of his uncle. Only one scene and part of another are devoted to these young princes; but their noble aspiring souls are clearly revealed, and the beauty and innocence of their characters stand out as distinctly as the wicked character of Richard himself.

But of all Shakespeare's studies of children, one stands out more clearly cut than all the others and that is the pathetic little Arthur in "King John." Hudson says that "Arthur is the most powerful and charming of Shakespeare's pictures of nursery life" (1) and Grudwohl adds that "whether intentionally or not, the master has given in this early drama, a complete portrait of childhood -- beautiful, innocent and appealing, but made tragic by the events of a turbulent time." (2) He, too, has a certain precocity of intellect with its attendant feature of refinement and sensitiveness; he is the timid, shrinking child; one who would have been happy far from the steps of a throne.

What tender pathos in the loving and lovely boy is found in that scene between Hubert and the little prisoner! "If anything ever were penned, heart-piercing, mixing the extremes

(1). Shakespeare, H. N. Hudson, P. 31.
(2). Children in Shakespeare's Dramas, R. J. Grudwohl, P. 77.
"Catholic World".

of terror and pity, of that which shocks and that which soothes the mind," it is that pathetic scene. (1).

That the great, simple, heart of Shakespeare loved childhood is evident enough, but he has not "the observant psychologic knowledge of the child he has of the great world of men and women among whom he lived." (2). Some are the creatures of heredity, while the others are delicate instruments played on by circumstances and environment, glad or serious, happy or unhappy, according as events touch them." (3) For these reasons, Shakespeare is not called a "poet of childhood," although these true studies of exceptional children placed in exceptional circumstances are one of the most delightful phases of the great dramatist's universality.(4)

The earliest written evidence of a sympathetic recurrence to the lost ideal that a child is beautiful because of and not despite his childhood, seems to be in William Cartwright. Had he done nothing else for English letters than to rescue one sweet ideal, his unmarked grave at Oxford should be a fragrant place to thoughtful minds. In his stanzas to Mr. W. B. on the "Birth of His First Child," there is something cognate to the loveliest lines ever written about a baby. Again in the poem, "Consideration,"

(1). Shakespeare, H. N. Hudson, P. 30.
(2). Children in Modern Literature, H. Sutton.
(3). Children in Shakespeare's Dramas, H.J. Gradwohl, P.85.
(4). Ibid.

Catholic World.

he returns to the theme; and although it gives no thrills to the modern blase reader, it has a singular historic significance which has been overlooked. Its modest eighteen lines were generative and their informing spirit was soon taken up by a better poet than Cartwright. Vaughan was a lover of Cartwright and it looks as though he read him diligently". (1) To these two poets, English literature is not sufficiently grateful, they succeeded partially in establishing in men's minds the idea of the excellence of "childhood as resting on its ethical if not yet on its aesthetic principle" and what seemed about to die was now to bud and give promise of fruit. (2)

But most poets and other writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seemed to ignore the personality of the child. They are unable to tear themselves away from their own ideas to live the life of "wee ones." They are too engrossed with the lofty thoughts and great problems of humanity to descend to the level of childhood, to watch it in all its beauty and simplicity. The trouble is they do not really love children. They may have been men of great intellect, of great will-power; they may have been good men who were kind, but there is a flaw in their characters.

(1) Miss L. Guiney in "Childhood in The 17th Century Poetry. Catholic World.
(2) Ibid.

However high may have been their moral principles there is a trace of selfishness in their lives.

Earle is one of the few writers of the seventeenth century who seems to realise that "the child is," as he says in his Microcosmographie, "nature's fresh picture newly drawn in oil; which time and much handling dims and defaces. His soul is yet a white paper unscribbled with observations of the world, wherewith at length it becomes a blurred note book. He is purely happy because he knows no evil, nor hath made means by sin to be acquainted with misery. He arrives not at the mischief of being wise, nor endures evils to come by foreseeing them. He kisses and loves all, and,when the smart of the rod is past, smiles on his beater.

We laugh at his foolish sports, but his game is our earnest, and his drums, rattles and hobby-horses, but the emblems and mockings of man's business. His father hath writ him as his own little story, wherein he reads those days of his life he cannot remember, and sighs to see what innocence he has outlived. The older he grows he is a stair lower from God; and like his first father much worse in his breeches.

He is the Christian's example, and the old man's reliques, the one imitates his pureness and the other falls into his simplicity. Could he put off his body with his little coat,

he had got Eternity without a burthen, and exchanged but one heaven for another." (1)

In this "Microcosmographie," we also find that caressing reference to the death of a child, "the best coppie of Adam." (2) The deep pathos of infancy appealed to him as it did to Crashaw. His lines show a truth of perception on this subject and a loving knowledge of it, which, as Miss Guiney says, "are comparable to the rosy outlines of some tiny body on a canvas of Correggio." (3)

Concerning Traherne, we shall quote what the distinguished Sir A. Quiller-Couch says:- "Of Traherne, the first and last word is that he carried into a sustained ecstacy this adoration of the vision of childhood." (4)

"The child is, was, and shall be
The world's deliverer; in his heart the springs
Of our salvation ever rise and we
Mount on his innocency as on wings." (5)

These lines written during the nineteenth century seem to express very keenly the changed attitude of the world towards childhood. At last, men have opened their eyes to the fact that if a solid social structure is to be reared, the foundations must be laid in the heart and soul of the

(1) Essays. Sir A. Quiller Couch. "Traherne."
(2) Ibid
(3) Miss. L. Guiney. Childhood in Seventeenth Century Poetry. Catholic World.
(4) Essays. Sir. A. Q. Couch.
(5) Anonymous.

child. There is a beautiful picture which we think might be the companion of our quotation. The artist has placed on the canvas the king of animals surrounded by a lamb, a calf, a panther, and amidst this strange group, a cherub-like child whose hand rests on the lion's mane. Beautiful is it in its mystic symbolism: strength, meekness, endurance, passion, all crouch before the small omnipotent hand. "A little child shall lead them." If this unhospitable world of ours is no longer visited by angels, as in ages past, God has left visible ones with us always in children.

To understand the message the child brings us, we must become as little children; we must live their lives and judge of things not from the pedestal of pride but from the lowly ground of childhood's views. Then shall we apprehend things as the child does, seeing them in their simple beauty; we must have faith in God and in man; faith in beauty and in love. The poet who has these qualities is able to show us the child as he is, not hemmed in by conventionalities but godlike in his pure beauty. There are some who have succeeded in this most difficult work. They saw the child as the deliverer from all the sophisms of the world; they saw that if men are to be saved from the evils of a world grown old in iniquity, they must return to the simplicity of childhood.

"By nature's law," says Francis Thompson," no man can admire, no man can understand, that of which he has no echo in himself." (1) To write about the child, one must enter into his soul otherwise only a conventional and superficial portrait will be given.

Novelists seem unable to portray anything but orphans at the mercy of pitiless taskmasters; or little drudges to prosperous aunts and grandparents; or again, unfortunate waifs who are the victims of a cold and hard-hearted world. It is the tragic, unhappy child who again and again looms before the mind in the masterpieces of English fiction. As one reads these chronicles of childhood, as set forth by romancers, one wonders if the state of "happy childhood" is only a myth?

If the novelist wrote of sorrows and of these from his own point of view, the poet, who sees at a glance the glory of the world, beauty in all its forms and manifestations; who knows mankind as others know single men, who hears at moments the clear voice of God,--that poet will have no such misapprehensions. And it is the purpose of this study to try to prove that the poets have been blessed with the gift of hearing the "song of the soul of the child." Having listened, they gave of their abundance that the world might live; for, as Joyce Kilmer says, "What humanity always needs is a child."

(1) Francis Thompson - "Life and Works"

Chapter I.

Blake.

BLAKE.

" The symbolical interpretation of the Child."

Poems Discussed:-

From "Songs of Innocence"
- "Piping down the Valley"
- "I have no Name"
- "Laughing Song"
- "Echoing Green"
- " The Lamb"
- " The Tiger"
- The Cradle Song"
- " The Blossom"
- " The Dream"

From " Songs of Experience".
- "Little Lost Boy"
- " The Chimney Sweeper"
- " Holy Thursday"
- " The School Boy"
- " London

Blake.

The artificial poetry of the first half of the eighteenth century was the result of cold reasoning; it appeals to us as a study of human nature, but seldom does it afford any pleasure to the imagination. The eighteenth century poet who would have his work considered at all must chisel his phrases, place them in a mould, and emphasize the exterior form rather than the thought which gave it birth; he must repress all fine feeling and passion, control all outbursts of enthusiasm and emotion, in fine, lose his own personality. But artificiality is only short lived, truth in all its inherent beauty is the only thing which can really respond to man's search after ideality; hence, contemporary with the leaders of the pseudo-classic school, there lived true poets who gave expression to the dreams of a golden age. The ideals of youth were again established as permanent realities, and nature and humanity became the sources whence a new generation of writers returned for inspiration. Naturalism was the distinctive characteristic of this reactionary movement, and one of its first representatives in English poetry, is the mystic poet, Blake.

" His naturalism is plain enough," says Stopford Brooke, "It consists in his direct painting of certain very simple phases of human nature, as yet scarcely touched by the English poets; and in an extremely simple, passionate and spiritual treatment of both phases, as if human nature in them belonged less to the earth than to the whole universe of spirit. One

of these simple phases was the nature of childhood." (I)

To Blake, we owe the return of the child to English poetry; he entered into the child's mind and in the " Reeds of Innocence" he sang the songs of the child's heart as no other poet had d done. He saw in childhood the realization of the ideal of eternity, as far as it can be realized on earth. The elements that combine to form this ideal are four: perfect happiness resulting fron ignorance of all evil; perfect innocence which is chiefly due to the absence of all restrictive law; unhindered communion between the child's own life and that of animals and the things that surround it; and, lastly, the clear vision of the divine world and the spiritual beings who are always ready to protect and love the child. (2)

Into the symbolical and real child-world, with its ideas and its sentiments, its loves and its fears, we shall be admitted; but if all its beauty and sweetness are to be tasted and enjoyed, we must become as little children, for only the soul who responds to the joy and happiness, the divine hope, and close companionship with heavenly beings can understand Blake and comprehend the little human beings he places before us; for " no man has been able to give with such truthfulness the naive expression of childlike joy or to put into words so perfect what one may term the fragrance of an infant's thought"(3)

An anonymous Blake worshipper has said of the "Songs of Innocence" that the mind of the devotee hangs in pleasant

(I) Stopford Brooke in "Studies in Poetry." page 31.
(2) William Blake by Berger. page 292.
(3) William Blake, Life, Work, Character, A. Story. page 85.

uncertainty as to whether it is a picture that is singing or a song which had newly budded and blossomed into color and form." The subjects of these poems are clearly illustrated by graphic designs, beautifully colored.- a child caressing a lamb, a shepherd with his crook leading his flock, a little babe resting on his mother's knees, the weeping figure of a little lost girl---and around the central motif twine intricate designs which serve not only to beautify the pages but to separate the stanzas; all this makes each page appeal to the eye as much as the melody of the verses appeals to the ear and the depth and simplicity of thought to the soul.

A sympathetic critic says," Linger where you will, a gay and tender harmony pervades every leaf, the smile of an inspired child looks up at you and flashes something intuitive and precious into your soul. The limpidness of the verses, the felicity of the designs recall special morning moods in the morning of life. Hope, innocence, joy and an all pervading sense of Divine nearness are the characteristic notes sounded"(I)

In imagination, Blake, the " incomprehensible child" returned to his own childhood days describing the joyful and happy world his soul moved in, thus revealing the gold mine of infancy, unfathomed or at least ignored by writers of previous centuries. The Song which serves as an introduction to the " Reeds of Innocence" strikes the key-note of the whole. The poet will " pipe songs every child will joy to hear."

(I)" William Blake' by Irene Langridge. page 83.

Every word has a ring of laughing joy in it and we feel as though the singer had admitted us to share the ethereal vision of the child; we shall " follow the gleam" entering into his sacred world of joy, innocence, and happiness.

" ---Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

' Pipe a song about a lamb !'
So I piped with merry cheer.
Piper, pipe that song again;
So I piped: he wept to hear.

' Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe
Sing the songs of happy cheer;'
So I sang the same again
While he wept with joy to hear.

' Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read,'
So he vanished from myeight,
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear." (1)

(1) Poetical Works of Blake, edited by Sampson, page 65.

Few lyrics in our literature are as sweet as the little song," I have no Name." Of this piece, Irene Langridge says, " These are the spontaneous gushing notes of the bird in spring-time, careless, free, unstudied, but felicitously right, not to be touched or corrected for each word must lie just as it falls." (I) The repetition of the simple words produce a musical cadence like the cooing of the little babe who is talking to the angels hovering over its cradle. We listen all entranced to the first babblings of the little one and think of the power possessed by such an interpreter as Blake.

" I have no name:
I am but two days old
What shall I call thee?
I happy am,
Joy is my name ,
Sweet joy befall thee.

Pretty Joy !
Sweet Joy but two days old.
Sweet Joy, I call thee
Thou dost smile
I sing the while
Sweet joy befall thee." (2)

But soon the speechless joy of the infant is overshadowed by the vivacious expressions of exuberant life. As the child grows, his feelings take a more definite form and he is now able to find words to express his ideas; his imagination responds

(I) Blake. Irene Langridge . page 86
(2) Poetical Works of Blake by Sampson. page 69

to all impressions given, and Blake has entered into the child's growing personality in the " Laughing Song" in which he describes vividly the child's awakening life and which has been called " the gayest, wildest, quaintest most unreasoning fantasy."(2)

" When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing 'Ha,Ha, Ha!'

When the painted birds laugh in the shade
Where our tables with cherries and nuts are spread
Come life, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of Ha,Ha,Ha!

Again, in "Echoing Green," we listen to voices of children mingling harmoniously with the songs of birds; the little adventures of their daily life are related in what might be called Blakesonian simplicity. There is not a sad note in the song; but the last stanza has a certain indefinable melancholy which makes us linger on the last sounds of the footsteps of the wee ones and the cooings of the mother bird

(1) Poetical Works of Blake by Sampson. page 69
(2) Blake, Irene Langridge. p. 89.

to her young.

The Sun does arise
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush
The birds of the bush
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Old John with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say.
Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the Echoing Green."

Till the little ones, weary ,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend
And our sports have an end
Round the laps of their mothers

Many sisters and brothers
Like birds in their nests
Are ready for rest
And sport no more seen
On the Echoing Green.(1)

Critics who say that the"Songs of Innocence" are not an attempt to get back into the mind of actual children,seem to have overlooked the current thought running through the two poems quoted above. The spontaneous expression of childish joy in "The Laughing Song" and the musical laughter of the children in "Echoing Green" show clearly an understanding of the innocent and guileless pleasure of childhood.

If joy is one of the dominant notes of the Songs, it may be said that love is really their animating spirit. A joyful heart is naturally a loving heart, seeking to make others share its happiness; it is so with the child: he is a creature of love and he loves all things. How much true and simple love of the childish heart is revealed in the little one's apostrophe to "The Lamb!" "The pretty robin under leaves so green", the "merry, merry sparrow, swift as arrow," the little lamb wandering by the stream, the "glow-worm and the poor/emmet," all are wonders which kindle love and admiration in the child's heart and Blake sang and painted these wonders of a child. He loves not only nature, the birds, the flowers, the tiny animals, but instinctively is he drawn towards those who have returned to the

(1)Poetical Works of Blake by Sampson.page 66

the feelings of childhood; that the old folk are watching him at play is a source of encouragement and his happiness is doubled when it is witnessed.

Blake's children are, therfore, true, carefree, happy and fearless, having absolute confidence in those with whom they live; they sing of the joys unknown to the world and unconsciously shape many a life; never a thought of fear or shame comes to their mind. There is just enough idealization about his childish creations to lift them above the crowd; he has recreated the children of our visions, but he "added nothing to the child's soul except those dreams of Paradise he saw reflected in the pure eyes of children"(1) No other poem better portrays those dreams than the "Cradle Song"; to it can be applied Pater's criticism," the very perfection of such poetry often appears to depend, in part, on a certain suppression or vagueness of mere subject, so that the meaning reaches us through ways not distinctly traceable by the understanding"(2)

Sweet dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, Angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

(1) Blake by Berger. page 296.
(2) Blake by Irene Langridge. page 85.

Sweet smiles, in the night
Hover over my delight
Sweet smiles, mother's smiles
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dovelike sighs
All creation slept and smiled
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace
Sweet babe once like thee
Thy Maker lay and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When He was an infant small
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee.

Smile on thee, on me, on all;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are His own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.(1)

"In this poem, we find, says Berger, all that is sweetest in humanity, in earth, and in Heaven. (2)It is a most perfect lullaby, picturing the celestial radiance of God's sweet presence and raising our thoughts to Heaven's greatest mystery and

(1) Poetical Works of Blake, edited by Sampsom. page 71.
(2) W. Blake, Berger. p.281

gift to man. This poem is not a soul revelation, but it shows that the new poetry of the babe in his cradle could be the theme of immortal songs. How often must the words of Christ, " Suffer the little children to come unto to me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom Of God," have come to the poet's mind while writing his Songs!

We have said that the child is happy because he loves and is loved; but another source of happiness, according to Blake, is found in the unrestricted intercourse existing between him and the animal world. Now he is not attracted indifferently towards all creatures; to him nature is made up of a few domestic animals, the weak and small ones always having the preference. This characteristic tendency in the child has been expounded by the poet in "The Lamb". No where else do we find such expression of childish simplicity with a scene of such simple rural beauty! The repetition of words makes the poem very childlike, and this constitutes one of its charms, while on the other hand it also shows how well Blake understood the natural bond existing between children and animals.

" Little lamb, who made thee,
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life and bade thee feed
By stream and over the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight
Softest clothing, wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,

Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name
Little Lamb, God Bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!"(I)

The absolute sense of comradeship, of love between equals is also revealed in this poem, and it recalls much that is beautiful in pastoral life. The same theme is also the raison d'être of "The Blossom" and "The Dream". What sweet sympathy in "the glow-worm, the watchman of the night," as he leads the emmet home to its weeping little ones. The sweet tenderness which every child feels for suffering creatures is here simply expressed.

The last element which contributes so stronly to make the child happy is the feeling of nearness to God. The soul is naturally pious and this is quickly perceived in the child. Like

(I) Poetical Works of Blake, edited by Sampson. page 67.

Wordsworth, Blake believed that Heaven lies about us in our infancy. " But how differently the two poets have treated the thought. The former was inspired with reverent awe at the contemplation of the mystery of childhood; while with Blake, it seems to be part of the world he created for himself, a world of vision, a world of childlike love, where there is no time, no space, where all beauty is real and all desires are satisfied. Heavenly spirits are the constant companions of the child; they share his sorrows as well as his joys. God Himself appears to the " Little Lost Boy", " like a "Father in white", kisses the child and leads him back to his sorrowing mother.

" The little boy lost in the lonely fen
Led by the wand'ring light,
Began to cry; but God, ever nigh,
Appeared like his Father, in white.

He kissed the child, and by the hand led,
And to his mother brought,
Who in sorrow pale, thro' the lonely dale,
Her little boy weeping sought." (I)

Simple and childlike faith is again the theme of " The Chimney Sweeper". The vision granted him gives a comfort surpassing earthly joys, and he now goes forth happy even in his misery for had not

" The Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,

(I) Poetical Works of Blake, edited by Sampson.page 79

He'd have God for his father, and never want joy
Though the morning was cold,
Tom was happy and warm." (1)

That child is always happy, no matter how lonely or misunderstood, whose intercourse with the spirit world is as simple and natural as that of Blake's little hero.

Hence, from this simple faith results a simple religion; no formal prayer is uttered in the "Songs of Innocence" but the simple, loving heart needs but few words to express its feelings and spontaneously rises the song of praise; praise of the beauty of God's world, praise for the songs of the birds and the color of the flowers. What a world the child creates for God and His Angels; and it is all a reality to him Listen to these lines--

The Sun descending in the west
The evening star does shine
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower,
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night

Farewell, green fields and happy groves,
Where flocks have took delight
Where lambs have nibbled, silent moves
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing
And joy without ceasing

On each bud and blossom,
And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm.
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed." (I)

In our study of the Songs, we have seen the child full of hope, of love, and innocence; happy because he does not understand the doubts and faint-heartedness of men but as the little one increases in age and experience, the inevitable change follows. After a brief space of time, the innocent child has become disillusioned; no longer does Blake make joy and innocence the theme of his songs, but the sentiments are replaced by intense sorrow which becomes the key-note of the "Songs of Experience.

"The loveliest things in the "Songs of experience" are those that approximate nearest to the spirit and melody of the "Songs of Innocence" says the very sympathetic critic, Story."(2) The child is still the hero of the songs, but with a few exceptions, they have become very symbolical; in them we begin to trace the strong mysticism of Blake, although they have not yet reached that obscurity found in the

(I)Poetical Works of Blake, edited by Sumpson. page 75
(2) Blake, His Life, Character, and Genius. A. Story. P. 86

"Prophetic Books." He makes his poems the trumpet of his revolutionary ideas and, like most extremists, decries abuses without stating any remedy. Blake was only a dreamer, but had he had any influence over the world of thought, he would no doubt have hastened the day of child reform. Already the note Dickens was to sound in his famous novels, is heard in Blake's "Chimney Sweeper", "Holy Thursday", and "The Schoolboy" These songs picture the pathos and pity of the child's lot which no one was as yet thinking of bettering. Blake, however, sometimes takes a false and exaggerated view of the hardships of children, as for example, in the poem, "Holy Thursday"

" Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of joy?
And so many children poor?
Is it a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are filled with thorns;
It is eternal winter there.

For wher'er the sun does shine,
And wher'er the rain does fall,
Babe can never hunger there
For poverty the mind appal. (1)

But in "The Schoolboy" we read the suffering of the little soul ruled by the brute force of inhuman teachers who seem to be of the type who knew of the human soul thus much that it had a faculty called memory and could be/acted upon through the muscular integument by appliance of birch rods.

"I love to rise in a summer morn
When birds sing in every tree;
The distant huntsman winds his horn,
And the skylark sings with me.
O! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morning,
O! it drives all joy away
Under a cruel eye outworn
The little ones spend the day
In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit
And spend many an anxious hour,
Nor in my book can I take delight
Nor sit in learning's bower,
Worn thro' with the dreary shower.

(1) Poetical Works of Blake. P. 93.

How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing?
How can a child, when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing
And forget his youthful spring?" (I)

Has not Blake expressed herein, the thoughts which during the dawning century, were to form the theme of poetry destined to be one of the great factors in bettering the child's condition. For though Blake lived in a world he himself had fashioned, seemingly oblivious to all that was occuring in the great commercial and social world, he was not a stranger to the sufferings of the great city. The cry of misery heard in "London" is full of anguish and it is one of the first social trumpet-call which will rouse the world to better things. His little "Chimney Sweeper" reveals vividly the agony of a lonely child. Like Dickens and a few other later writers , he thoroughly understood the terrible but mute agony of childish loneliness.

" A little black thing among the snow,
Crying 'weep! 'weep! in notes of woe
Where are thy father and mother,say ?
They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil'd among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

(I)Poetical Works of Blake, edited by Sampson. page 100.

And because I am happy and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God, and His Priest and King,
Who make a Heaven of our misery " (1)

The little Black Boy gives an insight into what Blake thought of Child slavery. The last line

" Are such things done on Albion's shore?"

reveals all his hatred for that depraved condition of things which is an insult thrown in the face of England who allows children to be sacrificed to ambition, to lust and does nothing to save them. The same notes will be sounded in Thompson's "Darkest England".

The studies and quotations of the "Songs of Innocence" and "Songs of Experience" given above prove clearly that Blake understood the various moods and emotions of childhood: the power of keen perception, of imaginary creations, the incapacity of a sustained and prolonged effort resulting in a certain want of sequence in the utterance of thoughts, the natural piety of a loving soul,--all these diverse feelings have been expressed in a language sweet and childlike; the very repetition of many phrases adds charms to the Songs and gives them an attraction which is unique in English poetry.

The natural and spiritual effluence of joyous infancy flowing from the "Songs," and he who has an eye still simple and a heart free from passion's sting, if he has the heart of a child, capable of responding to the emotions of an

(1) Poetical Works of Blake, edited by Sampson, page 104

innocent and childlike soul, he will fully understand the message Blake brought to the cold and formal eighteenth century. It heeded it not, and child knowledge which in Blake is found budding and blossoming like the leaves and flowers of early Spring, gave promise of the ripe fruit which would be reaped in the childhood poems of Wordsworth and Thompson.

Chapter II.

Wordsworth.

Poems Discussed

1. Ode- Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood
2. The Prelude or Growth of a Poet 's Mind
3. Poems Referring to the Period of Childhood
    1. My Heart Leaps up when I behold
    2. Characteristics of a Child three Years Old.
    3. Alice Fell, or Poverty.
    4. Lucy Grey, or Solitude.
    5. We are Seven.
    6. The Pet Lamb.
    7. To H.C. Six Years Old.
    8. Influence of Natural Objects in calling forth and strengthening the imagination in Boyhood and early Youth.
    9. The Norman Boy.

Wordsworth

As we have seen, the cornerstone of childhood comprehension in English poetry was laid by William Blake in his Songs of Innocence and Wordsworth, with whom he had much in common, was to be the architect who could continue and ornament the structure. Like the old Gothic Cathedrals, which required centuries to build so years would be required to convince a materialistic nation that the child is beautiful because he is a child not despite the fact; andtthat it is the innocent soul fresh from the hands of God that makes him beautiful. The later toiler in the realms of poetry did not work in vain. Through the arch he raised, gleams every rainbow hue of childhood in its variety and delicacy. " To the store of human wisdom," the early Victorian poet " has contributed his own peculiar sense of the sublime and prophetic in childhood,"(I) thus opening the minds of readers and poets alike to the treasures of childhood life.

Wordsworth was a true poet, and as such he had more enthusiasm and tenderness than other men; a more perceptive mind and a more sensitive soul. His sympathies were wider than those of others; he loved man, nature, childhood and animals, and this universal sympathy gave him greater insight into God's great world; his power of seeing absent things as though they were present and of recalling memories of the past

(I) Theology in English Poets. S. Brooke, page 121.

enables him to recreate the distant in time and thus he reveals a new and immortal world. In the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, he says that a Poet is one " pleased with his own passions and volitions and rejoicing more than other men in the spirit of life within him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions, and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them." (1) So Wordsworth endeavored to understand as far as he could the human agency which cooperates with external powers and makes beauty and grandeur possible. It is this habitual state of mind which influenced Wordsworth in his investigations of the thoughts and feelings of happy children; in his intercourse with them, he sought guidance for he believed they were nearer the truth than man;he sought enlightenment for he believed their purity made them see things which were concealed from him but which he too could attain if only his eye could learn to see.

Wordsworth is called poet of childhood because " from a familiar observation of the ways of children and much more from a restrospect of his own mind when a child, he gathered more reverential notions of that state than fall to the lot of ordinary observers; and, escaping from the dissonant wranglings of men, has tuned his lyre, though but for occasional harmonies to the milder utterances of that age." (2) Children fascinated the poet but unlike Blake, he does not content himself with picturing the simple happiness of the child but

(1) Wordsworth by Winchester. page 21
(2) Lamb's Criticism from W. by Harper page 246

recognizes the " sanctity of Childhood" and it is this reverential attitude towards the child " which gives a peculiar significance to most of the poems grouped together as " Referring to the Period of Childhood".(1) This first of his poems of childhood

" My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So it is now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old, " Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety." (2)

forms the headstone of Wordsworth's entire childhood study. It is the motto of the Ode-Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood" and the thought which prompted and animated the writing of the poems having children for their subject. Although Wordsworth does not place the Ode among the group referring to childhood, we shall include it in our study; for as Sneath says, it gives an insight into the poet's psychology of childhood, One critic says that " the sanctity of childhood is the theme of the Ode." (3) It opens with a description of the poet's early childhood, and in exquisite language, he pictures strange experiences in which, according to his belief all mankind share; " It is an experience which

(1)Lamb's Criticism from W. by Harper. page 246
(2)Wordsworth's Works page 79. Edited by Hutchinson.
(3)Wordsworth by Harper page 125, Vol.II.

vindicates for childhood superior impressibility as compared with later years." (1) " But what according to Wordsworth is the power of the soul in these early years and what the blessedness of its hours? His answer contains his psychological ideas on that mysterious period of life. The small feeble body of the child belies his soul's immensity. Not the man but the child is the best philosopher; who keeps his glorious heritage; who is the eye among the blind. It is he who reads " the eternal deep" haunted forever by the eternal mind."(2) He is the prophet and seer who intuits profound and vital truths which men toil a lifetime to find, lost in darkness. To the child immortality is an ever present reality, brooding over him like the dey " and stronger too is his grasp of fundamental truths than that of full grown man and far superior also is his intellectual vision. ' But the child is not conscious of this vision,' says Stopford Brooke endeavoring to interpret the poem." (3) He does not know that he sees God; that he is as he speaks revealing the truths of the world in which he half lives; that his common thoughts and feelings have their beauty from his direct insights of the glory he has left." He knows nothing of it. But we looking back on our childhood, or looking at childhood itself, from an age out of which has faded the light we had, remember the light of this vision in our own childhood and recognize its results and quality in children."(4)

(1) Wordsworth. Harper. page 125, Vol.II
(2) Ibid " " " "
(3) Wordsworth. Sneath.page 210
(4) Theology in the Eng. Poets. Stopford Brooke. page 274

The thought of these years of happy childhood breeds in the poet perpetual benediction and he raises a song of praise:

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive !
The thoughts of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction; not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:-
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Falling from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing." (I)

(I) Poetical Works Of W.W. Hutchinson. page 584.

The same thought is in Wordsworth's mind as he writes the popular little poem, " We Are Seven", and the less known one "Anecdote for fathers". The obstinate faith and love so strong in the heart of the little mountaineer, came not from perversion or ignorance but because she was nearer the truth. " If the beauty of this poem is to be fully appreciated," says George, " we must look at it in the light of the Ode, remembering that Wordsworth's ideas of " immortality rest upon the heaven taught wisdom of the child, before its ideas are corrupted by the senses and the trailing clouds of glory disappear." (I)

Beautiful and fresh poems never loose freshness and although all readers are familiar with " We Are Seven", we quote it again in its entirety:-

-- A simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb
What should it know of death?

I met a little Cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair,
Her beauty made me glad.

Poems W.W. edited by Wetherell.- Notes page 186.-

Sisters and brothers, little maid,
How many may you be ?"
How many ? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

And where are they ? I pray you tell."
She answered, Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven ! I pray you tell,
Sweet maid, how this may be."

Then did the little maid reply,
Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in church-yard lie
Beneath the church-yard tree."

You run about my little maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church yard laid
Then ye are only five.

Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little maid replied.
Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

And often after sunset sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer
and eat my supper there.

The first that died was sister Jane.
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain
And then she went away.

So in the church-yard she was laid;
And when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide
My brother John was forced to go
And he lies by her side."

How many are you, then, said I
If they two are in heaven ?"
Quick was the little maid's reply,
O master ! we are seven."

But they are dead; those two are dead !
Their spirits are in heaven !"
Twas throwing words away; for still
The little maid would have her will
And said, " May, we are Seven." (I)

For the first time in childhood poetry, the profound fact was revealed that the mind of a child"can not admit the idea of death, any more than the fountain of light can comprehend darkness." (2)

In the second poem mentioned, an " Anecdote for Fathers", Wordsworth questions little Edward, a child who had been living with him for some time, as to the reasons why he should prefer living in one place more than in another. Would he rather be at Kilve, by the seaside or here at Liswyn Farm ? The little fellow who evidently does not enjoy the company of his questioner replies that he prefers Kilve. But the psychologist is not satisfied and he insists on learning the reason for the child's preference. Now too many questions usually put children on their guard; they can not give an account of what they think and the greater the anxiety of the mature person to get at their real mind, the less are they able or willing to make it known. The little hero anyhow to end the matter tells

(I) Poems of W.W. edited by Hutchinson. page 84.
(2) W.W. edited by Wetherell-Notes page 186. De Quincey Criticism

the poet that

" At Kilve there was a weather cock
And that is the reason why" (1)

Wordsworth recognizing that the answer is a prevarication, is conscious of the wrong done and he points to the moral of the incident with perfect candor against himself:

" O dearest, dearest boy ! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn." (2)

This psychological tendency of the poet is even present in his mind as he analyses the soul of his little daughter, Catherine. We feel all the analytical acuteness and as he dwells on the happiness and beauty, his mind sees her holding converse with the unseen world, thereby enjoying " society in solitude."

" Loving is she, and tractable, though wild;
And innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And as a fagot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less in unattended and alone
That when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity;

(1) "Anecdote for Fathers"-Poems on W.W. edited by Hutchinson p.85
(2) Ibid

Even so, this happy creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.(1)

Perhaps this thought of the nearness of God to the child has never been more exquisitely expressed than in the sonnet composed on the sea shore:

"The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the sea:
Listen ! the Mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder - everlastingly.
Dear Child ! dear Girl ! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched with solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year." (2)

And with what wonder is not the poet's mind filled as he watches little Hartely Colridge, "that exquisitely wild creature whose fancies come from afar."

O thou ! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze like motion and self-born carol;
Thou faery voyager ! that dost float
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream

(1)Poems of W.W. edited by Hutchinson. page 80
(2) Poetical Works of W.W. edited by Hutchinson. page 258.

Suspended in a stream as clear as sky,

Where earth and heaven do make one imagery." (1)

While contemplating the little fellow's beauty, the poet's thoughts dip into past and future. His mind sees farther than his eye and his heart feels more than his hand transcribes:

" O blessed vision ! happy child !

Thou art so exquisitely wild,

I think of thee with many fears

For what may be thy lot in future years." (2)

The smiles of Dora, his infant daughter seem so sweet and fill him with such rapturous thoughts because he believes she sees angels hovering about her and in their presence does she live.

All this wealth of child poetry is due to Wordsworth'S religious and psychological ideas on childhood and to these, the poets of the nineteenth century are indebted for the revelation of the possible workings of the child's mind. The mysticism of Wordsworth's " childhood memories " as recalled in the Ode and as he would see them in the children who are the heroes of the above quoted poems, does not concern us at present and will not be discussed for as Gingerich says the validity of the doctrine depends on the point of view. But the study of the narration of these "childhood memories" as related in"The Prelude" will give an insight into the influences which fashioned the poet's mind and which he believed would affect other children's minds.

He wrote somewhere that " diffidence and veneration are

(1)Poetical Works of W.W. edited by Hutchinson. page 88
(2)Ibid.

the sacred attributes of childhood; its appropriate calling is not to distinguish in the fear of being deceived or degraded; not to analyze with scrupulous minuteness but to accumulate in general confidence; its instincts, its safety, its benefit, its glory is to love, to admire, to feel, to labor." (I) These sentiments, Wordsworth wrote in mature life but in them are crystallized his soul history in youth, as delineated in " The Prelude".

Love and sensibility are the first sensations awakened in the child. This sensibility links him with the external world making all things beautiful. It gives him says a sympathetic critic, " the first poetic view of our human life." This prosaic world is transformed as he holds " mute dialogues with his mother's heart and drinks in feelings from her eye;" and this beautiful change, Wordsworth has expressed in very beautiful language:-

Blest the infant Babe,
(For with my best conjecture I would trace
Our Being's earthly progress,) blest the Babe,
Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep,
Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye !
For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
Objects through widest intercourse of sense.
No outcast he, bewildered and depressed;

(I) W.W. by Harper.page 125. Vol.II.

Along his infant veins are interfused
The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature that connect him with the world.
Is there a flower, to which he points with hand
Too weak to gather it, already love
Drawn from love's purest earthly found for him
Hath beautified that flower; already shades
Of pity cast from inward tenderness
Do fall around him upon aught that bears
Unsightly marks of violence or harm.
Emphatically such a Being lives,
Frail creature as he is, helpless as frail,
An inmate of this active universe.
For feeling has to him imparted power
That through the growing faculties of sense
Doth like an agent of the one great Mind
Create, creator and receiver both,
Working but in alliance with the works
Which it beholds. - Such, verily, is the first
Poetic spirit of our human life,
By uniform control of after years,
In most, abated or suppressed; in some,
Through every change of growth and of decay,
Pre-eminent till death.
From early days,
Beginning not long after that first time
In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch
I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart,

I have endeavored to display the means
Whereby this infant sensibility
Great birthright of our being, was in me
Augmented and sustained." (I)

In order that the first impressions made on the child's mind may be favorable to the development of these sentiments of love and sensibility, he must be brought directly in touch with beautiful and wonderful things. Nature should, therefore be one of the child's play-fellows: In quotations given, Wordsworth shows very clearly that a love of nature is a great estate with which to endow a child; it is the source of happiness, happiness of the best kind in taking possession of a world designed for his use and enjoyment. The poet shows that this intimate intercourse with Nature, brings the soul to a place where many roads meet: to the confines of art, for what can be understood can be expressed and interpreted; to the confines of religion, for a child's soul hushed in wonder, is very near to God.

"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 didst 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-

(I) The Prelude.- Works of WW. edited by Hutchinson.
Book II. page 645.

With life and nature - purifying thus
The elements of feelings and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness."

If the love which Nature inspires is to be lasting, the element of admiration must be linked with it. This instinct is in every child and it must be fostered by contact with beauty which is real. Spalding has admirably said that " beauty is nobly useful. It illumines the mind, raises the imagination, and warms the heart. It is not an added quality but grows from the inner nature of things; it is the thought of God working outward." (2) Wordsworth worshipped at beauty's shrine even as a child and in his autobiography, he describes the effects produced on his mind by intimate intercourse with God's world, in very accurate language:-

"Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear;
Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
To range the open heights where wood-cocks run
Among the smooth green turf.(3)

(1) Influence of Natural Objects. by W.W.
(2) Education and the Higher Life. Spalding page 66. Essay on "The Love of Excellence."
(3) Book 1 The Prelude Poems of W.W.

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange that all
The terrors, pains, and earthly miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself ! Praise to the end !
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use
Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim. " (I)

How minutely does he not enter into the question of the influence of external nature upon the human character. He is deeply convinced that impressions of external nature are felt by all human beings and that in their childhood while exercising their senses, they must have been not only nourishers but often the fathers of their finest and best emotions. To the poet these feelings, these emotions came when alone, running along the moonlit glens to set his snares; or when chasing the reflection of a star on the ice and secluding himself from his companions

(I) Book1, "The Prelude". Poems by W.W. edited by Hutchinson.p. 637

into some silent bay, he

"Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me - even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round !
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.
Ye presences of Nature in the sky
And on the earth ! Ye visions of the hills !
And Souls of lonely places ! can I think
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
Such ministry, when ye through many a year
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
On coves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
Impressed upon all forms and characters
Of danger or desire; and thus did make
The surface of the universal earth
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
Work like a sea? " (1)

The "Blest Babe " who is part of the shining web of the universe is growing; he is learning to spell the universe letter by letter and who will be the most sympathetic teacher for the growing mind? According to Wordsworth, the greater part of education consists in a daily intercourse with the larger aspects of Nature. To the development of this theory, the poet has consecrated the first books of " The Prelude " and in Book V, he

(1)Book 1 .The Prelude. Poems of W.W. edited by Hutchinson.P.639

pictures the "Model Child" of the 19th century school.

" Dull early trained to worship seemliness,
This "model of a child" is never known
To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath
His dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
As generous as a fountain; selfishness
May not come near him, nor the little throng
Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path;
The wandering beggars propogate his name,
Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,
And nature or supernatural fear,
Unless it leaps upon him in a dream,
Touches him not. To enhance the wonder, see
How arch his notices, how nice his sense
Of the ridiculous; not blind is he
To brood follies of the licensed world,
Yet innocent himself withal, though shrewd,
And can read lectures upon innocence;
A miracle of scientific lore,
Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,
And tell you all their cunning; he can read
The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;
He knows the policies of foreign lands;
Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,
The whole world over, tight as beads of dew
Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;
All things are put to question; he must live
Knowing that he grows wiser every day

Or else not live at all, and seeing too
Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:
For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,
Pity the tree.-" (I)

The sarcasm of the whole section is delightful. The false educational views prevalent at the time have produced a little paragon of perfection by excessive training, the breaking of the child's will, thwarting his feelings, bridling his imagination so that he has become only the shadow of what a modern parent or teacher would wish a child to be. The poet once wrote to Miss Isabelle Fenwick :" I am absolutely convinced that children will derive more benefit from books which are not unworthy the perusal of persons of any age. I protest with my whole heart against those productions, so abundant in the present day, in which the doings of children are dwelt upon as if they were incapable of being interested in anything else."(2) In Book V he dwells on this subject at length; Sneath commenting on this particular section finds that there is hardly anything more delightful in the poet's entire autobiographical poem, than the tribute Wordsworth pays these dreamers and writers of tales. What a ministry they perform ! What a benediction to childhood ! They minister to the child's self-forgetfulness, transforming the dull world of actuality into the enchanting world of fancy and day-dreams. The tribute, to a large extent, reveals the influence of the spirit of romance

(I) The Prelude. Works of W.W. edited by Hutchinson. page 670.
(2) W. Wordsworth edited by Wetherell.

on the mind of the child." (I)

A gracious spirit o'er this earth presides,
And o'er the heart of man invisibly
It comes, to works of unreproved delight,
And tendency benign, directing those
Who care not, know not, think not what they do.
The tales that charm away the wakeful nights
In Araby, romances; legends penned
For solace by dim light of monkish lamps;
Fictions, for ladies of their loves, devised
By youthful squires; adventures endless, spun
By the dismantled warrior in old age,
Out of the bowels of those very schemes
In which his youth did first extravegate;
These spread like day, and something in the shape
Of these will live till man shall be no more.
Dumb yearnings, hidden appatites, are ours,
And they must have their food. Our childhood sits
Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne
That hath more power than all the elements.
I guess not what this tells of Being past,
Nor what it augurs of the life to come;
But so it is, and, in that dubious hour,
That twilight when we first begin to see
This dawning earth, to recognise, expect,
And in the long probation that ensues
The time of trial, ere we learn to live

(I) Wordsworth by Sneath. page 30

In reconcilement with our stinted powers;
To endure this stage of meagre vassalage
Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,
Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows
To custom, mettlesome , and not yet tamed
And humbled dawn;- oh ! then we feel, we feel,
We know where we have friends. Ye dreamers, then,
Forgers of daring tales ! we bless you, then
Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
Philosophy will call you; then we feel
With what, and how great might ye are in league,
Who make our wish, our power, our thought a deed,
An empire, a possession,- ye whom time
And seasons serve; all Faculties to whom
Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,
Space like a heaven filled up with northern lights
Here, nowhere, there, everywhere at once." (I)

From this retrospective study of his own childhood memories in the Prelude, Wordsworth revealed the divine and fresh potencies possessed but dormant in the child. The poet does not deny the facts upon which scientists and psychologists would dwell; to them, the child is an impotent little creature whose perceptive faculties are not trained; childhood is made of sweetness and innocence, they admit but they immediately add that these are the results of ignorance; in the child are found inclinations to anger, jealousy, vengeance and the other vices so devastating

(I)The Prelude. Book V. L.491-533 page 673.

in their effects if not uprooted in early youth. All these truisms are accepted by Wordswoeth; but beneath the clayey element, he would have us discover the nobler instincts of love, trust, admiration, innocence which make the child's soul beautiful; he would have us behold in the child the promise of something divine, something immortal.

Wordsworth partially accomplished the task of childhood portraiture by giving his autobiography in The Prelude; however, here, we become acquainted with what might be called a"child-wonder", and he himself acknowledges with a certain regret that habits of serious thought have rendered him unable from sharing the simple pleasures of children. Many of his biographers corroborate this self-accusation. Canon Rawnsley, one day, suggested that the poet of childhood must have been very fond of children.-" Ay,ay," said the old servant who was questioned, " he was fond of children, like enough, but children was niver vara fond o'him. Ye see he was a man of moods, niver no certainty about him." (I) " He never cared for children", said another old man who in his boyhood had known Wordsworth,"Ye may be certain o'that for didn't I have to pass him four times a week up to his door wi meat ? And he never once said owt. Ye're well aware if he'd been fond of children he ud a spoke ". (2) A more sympathetic critic, Miss Harriet Martineau, describes the poet' intersource with children quite differently from what is suggested by the old dalesmen's accounts. She says she often met him attended perhaps by a half score of cottager's

(I)Wordsworth by W. Raleigh. page I63
(2) " by W. Winchester. page I52

children, the youngest pulling at his cloak or holding by his trousers, while he cut ash switches for them out of the hedges." (I) However different these points of view are, we may assert with some certainty that the " Poet of childhood" was not a friend of children. On the whole he was too transcendental to take children as they were; his meditative mind never considered merely the external activities and amusements of children but sought to analyse the motives, the thoughts and all actions of children.

Though Wordsworth often passes his children studies through the crucible of his own personality, he never treats them as adults; children they are, and children they remain; the "sweetness of their souls he takes into his own and although we feel the poet's presence in his childhood poems, we feel that the sacred interpretation he is giving of the child, is true to nature. This is confirmed in one of the exquisite pastorals; " The Pet Lamb". It was suggested to Wordsworth by an apparently trivial incident. Little Barbara Lewthwaite, " a maid of beauty rare" (2) is represented as giving its evening meal to a little snow white lamb tethered to a stone some distance from her home. As he sees her uttering the words: "Drink, pretty creature, drink," (3) Wordsworth watches the pair with admiration; Barbara is now returning home, but she is loath to leave the little creature;

> But ere ten yards were gone, her footsteps did she stay:
> Right towards the lamb she looked." (4)

(I) Wordsworth, Makers of Eng. Poetry, Dawson. page 150
(2) The Pet Lamb. Poems edited by Hutchinson. page 87.
(3) Ibid
(4) Ibid.

The poet now sees in her facial expression a wealth of thoughts which were in reality a reflex of his own, and in " measured numbers" he expresses them:

"What ails thee,young One? What? Why pull so at thy cord
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be;
Rest, little one, rest, what is it that aileth thee?"(1)

Like a fond little mother, Barbara tells the lamb of all that should make it happy, its own beauty and strength, the food it now receives and the tree that shades it from the warm rays of the sun; but still

"It will not, will not rest! Poor creature, can it be
That 'tis that mother's heart which is working so in thee?
Thinks that I know not of belike to thee are dear.
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear."(2)

The little maiden tries to soothe her pet by telling it of the affection lavished on it by her own heart; still it is restless, and now she tells it of the dangers which lie in wait for the defenceless little creature and then leaves it saying:

"Night and day, thou art safe,-our cottage is hard by
Why bleat so after me? Why pull so at thy chain?
Sleep- and at break of day,- I will come to thee again."(3)

Wordsworth then watches her direct her steps homeward. The sympathy, love, and kindness of little Barbara for dumb creatures are revealed in this soliloquy, and was Wordsworth one of the fir-st poets to remind the world that those powers exist in the

(1) (2) (3) The Pet Lamb. Poems of W.W. edited by Hutchinson p.87.

souls of all true hearted children ?-

Again in " Lucy Gray" he immortalized the devoted service even to death, which is one of the most beautiful characteristics of a child. The theme was furnished by his sister,Dorothy,who told him the story of a " little girl who not far from Halifax in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snow-stoem. Her footsteps were traced by her parents to the middle of the lock of a canal. and no vestige of her, backwards or forward, could be traced. The body however was found in the canal."(I) With what child-like love is this sweet ballad not filled ?

" Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And when I crossed the wild
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
- The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door !

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

(I)Wordsworth by Dowden.page 375

" To-night will be a stormy night -
You to town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow

That, Father, will I gladly do;
'Tis scarcely afternoon-
The minster-clock has just struck two
And yonder is the moon !"

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;-and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe;
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time;
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb;
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept- and turning homeward, cried,
' In heaven we all shall meet;'
--When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge
And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed;
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none !(I)

De Vere says that Wordsworth never goes out of his way to find some form of suffering unheard of before but in his hands ordinary things become extraordinary because he sees in them and teaches his readers to see depths and heights unsuspected."(2)

(I) The Works of W.W. edited by Hutchinson. page 82.
(2) Wordsworth by Sneath page 98.

Where can one find a more homely theme than that upon which " Alice Fell " a little girl weeping because an old ragged cloak, priceless in her eyes, was caught in the wheel of a chaise and torn. True, it was written, as the poet tells us, to gratify Mr. Graham of Glasgow who was a zealous coadjutor of Mr. Clarkson and a man of ardent humanity. The incident had happened to himself and he urged me to put it into verse for humanity's sake," (I) but does it not reveal the sympathetic understanding of the poet for suffering children ?

" Whence comes," said I, " this piteous moan?"
And there a little girl I found,
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.
"My cloak" ! No other word she spoke
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break;

Up to the tavern-door we past;
Of Alice and her grief I told;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old."(2)

As stated before, children fascinated him; they interested him intensely for he desired to get facts about humanity so he never loses sight of the ideal set himself " every great poet is a teacher ". The note written to Miss Isabelle Fenwick embodies this doctrine: " I do not regret that I took the trouble of the relating the incident of the " Norman Boy" in verse; for

(I)Wordsworth by Sneath. page 184.
(2) Alice Fell. Poems of W.W. edited by Hutchinson.page 82

not improbably the fact is illustrative of the boy's piety and may concur with my other pieces on children, to produce profitable reflection among my youthful readers" (1)

" ...The Boy was busier still,with work of anxious heed.

For covert from the keen north wind, his hands a hut had made.
A thing of such materials framed, by a builder such as he.
The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly lacked aught
That skill or means of his could add,but the architect had wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross,well-shaped with fingers nice,
To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.
That Cross he now was fastening there, as the surest power and best
For supplying all deficiencies,all wants of the rude nest
In which,from burning heat, or tempest driving far and wide
The innowent Boy, else shelterless,his lonely head must hide."(2)

That Wordsworth knew much of child psychology, the science which since 1880 has so contributed to change the world's attitude towards children, is further evidenced from the advice given in a letter concerning Education. He insists on the question of the influence of external nature on human character, declaring this influence to be very general." (3)

Wordsworth saw farther into the minds and souls, hopes and fears, loves and hates of a child than any other poet. Someone has said that it takes a hero to understand a hero, and it may be added that it takes a child-like soul to comprehend sympathet-

(I)Notes on W.W. edited by N.Smith. page 500 Vol.I
(2) The Norman Boy. Pooms of W.W. edited by Hutchinson. page 91
(3) Wordsworth by Harper. Vol. II page 437

ically childhood in all its diverse phases. Wordsworth was gifted with that soul; as the waters of oblivion gradually erepth over his own childhood, a few of the higher peaks of experience remained above the waves. These islands were interesting for they were filled with treasures. Just as these islands out from the mainland preserve a record of the life that existed before geographical changes occurred, so these isolated memories of childhood revealed altitudes of mind which the poet knew how to exploit; he left the records of his travels in " The Prelude". He looked upon his childhood with a reverence filled with something akin to awe.

Our reasons for calling Wordsworth the poet of childhood do not lie in his having excelled as Stevenson does in enjoying the " child's childishness" and in expressing this in felicitous verse. The poems found in the"Child Garden of Verse " are not enveloped in that heavenly atmosphere which penetrates that which Wordsworth wrote on the child. Stevenson was a psychologist; he knew the powers and the weaknesses of the human heart and we find the true characterisation stamped onnall the living figures he placed in the " Gallery of Immortals". Full scope is given to this power in the presentation of characters in his novels but we find the quality peeping from behind the child words in the " Garden of Verse".

The "Garden of Verse" might be divided into three parts: The singer of childhood has poems for the child; poems about the child; and poems by the child. Many poems which are the child's own words and thoughts; poems which are man's retrospective glance on days that are no more; and lastly, poems in which both man and child meet; the mature mind's thoughts are expressed rather tersely by a word or two in the last line of the poem.

Stevenson himself divided the "Garden of Verse" into four parts. Concerning this division, we find in an article on " Childish Things" the following criticism: " The first section is the most characteristic and entertaining as both child and man come before us in a most exquisite Stevensonian style".(1) The dreamy mysticism of Blake is absent from the poem but we find a simplicity of language which recalls the " Songs of Innocence". Few poems picture better the mind of the child than " My Shadow", " The Land of Counterpane ", and " The Lamplighter", for they summarize all the feelings of children; they show us what he thinks and how things strike his imagination, they are the unalloyed and literal transcript of the workings in the child's mind. Stevenson was the first English poet to strike this particular note in English literature. The door being opened, how many later nineteenth century poets were to follow! But to return to Wordsworth. If he were unable to enjoy the child's " sweet childishness" as Stevenson did, he had

(1) R.A. Jack. Childish Things. Essay.

a power of observation which enabled him to " catch " the child in all his genuine simplicity. He admired children because he believed them to be nearer the truth than the full grown man; this belief prompted the great " Ode" as stated above and he lived up to this belief; he sang of affections which are not mere instincts of temperament but those nobly simple upon which all that is lasting will be built.

If we except the poems, " The Pet Lamb", and " We are Seven" which may be enjoyed by some children, we may say that Wordsworth did not write <u>for</u> children no more than will his great rival Francis Thompson; he wrote <u>of</u> them. He saw in the child an unfolding bundle of human possibilities which are to be developed for he had already recognised the great truth which England wished to ignore, that if salvation was to be brought to her, she must begin by rehabilitating the child. The greatest poet of nature sent down streams of higher truth fresh and purifying winds of feelings to those who seek to return to reality and is not the study of the child the surest road thereto? Wordsworth held within his hands all the " pigments for child portraiture, he had the love which understands without words; he had the masterly art capable of expressing what he conceived; he had the grasp on the eternities of Catholic philosophy." (1)

(1) Catholic World, Childhood in the 17th Century Poetry, 1906.

Chapter III.

Thompson.

Francis Thompson.

" The child is the symbol of general evolutionary changes."

Poems Discussed:-

- Little Jesus
- The Making of Viola
- Daisy
- The Poppy
- To Monica Thought Dying.
- To Olivia
- To my Godchild.

Sister Songs

- The Proem
- Part the First
- Part the Second
- Inscription.

Francis Thompson.

Wordsworth was a power, a light in English literature of the nineteenth century. The sound philosophy of his " Ode to Duty", to mention only one of his poems, reached the hearts of a sincere but materialistic people, and its teachings were not unheeded; but when the poet-philosopher became the poet of childhood, England in disgust shrugged its shoulders and with cynical pity said the poet was mad.

The bard, however, had not cried in the wilderness; and soo n undiscovered sympathisers, who seemed to have remained silent through fear, loudly, and clearly proclaimed that they, too, believed in childhood and its divine possibilities. No longer will that theme of perennial interest be banished from the world of letters; but poets and novelists will now treat it in a self-conscious way. The child will often become a pretense and often will be made the subject of sentimental poetry, though it was evident that childhood would permanently form a part of modern poetry and the results would be deep and far reaching.

Wordsworth had contributed to English poetry his immortal " Ode"; but, as stated in the preceding chapter, he was too grave and transcendental in general, to take children as they were by nature. One can not help feeling at times that it is not the child itself so much as the wonder of the man at it.

which often speaks in his poems. Poets often treated " the child" either as a flower in a crannied wall, " giving fragrant kisses, or as a theological abstraction". (I)

From no one English singer had come all there was to say of the child; a complete, symmetrical exposition was still wanting. Indeed, if it had been produced during the earlier part of the century, would England have been aroused by its revelation? Gradually, however, great social changes, a return to religious ideals so influenced English minds that when the voice of Francis Thompson championed the cause of the child, he was recognised as a singer, a singer of childhood worthy of being placed next to if not before Blake and Wordsworth, for in the later singer, we find united that which existed separately in in his two great predecessors.

Blake, as already stated, made himself a child with children; his"Songs " are full of simplicity both in thought and language; a guileless sincerity fills each one; Wordsworth, who has all the knowledge and apprehension of Blake, sees in the child's simplicity and purity the reflection of God's attributes. In Francis Thompson, we have the tenderness and sweet familiarity of Blake, and the reverent wonder of Wordsworth, but we have more. Thompson recalls to our minds and makes us feel that

(I) Miss I.GUINEY in Childhood in 17th Century Poetry. Catholic World.

all in this world is in a state of evolution, is a period of formation, and of this evolutionary change, the child stands out as the universal symbol. But, the main reasons for calling Thompson the poet of childhood are these : He has the power of interpreting its feelings; he gives voice to its ideas; he is the fervent admirer of its idealistic beauty and exquisite purity. Some of these powers he shares with Blake and Wordsworth, but if all these were not strong enought to give him the title, one las trait may be shown which belongs exclusively to him, that of awakening to the beauties of poetry, the soul of the child.

One critic has said that "though his poems on childhood possess undoubted charm, yet one may question their greatness. The subjective note so persistent in them all, informs them with a pathos fascinating and artistic, it may be; the poet looms largely in them all; he is studying his own moods, and sad moods they are." (1) For this rather harsh criticisms, he himself is partially responsible. Does he not say in his " Essay on Shelley ", that " we of this self-conscious,incredulous generation sentimentalise our children, analyse our children think we are endowed with a special capacity to sympathise and identify ourselves with children; we play at being children. And the result is that we are not more childlike but our

(1) The Message of Francis Thompson, A Sister of Notre Dame. P.43

children are less childlike. It is so tiring to stoop to the child, so much easier to lift the child to you." (1)

This criticism may be true, but only in some cases, and serves as an argument for critics who do not look with favor on his childhood poems. But these very critics, who, supported by this self-accusation, say that Thompson voices his admiration, his thoughts, his soul ecstasies aroused by the vision of childhood, rather than lends his lips to its own, forget the two poems, " Ex Ore Infantium" and "The Making of Viola." In " Ex Ore Infantium", are we not listening to a prayer falling from the lips of Innocence, although a poet is uttering it ?

Little Jesus, wast Thou shy
Once, and just so small as I ?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me?
Didst Thou sometimes think of there
And ask where all the angels were ?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were;
And at waking 't would distress me--

(1) Essay on Shelley. Works of F. Thompson. Vol.III

Not an angel there to dress me !
Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The angels, that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles ? Did the things
Play Can you see me? through their wings?
And did Thy Mother let Thee spoil
Thy robes with playing on our soil?
How nice to have them always new
In Heaven, because 't was quite clean blue!
Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way?
And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long ?
And dost Thou like it best, that we
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?
I used to think before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.
And did Thy Mother at the night
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed?
Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small:
And Thou knowest I cannot pray
To Thee in my father's way--
When Thou was so little, say,
Couldst Thou talk Thy Father's way ?
So, a little Child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair),
And say:" O Father, I Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one."

And he will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since Thou was young! (1)

Never once do we feel the personality of the writer. He voices, as the author of " The Message of Francis Thompson" says the child's apprehension of the awful thruth of those mysterious words: " Et verbum caro factum est", et habitavit in nobis". (2)

The kind critic, John Craig, has summarised all that can be said about " The Making of Viola" in the following lines:"So

(1) Ex Ore Infantium, Works of Francis Thompson, page 21, Vol.I
(2)Gospel of St. John, Chapter I, Verse 14

printed word can convey more than a hint of the ineffable imagery of ' The Making of Viola' . One has often when looking at the angelic loveliness of a little child dwelt even if nebulously, upon the thought that such beauty could be made only in heaven. Who but a heaven-inspired genius could have expressed such a thought so beautifully as has Francis Thompson in this exquisite verse? In it he has pictured the Father of Heaven ordering the making of Viola"(1)

The Father of Heaven
Spinn, daughter Mary, spin,
Twirl your wheel with silver din;
Spin, daughter Mary, spin,
Spin a tress for Viola.

Angels.
Spin, Queen Mary, a
Brown tress for Viola!

7

All things being accomplished, saith the Father of Heaven:
Bear her down, and bearing, sing,
Bear her down on spyless wing,
Bear her down, and bearing, sing,
With a sound of Viola.

Angels.
Music as her name is, a
Sweet sound of Viola!

(1) F. Thompson and his Poetry. Catholic World. by. J. Craig.

VIII.

Wheeling angels, past espial,
Danced her down with sound of viol;
Wheeling angels, past espial,
Descanting on " Viola."

Angels.
Sing in our footing,a
Lovely lilt of " Viola!"

IX

Baby smiled, mother wailed,
Earthward while the sweetling sailed;
Mother smiled, baby wailed,
When to earth came Viola

And her elders shall say:
So soon have we taught you a
Way to weep, poor Viola!.

X

Smile sweet baby, smile,
For you will have weeping-while;
Native in your heaven is smile,-
But your weeping, Viola?

Whence your smiles we know, but oh!
Whence your weeping, Viola?-
Our first gift to you is a
Gift of tears, my Viola! (1)

We have said that Thompson is the poet of childhood because

(1) The Making of Viola. Works of Francis Thompson. Vol.I.Page 13.

of the admiration he felt for that most blissful state. He is more capable of self-forgetfulness than Wordsworth; the above quotations prove that he can and does forget the man in him, but more frequently does he bid us listen to melodious harmonies aroused by the sight or even at the thought of a child. His works amply prove his real love for childhood.

Once while at Crawley, His eye chanced to read in the Register of the death of one, Monica Mary. " My heart stood still," he writes. Happily, it was not the Monica of " The Poppy" but of the feelings aroused by that awful notice of death we have an inkling of in " To Monica Thought Dying."

You, O the piteous you!
Who all the long night through
Anticipatedly
Disclose yourself to me
Already in the ways
Beyond our human comfortable days;
How can you deem what Death
Impitiably saith
To me, who listening wake
For your poor sake?
When a grown woman dies
You know we think unceasingly

What things she said, how sweet, how wise;
And these do make our misery.
But you were (you to me
The dead anticipatedly !)
You--eleven years, was't not, or so?--
Were just a child, you know;
And so you never said
Things sweet immediately and wise
To interdict from closure my wet eyes:
But foolish things, my dead, my dead!
Little and laughable,
Your age that fitted well.
And was it such things all unmemorable,
Was it such things could make
Me sob all night for your implacable sake?
Yet, as you said to me,
In pretty make-believe of revelry,
So the night long said Death
With his magniloquent breath;
(And that remembered laughter,
Which in our daily uses followed after,
Was all untuned to pity and to awe:)
" A cup of chocolate,
One farthing is the rate,
You drink it through a straw."

How could I know, how know
Those laughing words when drenched with sobbing so?
Another voice than yours, than yours, he hath.
My dear, was't worth his breath,
His mighty utterance?- yet he saith, and saith!
This dreadful Death to his own dreadfulness
Doth dreadful wrong.
This dreadful childish babble on his tongue.
That iron tongue made to speak sentences,
And wisdom insupportably complete,
Why should it only say the long night through,
In mimicry of you,--
"A cup of chocolate,
One farthing is the rate,
You drink it through a straw, a straw, a straw."

Oh,of all sentences,
Piercingly incomplete!
Why did you teach that fatal mouth to draw,
Child, impermissible awe,
From your old trivialness?
Why have you done me this
Most unsustainable wrong,
And unto Death's control
Betrayed the secret places of my soul?--

Teaching him that his lips,
Uttering their native earthquake and eclipse,
Could never so avail
To rend from hem to hem the ultimate veil
Of this most desolate
Spirit, and leave it stripped and desecrate,--
Hay, never so have wrung
From eyes and speech weakness unmanned, unmeet,
As when his terrible dotage to repeat
Its little lesson learneth at your feet,
As when he sits among
His sepulchres to play
With broken toys your hand had cast away,
With derelict trinkets of the darling young.
Why have you taught---that he might so complete
His awful panoply
From your scant playthings--why,
This dreadful childish babble to his tongue,
Dreadful and sweet? (1)

The subject is the old story, the history of the loss of a little one who is beloved, but the portrait is exquisitely drawn, and we feel that Thompson has given free scope to a tenderness which might easily be compared to that of a mother.

The sympathetic Miss Bregy finds " these lines positively

(1) To Monica Thought Dying. Works of Francis Thompson, Vol.I P.10

haunting, with the image of death holding state among the little broken playthings thrice intolerable with this dreadful childish babble on his tongue." (1)

Love of the child, which is to so many world- worn souls a healing and comforting balm, was to poor Thompson a source of fresh pain. Their innocent prattle, their guileless looks, even their love tokens become sharp tormentors. To breathe a modicum of health into his frail body, he was sent to Mr. Meynell who hurried him off on an expedition with his rescuer's children, at Friston in Suffolk. The delightful hours he spent there brought relief to the poor racked body, and the young companions who were to have so lasting an influence on him, were afterwards to appear in the silvery numbers of his " Poems on Children."

Of one these playfellows, Monica, wee read a tender incident in " The Poppy".

Summer set lip to earth's bosom bare,
And left the flushed print in a poppy there;
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.

\- -

A child and man paced side by side,
Treading the skirts of eventide;
But between the clasp of his hand and hers
Lay, felt not, twenty withered years.

(1) Catherine Bregy in Catholic World. Poetry of F. Thompson.

She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair,
And saw the sleeping gipsy there;
And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim,
With--" Keep it,long as you live!" -- to him.
- -
For he saw what she did not see,
That--as kindled by its own fervency--
The verge shrivelled inward smoulderingly:
And suddenly'twixt his hand and hers
He knew the twenty withered years--
No flower, but twenty shrivelled years.

" Was never such thing until this hour,"
Low to his heart he said; " the flower
Of sleep brings waking to me,
And of oblivion, memory."

"Was never this thing to me," he said,
" Though with bruised poppies my feet are red!"
And again to his own heart very low:
"O child! I love, for I love and know:
- -
" I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,
Knowing well when certain years are over
You vanish from me to another;
Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,
Heavy with dreams, as that with bread;
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper
Time shall reap, and Time the reaper

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
Time shall reap, but after the reaper
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper

Love, Love! your flower of withered dream
In leaved rhyme lies safe, I deem,
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time

Love! I fall into the claws of Time:
But lasts within a leaved rhyme
All that the world of me esteems--
My withered dreams, my withered dreams. (I)

" Keep it as long as you live", said the child, never dreaming of what anguish those words were the cause. Indeed, the withered leaves of that gift of love were found in a book of his "Poems", after his deathe.

To the incident of the flower, he refers when he wrote "Monica" upon the announcement of her engagement to be married:

(I) The Poppy, Works of Francis Thompson, Vol.I page 6.

" Most warmly and sincerely I congratulate you, dear Monica, on what is the greatest event in a woman's life--or a man's, to my thinking..... Extend to him if he will allow me, the affection which you once-- so ling since-- purchased with a poppy in that Friston field. ' Keep it' you said (though you have doubtless forgotten what you said) ' as long as you live'. I have kept it, and with it I keep you, my dearest. I do not say or show much, for I am an old man compared with you, and no companion for your young life. But, never, my dear, doubt I love you ." (I)

The "Daisy " has many analogies with"The Poppy"; in the latter, a real little actress appears on the stage; while in the former, it is an ideal, a personification of innocence and beauty. Among the tall thistles and harebells of Storrington hills, the poet sees coming as though carried forward by the sea-breezes, " Innocence and She ". Hand in hand they-- the poet and the newcomer--stray among the winding paths and talk wise, idle, childish things.

But why should the

"Beauty that smoothed earth's furrowed face"

arouse in him such anguish? Was her face not radiant? Was her skin not like a grape whose veins

"Run snow instead of wine"?

Were not the accents of her voice so sweet that

(I) J. Craig. F. Thompson and His Poetry. Catholic World. 1922.

" There's never a bird, so sweet a songThronged
Thronged in whose throat that day."

And with her does she not bring joy and

"tokens three:
A look, a word of her winsome mouth
And a wild raspberry.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word,--strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
For standing artless as the air
And candid as the skies
She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes."

And why should those three charming nothings,"those strings of sand", as he calls them bring such poignant agony that they make his poor"wild ,wild heart fly down to her little hand"? Again the gleam of love seems to conceal itself under the shadow of agony, and he now philosophises on the fleetness of all things in this world:

" The fairest things have fleetest end,
Their scent survives their close,

But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose,
She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way:
The sea's eye had mist on it
And the leaves fell from day to day.
She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone
And partings yet to be.

And he wonders why he should be "sad that she was glad, and he ends with;

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own."

Very seldom does Thompson allow himself to strike the note of pathos, but we find an echo of it in "The Daisy", which might have been written by Wordsworth.

"To Olivia" belongs to the group of "Poems on Children". Here again, the poet's heart fears to attach itself to a child because

"Love's the ambassador of loss."

The prayerful wish uttered in this poem, has a note of s sweet melancholy which recalls " The Daisy". The gratitude

with which Thompson's heart overflowed for those earthly angels, is delicately enshrined in " To My Godchild". He beseeches God to give the little child poetic gifts,--

" A poet's prayer implores a poet's power." But the humility of Thompson makes him shrink from the title of "true poet"; and to Saint Francis of Assisi and "Sweet Sales" does he pray that their legacy of virtue and poetic talents be the heritage of his godchild. He gives us a clue to his whereabouts when he writes:

> And when immortal mortal, droops your head,
> And you, the child of deathless song, are dead;
> Then, as you search with unaccustomed glance
> The ranks of Paradise for my countenance,
> Turn not your head along the Uranian sod
> Among the bearded counsellors of God;
> For if in Eden as on earth are we,
> I sure shall keep a younger company:
> Pass where beneath their ranged gonfalons
> The starry cohorts shake their shielded suns,
> The dreadful mass of their embodied spears;
> Pass where majestical the eternal peers,
> The stately choice of the great Saintdom, meet--
> A silvern segregation, globed complete
> In sandalled shadow of the Triune feet;
> Pass by where wait, young poet-wayfarer

Your cousined clusters, emulous to share
With you the roseal lightnings burning mid their hair;
Pass the crystalline sea, the Lampads seven:--
Look for me in the nurseries of heaven. (1)

And now, the charms of Monica and Sylvia "whose young sex is yet but in their souls," were to be celebrated and portrayed in "Sister Songs." Children were ever dear to Francis Thompson, and he always regarded them with a kind of reverential love; his pure soul could vibrate in unison with theirs. Our English poetry, rich as it was in tributes to girlhood, was to be enriched still more with the lyrics of unfailing delicacy of tought and felicity of phrase found in "Sister Songs".

The overture of this long poem is brilliant; the gorgeous colors and sounds of Spring are glowingly described. The spring pageant among whom figures Sylvia, joins Thompson in a joyful chorus.

O Spring's little children, more loud your laude upraise
For this is even Sylvia, with her sweet, feat ways!
Your lovesome labours lay aside,
And prank you out in holiday,
For eyallabing to Sylvia;
And all you birds on branches, leve your mouths with May.
To bear with me this burthen,
For singing to Sylvia!

(1) To My Godchild. Works of Francis Thompson, Vol.I, Page 17.

A prayer ~~is then uttered~~ in behalf of Sylvia then falls from the poet's lips, that she may be ever be fresh and young.

" Oh, keep still in thy train,
After the years when others therefrom fade,
This tiny, well-beloved maid!
To whom the gate of my heart's fortalice,
With all which in it is,
And the shy self who doth therein inmew him
'Gainst what loud leaguerers battailously woo him,
I, bribed traitor to him,
Set open for one kiss. (1)

Following this prayer, is set the jewel, " A Child's Kiss" wherein he immortalises the flower of friendship and charity which has bloomed in a byway where such precious blossoms are so little looked for. Out of the despoiled heritage of her soul, the unfortunate girl gave to this wretched social outcast. She nursed him, gave him food and cover to warm the chilled body. Then she fled from him!.... Years later, when sheltered among friends, he wrote the lines

A kiss? for a child's kiss ?
Aye, goddess, even for this.
Once bright Sylviola, in days not far,
Once--in that nightmare-time which still doth haunt
My dreams, a grim, unbidden visitant--
Forlorn, and faint, and stark,

(1)Sister Songs. Works of Francis Thompson. Vol.I.Page55.

I had endured through watches of the dark
The shameless inquisition of each star,
Yea, was the cutest mark
Of all those heavenly passer's scrutiny;
Stood bound and helplessly
For Time to shoot his barbed minutes at me;
Suffered the trampling hoof of every hour
In night's slow-wheeled car;
Until the tardy dawn dragged me at length
From under those dread wheels; and bled of strength,
I waited the inevitable last
Then there came past
A child; like thee, a spring flower, but a flower
Fallen from the budded coronal of spring,
And through the city streets blown withering.
She passed,--O brave, and, lovingest, tender thing!
And of her own scant pittance did she give,
That I might eat and live:
Then fled, a swift and treeless fugitive.
Therefore I kissed in thee
The heart of Childhood, so divine for me;
And her, through what more ways,
And what unchildish days
And spring, and all things that have gone from me,
And that shall never be;
All vanished hopes, and all most hopeless bliss,
Come with thee to my kiss.

And ah! solong myself had strayed afar
From child, and woman, and the hoon earth's green,
And all wherewith life's face is fair beseen;
Journeying its journey bare
Five suns, except of the all-kissing sun
Unkissed of one
Almost I had forgot
The healing harms,
And whitest witchery, a-lurk in that
Authentic cestus of two girding arms:
And I remembered not
The subtle sanctities which dart
From childish lips' unvalued precious brush,
Nor how it makes the sudden lilies push
Between the loosening fibres of the heart.
Then, that thy little kiss
Should be to me all this.
Let workaday wisdom blink sage lids thereat;
Which towers a flight three hedgerows high, poor bat!
And straightway charts me out the empyreal air.
Its chart I wing not by, its canon of worth
Scorn not, nor reckthough mine should breed it mirth
And howso thou and I may be disjoint,
Yet still my falcon spirit makes her point
Over the covert where
Thou,sweetest quarry, hast put in from her!

(1) Sister Songs. Works of Francis Thompson, Vol.I,page 37.

Some of Thompson's most appealing work is to be found in these "Songs" inspired by children. He is interested in them; their purity is a loadstone which draws him away from the general interests of ordinary men. This inclinations he reveals in his address to Monica

Nay, how or with what countenance shall I come
To plead in my defence
For loving thee at all?
I who hardly speak my fellows speech ,
Love their love, or mine own love to them teach;
A bastard barred from their inheritance,
Who seem, in this dim shape's uneasy mock,
Some sun-flower's spirit which by luckless chance
Has mournfully its tenement mistook;
When it were better in its right abode,
Heartless and happy lackeying its god. (1)

She had appeared as a ray of sunshine to his dark soul, when he ," a waif of a man, more ragged and unkept than the average beggar, with no shirt beneath his coat, and bare feet in broken shoes,(2)"was ushered into the presence of the man-beloved for his gentleness by everybody with whom he came into contact." With exquisite delicacy and a touch of pathos he describes the coming of the child and the soothing influence she had on his sick heart and aching body.-

(1)"Sister Songs". Works of Francis Thompson, Vol.I,page 40
(2) J. Craig. F. Thompson and His Poetry. Catholic World. 1922.

And now?--

The hours I tread ecse memories of thee, Sweet,
Beneath my casual feet.
With rainfall as the lea,
The day is drenched with thee;
In little exquisite surprises
Bubbling deliciousness of thee arises
From sudden places,
Un der the common traces
Of my most lethargied and customed paces. (I)

- -

'Tis a vision:
Yet the greeneries Elysian
He has known in treete efer;
Thus the enamouring fountains flow,
Those the very palms that grow,
By rare-gummed Java, or Herbalimar.--
Such a watered dream has tarried
Trembling on my desert arid;
Even so
Its lovely gleamings
Seemings show
Of things not seemings;
And I gaze,
Knowing that, beyond my ways,
Verily
All these are, for these are She.

Eve no gentler lays her cooling cheek
On the burning brow of the sick earth,
Sick with death, and sick with birth,
Aeon to aeon, in secular fever twirled,
Than thy shadow soothes this weak
And distempered being of mine.
In all I work, my hand includeth thine;
Thou rushest down in every stream
Whose passion frets my spirit's deepening gorge;
Un hood'st mine eyes-heart, and flicst my dream;
Thou swing'st the hammers of my forge;
As the innocent moon, that nothing does but shine,
Moves all the labouring surges of the world.
Fierce where thou wilt the springing thought in me,
And there thy pictured countenance lies enfurled,
As in the out fern lies the imaged tree.
This poor song that sings of thee,
This fragile song, is but a curled
Shell outgathered from thy sea,
And murmurous still of its nativity.
Princess of Smiles,
Sorceress of most unlawful-lawful wiles,
Cunning pit for gazers' senses,
Overstrewn with innocences!
Purities gleam white like statues
In the fair lakes of thine eyes,

And I watch the sparkles that use
There to rise,
Knowing these
Are bubbles from the eglayes
Of the lovely thoughts that breathe
Paving, like water-flowers, thy spirit's floor beneath.

Listening to such raptures, which are now ardent and solemn, now ethereal and spirit-like, always religious, can one doubt that Thompson knew the soul of the child?

As stated above, he possessed the rather exclusive power of showing the child, beauty in poetical works. Coventry Patmore has called Thompson a "Captain of Song". On reading these words, one might expect to see a poetical dictator come forward to receive the adulation of a little coterie of admirers; such is not the case. The little circle over which he will preside is composed of familiar faces with whom we are already well acquainted. It is the child world which entwined itself about the poet's heart and readily answered each bidding. Monica, Viola, Olivia, Francis--all said their "adsum".

The loving kindness of the Meynells did not, however, make the poet forget that it was not given all children to enjoy such love of devoted parents; the many who never know the innocent joys of a home, called to him and his zeal was not irresponsive. Like Dickens, he had known the horrors of

The Streets.

(1) Sister Songs. Works of Francis Thompson, Vol.I page 48.

Like Mrs. Browning, he was touched, not so much by the cry as by the laugh of children grown familiar with evil. How tersely, yet zealously does he not comment on one of the chapters of Booth's Darkest England. " I will therefore, only note in it a single point, which for more than one reason I cannot here dwell upon. Let those who are robust enough not to take injury from the terrible directness with which things are stated read the chapter entitled "The Children of the Lost". For it drives home a truth which I fear the English public, with all its compassion for our destitute children, scarcely realizes,Knows but in a vague, general way; namely, that they are brought up in sin from their cradles, that they know evil before they know good, that the boys are ruffians and profligates, the girls harlots in the mother's womb. This, to me the most nightmarish idea in all the nightmare of those poor little lives, I have never been able to perceive that people had any true grasp on. And having mentioned it, thought it is a subject very near my heart I will say no more." (I)

Later,he will say that no plan that tries to bring true democracy and Christian brotherhood into this sick world of ours by the improvement of world-wise adults, can be of much use,But the children! There is the chance; there, also, is the fear. Think of it ! If Christ stood amidst your London slums He could not say :" Except ye become as one of these little

(I) In Darkest England. Thompson's Poetical Works. Vol.III page 55.

children. For better your children were cast from the bridges of London that they should become as one of those little ones. Could they be gathered together and educated in the truest sense of the word; could the children of the nation at large be so educated as to cut off future recruits to the ranks of "Darkest England"; then it would need no astrology to cast the horoscope of the morrow. " Le tete de L'homme du peuple, plutôt de l'enfant du peuple---" artound that sways the conflict. Who grasps the child grasps the future.

The grim old superstition was right. When man would build to a lasting finish, he must found his building over a child. There is not a secret society in Europe, there is not a secularist in France, in Germany, in Italy, in England, but knows it; everywhere, these gangs of coiners are at their work of stamping and uttering base humanity. We, too, have recognised it, we on our part have not been idel, we least of all; but we are hard put to it for laborers in the task. In the schools-satchels lie the keys of to-morrow." (I)

The cry of anguish and of hope could come only from one who knew the value of a child, truly loved him, and wept over the nefarious influences to which he is often exposed.

Innocence, love, faith, love of beauty, all these key-notes of the child's soul have been sounded in Thompson's poems. He who knew the child so intimately could write the following lines:

(I) In Darkest England" F. Thompson's Works, Vol.III, page 65.

To be a child is to be something very different from the man of to-day. Is is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in loge, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief; it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice, into horses, lowness into loftiness, and making everything, out of nothing, for each child has its fairy godmother in its own soul; it is to live in a nutshell and to count yourself the king of infinite space; it is

To see a world in a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour" (1)

More than any other, can Thompson be called the poet of childhood, and all children and lovers of children owe him a debt of gratitude, the highest meed of appreciation and praise

(1) Essay on Shelley, Works of F. Thompson, Vol.III, page 6.

Conclusion.

Conclusion.

The foregoing pages contain facts sufficient to prove that the great masters who penetrated into the child's mind and revealed his innermost soul are the poets of the nineteenth century.

As stated in the Introduction, Shakespeare can by no mea ns be called childhood's poet. An anonymous critic suggests "that a child in dramatic poetry is not necessarily a simple child", and he would have us leave the great dramatist's creations with that.

Miss Imogen Guiney has aised the situation of childhood as treated by the seventeenth century poets, in the following lines: " Of the sanctity of childhood as childhood, the poets of the 17th century with all their salient imagination and their command of language, knew nothing. Writers in general had agreed to disregard not only the individuality of little children but all the force of that mystical word of the Gospel of Saint Mathew,' Nisi efficiamur sicut parvuli.' The true awakening came with Crashaw, Traherne and Vaughan; they implanted into the apologetics of English poetry, the truth that" beauty of childhood and the innocence of children is the highest of moral conditions." (1)

(1) Imogen Guiney. Childhood in the 17th Century. Catholic World. 1906.

However, before the close of the 17th century, the conception of childhood as an excellence resting on its ethical, if not yet fully on its aesthetic principle, was securely grafted on to popular thought, though it was destined to be long latent.

With the 18th century's slow spiritual progress, the poetical numbers that sing the joys of early years usually become involved in mature reflections-- still we find a certain kindliness in the writers' treatment of children. But of the ways and works, the gladness and the sadness, the eerily weakness, the heavenly reflection in those soulful eyes, the indefinable attraction lying deeper than all reason or all analysis can resolve, these various elements found in the child, forming a most precious ore would be mined by the Romantic bards of the nineteenth century.

The novelist of the last century created some strikingly original child characters, but we see them through the prism of the romancer's imagination: no longer simple children but premature men and women. No human being would ever think of presuming to mold the development of a flower; the novelist will however, frequently attempt to force the child along preconceived lines.

The studies given above prove that the poets made no such blunders; they did not reproduce imaginary creations. To Blake, childhood is an ideal composed of four elements: perfect happiness, perfect innocence, unhindered communion between the

child and the animal world, and the vision of the divine and spiritual beings. Blake's children are childish but the deft manipulation of the connoisseur has enveloped them in something that is angelic. To Wordsworth, the child becomes a source of philosophical study; the child is placed in the lime light by the poet who, while giving a study of his own soul, has helped us to understand more fully that of ordinary children.

To the third great poet studied the child is not only an ideal and a source of philosophic dissertation, but becomes a symbol, a source of real love, the promptor of some of the best poetry produced by childhood's last singer, Francis Thompson.

The fertile generation which produced Blake and Wordsworth -- the two wizards of child poetry-- also produced other great poets; although these latter can not be called singers of childhood, they, however, contributed immortal lines to the glorification of that sweet age. Lamb, was among the first to echo Wordsworth's belief; the exquisite perception and embracing comprehension he possessed make him an accomplished artist in the difficult art of child portraiture. With delight and sympathy are pages from "Elia" read and studied; a sweet humor pervades the whole series, the very life history of Lamb's personality ; (1) Hartley Coleridge worshipped childhood and to its praise, he consecrated some of his best lines. Clare closes the nomenclature of the poets of that generation which seemed gifted with intuitive knowledge of childhood.

(1) Editor, Childhood in Poetry. Contemporary.

It became more and more apparent that the treatment of childhood, the enchantment of which is the commingling of the readings of experience with the eagerness and surprise of innocence, had entered into English poetry. For several generations past, the child has been the crowning flower of the garden of life. Truly could Swinburne sing:

" If childhood were not in the world,
But only men and women grown
No baby looks in tendrils curled
No baby blossoms blown.

Though the utmost life of life's best hours
Found, or it can not now find words;
Though desert sands were sweet as flowers
And flowers could sing like birds

But children never heard them, never
They felt a child's foot leap and run;
This were a dreary world than ever
Yet looked upon the Sun." (1)

The child had now returned to English poetical domains where there is a very distinct intellectual character over and above the natural affection of childhood which contributed to the development of our peculiar literature of childhood and which divides it completely from the literature of other nations.

He who has been called the sphinx of the world, the constant riddle and mystery before whom all plans of philosophy, codes

(1) Swinburne's Poetical Works.

of ethics, and systems of theology must prove their value. He has been understood and revealed by the poets whose hearts were most simple and whose souls were nearest God.

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Blake

Author.	Title.	Publishers.	Date.
Berger, P.	Blake, Poet & Mystic	E.P.Dutton & Co. New York	1915
Brooke, Stopford A.	Studies in Poetry	Duckworth & Co.	
" " "	Chapter on Blake	New York	1907
Benson, A.C.	Blake	London	1896
Beeching, H.C.	Religious Poems of W. Blake in Essays & Studies		
Ellis, Edwin	The Real Blake	Chatto & Windus London	
Hill	Essay on Great Eng. Poets		
Langridge, Irene	Blake, A study of His Life and Art Work	George Bell & Sons London	1904
Story, Alfred	Blake, His Life, Character, Genius	Swan, Sennesehien Co. London	1893
Swinburne, A.C.	Blake, A Critical Essay	London	1906
	Magazines		
Brock, A.C.	Poetry of Blake	Living Age	1906
Editor, The	Blake, Poet, Artist, and Man	The Dial	1908
" "	Vital importance of Esthetics as Illustrated by Blake and Flaubert	Current Literature	1910
Inez, Herbert	Blake as a Teacher	Forthnightly Review	1910
Morris, D.R.	Blake the first of the Moderns	The Forum	1914
Moody, M.	Blake & Vaughan	The Dial	1915
Standing, Percy C.	Was Blake a Poet?	Catholic World	1905
Stedman, E.C.	Blake Poet & Painter		
Symons, A	W. Blake	The Outlook	1907

Letters	Publications	Date.
Letters of William Blake, edited by Archibald Russell	Methuen & Co. London	1906
Works--Poetical--Of Blake, edited	Oxford University Press London	1913
The Poems of W. Blake, edited by W.B.Yeats	Chas. Scribner & Sons New York	1893

Wordsworth

Author.	Title.	Publishers.	Date.
Byron, May	A Day with Wordsworth	Hodder & Staughton London	
Benoussan, S.L.	W. Wordsworth, His Home and Haunts	T.C.& E.C. Jack London	1910
Dowden, Ed.	Studies in Lit.	Kegan Paul & Co. London	1909
Field, J	Yesterday with Authors	Houghton, Miffin Co Boston	1900
Gingerich, Salmon	Wordsworth, Tennyson & Browning	George Wahr Ann Harbor, Michigan	1911
Harper, G.M.	Wordsworth, Life, Work & Influence. 2 Vol.	John Murray, London, Albemarle	1916
Herford, C.H.	The Age of Wordsworth	G. Bell, Sons, London	1914
Morley, John	Studies in Literature	Macmillan & Co, London	1910
Meyers, F.W.H.	Eng. Men of Letters	Athaenaeum Press S. Boston	1897
Masson, Rosaline	Wordsworth	T.C.& E.C. Jack New York	
Oliphant, Mrs.	Victorian Age in Lit.	Thomas Y. Crowell&Co New York	1892
Pater, Walter	Appreciations	Macmillan & Co. London	1907
Quiller-Couch, Sir A.	Studies in Lit.	G.P. Putnam's Sons Cambridge	1918
Raleigh, Walter	W. Wordsworth	Ed. Arnold, London	1912
Sneath, H.	W. Wordsworth, Poet of Nature, Poet of Man.	Ginn & Co. Boston	1912
Winchester, C.F.	Wordsworth, How to Know Him	The Bobbs-Merritt & Co, Indiniapolis	1916
Wetherell, J.E.	Selections from W.	W. J. Gage & Co Toronto, Ont.	1892
Walker, Hugh	Lit. of Victorian Age	Cambride University Press, Cambridge	1909

Magazines

Paul, H.W.	Permanence of Wordsworth	Living Age	1908
Roberts, E.C.	Ascendency of Wordsworth	Contemporary	1913
Wilson, J.G.	Footprints of "	G.P. Putnam & Sons	1908

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Poems of W

Wordsworth (continued)

	Publishers.	Date.
Poems of W. Wordsworth edited by E. Dowden	Ginn & Co, New York	1897
The Prelude. Edited by A.J. George	D.C.Heath & Co. Chicago	1888
The Poetical Works of W. Wordsworth edited by Thomas Hutchinson	H. Milford-Oxford University Press, London	1914
Poems of W. W. 3 Vol. edited by C.Nowell-Smith	Methuen & Co. London	

Francis Thompson

Author.	Title.	Publishers.	Date.
Chesterton,G.K.	Victorian Age in Lit.	William & Norgate London	
Meynell,Everard	Life of F. Thompson	Burns & Oates,London	1916
Quiller-Couch,Sir A.	Studies in Literature	G.P. Putnam&s SONS	1918
Sister of Notre Dame	Message of F. Thompson	Benziger Bros. New York	1920
Complete Poetical Works	- - - - - - - - - - - -	Beni Liversight, New York	1919
Selected Poems	- - - - - - - - - - - -	Burns & Oates,London	1909
Works of F. Thompson	- - - - - - - - - - - -	Burns & Oates, "	1913

Magazines

Armstrong,M.D.	Poetry of F. Thompson	The Forum	1913
Bregy, Katherine	" " " "	Catholic World	1905
Figgis,Darrel	Francis Thompson	Living Age	1913
" "	" "	Contemporary Review	1913
" "	" "	North American Rev.	1913
Moissant,Xavier	Le Poete de l'Enfance	Etudes	1908
Tynan,Katherine	Francis Thompson	Living Age	1918
" "	" "	Forthnightly Review	1910
Silliard,P.A.	A great Catholic Poet	The Western Review	1909
Craig, John	Francis Thompson	Catholic World	1922
Works of Swinburne	- - - - - - - - - - - -	Mission Book Co. Toronto,Ont.	
Essays on Modern Novelists by W. L. Phelps.			