CHAPTER VII

Miscellaneous Sonnets

A large number of Wordsworth's Sonnets are of miscellaneous nature. Wordsworth himself grouped them in three parts and titled them 'Miscellaneous Sonnets' but there are a few which are scattered over in other series where they do not form part of the main body of verses or sonnets. Here an attempt has been made to study them together both thematically and chronologically. In other words, these sonnets have been re-classified both subject-wise and in the order of composition, although these classifications cannot be rigid because their subject matter overlaps and the date of composition of many sonnets cannot be told with precision and many sonnets remain undated. Thematically considered, two categories comprise sonnets written on the names of the persons and places and sonnets written on natural objects and their impressions on the poet's mind. The third category comprises sonnets not covered under the two categories. Each category is given a separate section.
Wordsworth started his career as a sonnet writer with "Sonnet written by Mr........ immediately after the death of his wife on March 2, 1787" and "Sonnet On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep At Tale of Distress" March 1787. The former contains the grief of a sorrowing widower while the other is addressed to a poetess whom the poet had never personally known. He feels acutely grieved on seeing Miss Williams weeping. It seems as if life had come to a stand-still for a moment. She was beautiful and her tearful eyes made her look prettier. The description of her pitiable condition in tears and his own condition is noteworthy in the sonnet:

She wept, — Life's purple tide began to flow
In languid streams through every thrilling vein;
Dim were my swimming eyes—my pulse beat slow,
And my full heart was swell'd to dear delicious pain.
Life left my loaded heart, and closing eye;
A sigh recall'd the wanderer to my breast;
Dear was the pause of life, and dear the sigh
That call'd the wanderer home and home to rest.

(II)

These sonnets are followed by sonnets grouped under the head of "Miscellaneous Sonnets" prefaced by a dedicatory sonnet to Coleridge the 'chief of friends' which was composed as late as 1826. The poet is happy in dedicating his happy thoughts and feelings from his bosom in perfect shape like a bubble blown into the wanton air and hopes that the friend would smile upon the gift.

Sonnet II Sonnet On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep At Tale of Distress (Supplement of Pieces Not Appearing In The Edition of 1848-50)
with more than mild content. The first sonnet is addressed to the nuns and is followed by eighteen sonnets of the year 1802, the time when Wordsworth started writing sonnets when he was in a state of great agitation over certain personal and private problems. At that time the poet tried to take advantage of the pause in war with France to meet Annette Vallon and her daughter at Cailas. There he made a settlement with Annette in preparation for his marriage with Mary. He was also agitated over the difficulties of form and poetic mode as expressed in the great ode. So the sonnet has two agitations at its back - the private and the artistic - the private, made clear by Herbert Read in the preface to his book 'Wordsworth'. He writes about Wordsworth's staying in France after his falling in love with Annette:

"Apart from political considerations, he could not have found a reasonable basis for living there. He could have brought Annette and his illegitimate daughter to England, as at one time he intended. But that was precisely what pride in himself and concept of inter-human relationships prevailing among his friends and relations prevented him from doing. He sacrificed his passion to his self esteem, his moral integrity to his moral reputation."

It is, thus, his relationship with Annette that had been agitating his mind for last nine years. The artistic is made clear by Trilling in his interpretation of 'Immortality ode' when he remarks that the ode seems to be a dedication to another mode of poetry, that is, the mode of tragedy. But the tragic mode could not be Wordsworth's. The

ode tells us of the poetic crisis about 1802. Moreover, the poet felt the weight of too much liberty. After using a series of images -- hermits within their cells, maids at the wheel and the weaver at the loom -- the poet regards restriction as no restriction of the sonnet form and defends the form by saying:

In sun-dry moods, 'It was pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

This sonnet anticipates in relation to art, the doctrine of freedom with discipline that he would apply to the whole moral life in the 'Ode to Duty'. The second sonnet in defence of the sonnet form is "Scorn not the Sonnet" which describes Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Camoens, Spenser, and Shakespeare as seeking in the sonnet form an escape. The undated sonnet IX published in 1803 tells us the effect of the piety of Simonides. The ghost of a corpse advises the man not to sail as the ship is going to be wrecked. The man ignores the verdict and the same happens and the whole crew perishes but Simonides. The undated sonnet 'Admonition' was intended for those who might aspire for some beautiful place of retreat in the country of the lakes. He asks the visitors to enjoy the lovely cottage, dear brook, sky and pasture but warns them against coveting.

Sonnet I  Huns fret not (Misc. Sonnets Part I)
II  Admonition (Misc. Sonnets Part I)
IX  I find it written Simonides (Supplement of Pieces Not as appearing the edition of 1849-50)
1. It is probable that the theme of the sonnet was suggested to Wordsworth by Coleridge's Ancient Mariner
the abode. The intruders are advised not to tear a leaf with
harsh impiety because they are as sacred to the poor as the windows
and doors to them. Sonnet IV composed at Applethwaite, near
Keswick is addressed to Beaumont who had expressed his desire to
the poet to build a cottage for himself. The desire was yet to
be fulfilled but the poet hoped:

Old Skiddaw will look down upon the Spot
With pride, the Muses love it evermore.

(IV)

The sonnet XVI informs us how the benign, meek and noble sage
Walten unfurled his 'rod and line' in the Shawford brook and found
that the longest summer day was short for the pastime given by
Sedgy Lee. Sonnets XXIV, and XXVI are written on Michael Angelo.
In August 1805 Wordsworth began translating some of the sonnets of
Michael Angelo for Richard Duppa's Life'. The task proved harder
than he had anticipated. Of this he wrote:

I can translate and have translated two books
of Aristotle at the rate nearly, of 100 lines
a day, but so much meaning has been put by
Michelangeles into so little room, and meaning
sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found
the difficulty of translating him insurmountable.

Between Wordsworth and Michael Angelo existed a deep and strong bond
of feeling and thought, particularly a craving for 'objects that
endure' and become 'types and symbols of eternity'. Wordsworth
praises Michael Angelo's pious muse which he cast into ideal form and

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<td>XXIV</td>
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universal mould because like a true wiseman, he did not believe in things of the senses which are perishable. He, then, shows deep love and admiration for Michael Angel in the words:

His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour?
But in chaste hearts, uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

(XXIV)

and then sincerely prays to the Almighty to fill his heart with similar thoughts of piety so that he may likewise sing in His praise:

De Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue de Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of Thee,
And sound thy praises everlasting.

(XXVI)

Before 1807 the poet had also paid a similar tribute to Raisley Calvert in sonnet XXXVI praising the latter for his piety and goodness. Sonnet XVIII is devoted to Lady Beaumont in which the poet informs us that he is preparing beds for winter flowers, planting unfading bowers and shrubs to welcome her when

......these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

(XVIII)

Sonnet XXIX praises the poor old man in whom the poet finds a generous heart and a broad mind though filled with narrow cares. Leading a free life, his is the vast empire of ear and eye. He, thus, 'is greater than he seems'. In sonnet XVII the poet praises the musical

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<td>XXIX</td>
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<td>XVII</td>
<td>To the poet, John Dyer 1611 (Misc.Sonnets Part I)</td>
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and poetic talents of John Dyer who made the landscape alive and halloved it with musical delight. The powerful, pure and grateful minds still love his modest lay and will continue to do so 'so long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray O'er naked Snowdon's wide aerial waste / Long as the thrush shall pipe on Gronar Hill'. Sonnet XXIII was written on the eve of marriage of his wife's brother, Thomas Hutchinson who married Mary Monkhouse on November 1, 1612. The poet praises the bride for her modesty in her mien, gentleness in her pace and calmness of mind but as frailty is human, the bride must have some frailty though this would make her look more indulgent:

But, when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shewn that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

(XXIII)

In 1612 Wordsworth's second child Catherine who was born on September 6, 1806, passed away. She was a little quaint and tender creature with a face perfectly comic and a temper never ruffled and naturally the passing away of such an affectionate child left a deep mark on the heart of the doting father and Wordsworth wrote sonnet XXVII to express his heart-broken condition. His grief on seeing the child in grave, as great as the joy he felt when she was alive:

Surprised by joy -- impatient as the wind
I turned to share the transport -- Oh! With whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind --
But how could I forget thee?

(XXVII)

Sonnet XVIII  To Lady Beaumont 1807 (Misc. Sonnets Part II)
XXVII  Surprised by joy-impatient as the wind 1812
(Misc. Sonnets Part I)

and see 'characteristics of child three years old' on Catherine.
First two lines of the poem are full of a sense of joy and surprise which is suddenly stopped at the end of the second line with the words "Oh! with whom" giving a sense of emptiness. The recovery of the memory of the lost child gives the poet pain and he feels guilty because even a momentary forgetfulness of the "grievous loss" gives him a sense of betrayal because the minutest fraction of time ought to be filled with the memory of the lost child. The sestet pursues the same sense of loss and the sonnet ends with the lines:

That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

There is no easy consolation or false sentimentality in the poem. The child is gone for ever. In Sonnet IV he exhorts the Gillies to rise from sloth and dejection, and spurn the unprofitable yoke of care and be cheerful. He assures them that a rich reward waits for them. Wordsworth sent three sonnets to Haydon in 1815. Sonnet III which the poet wrote in reply to Haydon's enthusiastic letter in which he acclaimed Wordsworth's genius and his determination to stick to his vocation. In the sonnet the poet speaks highly of his own vocation as a poet and of Haydon's as a painter. These noble professions call forth an unswerving devotion of both mind and heart. At the end of the sonnet he reiterates his faith in the vocation he pursues:

While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, Oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long -lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness --
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!
(III)

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<td>III</td>
<td>To B.R.Haydon 1815 (Misc.Sonnets Part II)</td>
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Sonnet XVII is addressed to Lady Mary Lowther. The poet tells her that he has rifled the Parnassian cave and has taken out certain genuine crystals. Of these is made the grotto bright and clear and if she so desires, her deeper mind may enter. Sonnet XXVII bemoans the captivity of Mary Queen of Scots. The sadness is all the more sharpened by the surrounding joys. The death of George III in January 1820 also inspired Wordsworth to write a sonnet on his death. Sonnet V strikes a discordant note and he calls George III 'Ward of the Law! - dread shadow of a King!' The poet speaks of George's reign as full of gloom and darkness and does not express sorrow over his death. In sonnet IX the poet proposes that 'Vale of Meditation' along which flows a stream styled by the Britons expressive of repose should be renamed 'Vale of Friendship' after the two sisters Lady E.B. and the Hon. Miss P. who lived there as 'sisters in love', a love allowed "to climb, / Even on the earth above the reach of Time!". In sonnet XVI he praises childhood and shows deep sympathy and profound praise for the child because he is untouched by painful struggles; no fretful temper nullies her cheek. She is prompt, lively, self-sufficing, yet meek and rapt in herself. Innocence plays on her

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1. In Ruskin's 'Kings' Treasury' a similar thought is expressed
Sonnet XII draws the picture of the banished Philoctetes in the Lemnian is lying like a 'Form sculptured' and a bird sitting on his unbent bow to disperse his tear. The poet draws the conclusion:

And trust that spiritual Creatures round us move,
Griefs to allay which Reason cannot heal;
Yea, veriest reptiles have sufficed to prove
To fettered wretchedness that no Bastille
Is deep enough to exclude the light of love,
Though man for brother man has ceased to feel.

(The didactic conclusion seems to echo the neo-classical age of the 18th century England. Pope bemoans: "what man has made of man".

Moreover, Wordsworth himself had firm faith in the primary affections of man because they bring him close to nature and thus lead him to happiness. That is why Princes and Kings are not the themes of Wordsworth’s poetry. Cumberland Beggar, Leech Gatherer, Midas and Cumbrian peasants are his haunts where love resides and which are not to be made extinct by Bastille. Wordsworth always loved the simple life of the rustics because in it only he found primary affections in pure form and in their hearts good soil for their growth. He was always critical of the industrial age and its bad effects on human life which was deprived of its natural bliss. Man had grown materialistic and had forgotten Christ. He writes of this in sonnet XXXII already discussed in sonnets descriptive of nature. The same theme is reiterated

1. This sonnet is reminiscent of other poems - Lucy Gray We are seven, Alice Fell, To H.C., There was a boy The "Lucy" poems and the Immortality ode dealing with the theme of childhood and evoking a sense of joy, reverence and mystery.
Sonnet XII When Philoctetes in the Lemnian is 1927 (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
XXXII To a Painter (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
in sonnet XLVI where he deplores the vanishing beauty of the mountains and the deliterate negligence of the Britons in search of gold and power. In the same year appeared another sonnet probably addressed to his daughter, Dora who had then entered her 17th year. He praises her refined and saintly mind. She was beautiful not only outwardly but also in thought feeling. Her blanched unwithered cheek and drooping head were expressive of her meekness. The poet takes the help of a simile to describe the effect of her beauty and innocence on her life in advancing years:

There with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;  
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb  
From desolation toward the genial prime;  
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,  
And filling more and more with crystal light  
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

(XVII)

There are seven sonnets IV, XXIV, XXVI, XXIX, XXXII, XXXIII and XVII which are inspired by pictures or portraits of persons including himself. Sonnet IV describes the statue of Henry VIII showing his broad visage, chest of ample mould, broidered vestments, his poniard hanging and his worthies surrounding him. The poet expresses his surprise:

Bow Providence educeth, from the spring  
Of lawless will, unlooked-for streams of good,  
Which neither force shall check nor time abate!

(IV)

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<td>XVII</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>Recollection of the Portrait of King Henry the Eight Trinity Lodge, Cambridge (Misc. Sonnets Part III)</td>
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Sonnet XXIV was prompted by portrait of himself painted at Rydal Mount by W. Pickersgill for St. John's College, Cambridge. The portrait was easily recognised and the poet was impressed by its life-likeness:

Tears of delight, that testified how true
To life thou art, and, in thy truth, how dear!
(XXIV)

Sonnet XXVI applauds Haydon for his beautiful portrait of Napoleon with his back turned, arms folded and the unapparent face tinged against the background of a cloudless sky and waveless ocean. The other portrait by Haydon that prompted the poet to write sonnet XXIX was that of Wellington upon the field of Waterloo. The portrait shows the horse elevated with pride as the master's hand is shown on his neck but the poet notices no sign of pride or elation in the rider and feels that this divinely blest warrior will enjoy the fruits of fame in Heaven. Sonnets XXXII and XXXIII were called forth by a miniature painting of Mary by Margaret Gillies. They were written almost extempore and the poet was not unjustly pleased with them. He wrote to Dora: "I never poured out any thing more truly from the heart". The timelessness of his love for her who in his eyes could never grow old is his theme. The poet first tells the

Sonnet  XXIV  To the Author's Portrait 1832 (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
XXVI  To B. R. Haydon, on seeing his picture of Napoleon Bonaparte on the Island of St. Helena (Misc. Sonnets Pt. III)
XXIX  On a Portrait of the Duke of Wellington upon the field of Waterloo, by Haydon (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
XXXII  To a Painter (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
XXXIII  On the same subject (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
painter that his painting the picture for him in so life-like a manner is a fruitless task because the poet's love for Mary is not subject to change. He always sees her eyes unbedimmed and ever smiling and blooming face. He talks not only of her exterior beauty but also of her virtues:

Morn into noon did pass, noon into eye,
And the old day was welcome as the young,
As welcome, and as beautiful—in sooth
More beautiful, as being a thing more holy:
Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
Into one vision, future, present, past.

(XXXII)

Sonnet XVII shows the poet's deep love for Isabella Fenwick. The poet is not so much worried about his own death as he is worried about the sweet memory of I.F. enshrined in his heart but he pays thanks to Art which preserves the memory:

Yet, blessed Art, we yield not to dejection;
Thou against Time so feelingly dost strife.
Where'er, preserved in this most true reflection,
An image of her soul is kept alive,
Some lingering fragrance of the pure affection,
Whose flower with us will vanish, must survive.

(XVII)

Sonnet IX in praise of a picture painted by Sir G.H. Beaumont who had captured one significant moment out of eternity also speaks of the permanence of art. The sonnet is reminiscent of Keats's "Ode on Grecian urn", as both have the theme of permanence and transience. The theme of permanence is also taken up in sonnet XII. The poet

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finds a contrast between the heavenly things and the human woes and unspiritual pleasures. To I.F. Wordsworth also wrote another sonnet XVIII in which he expresses his unchilled love for her and calls her 'The heart-affianced sister of our love'. Wordsworth's biographers say that I.F. was a dear friend of Wordsworth to support and console him in his later years and the poet affirms this and shows how obliged he is to her for making his life happy at this advanced age:

The star which comes at close of day to shine
More heavenly bright than when it leads the morn,
Is Friendship's emblem, whether the forlorn
She visiteth, or, shedding light benign
Through shades that solemnize life's calm decline,
Both make the happy happier.

(XVIII)

Wordsworth also wrote a love sonnet (XXV) probably to show that he could write a sonnet in the Elizabethan tradition of love sonnet. It is addressed to an imaginary Lady Love. The sonnet starts with a query showing surprise at the silence of the beloved:

Why art thou silent! Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?

(XXV)

Not getting response the lover becomes impatient and asks her twice to speak. He draws a contrast between her past warm heart and present cold bosom:

Speak — though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's — nest filled with snow
Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine —
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!

(XXV)

Sonnet XVIII To I.F. (Supplement of Pieces Not Appearing in the Edition of 1849-50)

XXV Why art thou silent! (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
Sonnet XVI published 1636 is devoted to his grand child. While the child claps his hand, the poet feels sad over the absence of the father of the grand child. He criticises the statutes of the states for not caring for the children. The undated sonnets published in 1635 are sonnets XXVI, XXVIII and XV. In sonnet XXVI the 'Desponding Father!' is asked not to fret at the loss and draw consolation from nature. In nature the fruits fall, the flowers wither, and the branches lose their lustre but fade and disappear to renew with spring season. So is with human life which with its renewal brings new hope and growth:

.........................that from their timely fall
(Misdeem it not a cankerous change) may grow
Rich mellow bearings, that for thanks shall call:
In all men, sinful is it to be slow
To hope -- in Parents, sinful above all.

(XXVI)

Sonnet XXVIII throws light on how the lady became saint by listening to the sweet tones of Ledbury bells. The sound enraptured her to a degree that she meant 'Here I set up my rest'. Since then "a saintly Anchoress, she dwelt till she exchanged for heaven that happy ground". Sonnet XV tells about Lesbia who busied herself on her harp asking her Dove to wait. When she was free, she shrieked to note the kite destroying the Dove with its ruthless beak. The

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undated sonnets XXXI published in 1642 and XXXVI of miscellaneous
sonnets part III are also devoted to ladies. The former is about a
lady made weary by love and crossed by adverse circumstances. She is
described standing fixed in a saint-like trance. The poet wishes her
return from the happy trance to walk on earth's common grass thanking
God for her daily bread and thus discharging her duties should spend
her days. In the latter too, the poet speaks of a lady apparently
wretched and wrecked but, in fact, a devoted spirit privileged to hold
communication with God and her face illuminating by Heaven's pitying love.

In 1643 he wrote a sonnet on his master Rev. Christopher Wordsworth,
D.D. Master of Harrow School, after the perusal of latter's book
'Theophilus Anglicanus' lately published. The poet hopes that the
work will guide the pupils on the road to heaven. In the year follow­
ing he wrote a sonnet expressing the protest of a yeoman against the
proposed railway line passing through his paternal house near which
was standing a tree which he worshipped. In 1846 he wrote two sonnets
— one "To An Octogenarian" and one about the death of the child. The
former teaches the immortality of love, even when affections lose
their object:

Though poor and destitute of friends thou art,
Perhaps the sole survivor of thy race,
One to whom Heaven assigns that mournful part
The utmost solitude of age to face,
Still shall be left some corner of the heart
Where Love for living Things can find a place.

(VIII)

In the second the death of the child does not evoke in the poet sad
feeling because he feels that the child is given a Roman burial and
is in divine communion.

Sonnet  XXXI  Le; where she stands fixed (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
 XXXVI  Oh what a Wreck! (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
    VIII  To An Octogenarian 1846 (Misc. poems.)
PART - II  Wordsworth And Sonnets Descriptive Of Nature

Wordsworth is hailed as a great poet of nature. His love for nature from physical sensations of the first stage to the spiritual heights\(^1\) is admitted on all hands. Faith in nature was his religion and hence it is but natural for him to have composed sonnets on nature. Besides other series, such sonnets appear in miscellaneous series also. An attempt has been made to study these sonnets in this chapter. Wordsworth wrote sonnets descriptive of nature but he is not without a precursor in this field though the credit of establishing it conclusively goes to him. Thomas Warton the younger (1728-1790), a net insignificant forerunner of the Romantic Movement, was perhaps the first, who in some sonnets addressed himself to the sketching of natural scenery and the melancholy thoughts resulting therefrom\(^2\). He

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1. Tintern Abbey:  
"I have owed to them,  
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,  
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;  
....................................................

...............That serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on,....  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul."

The Prelude Book I (Line 16-20)  
"............and should the chosen guide  
Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,  
I cannot miss my way. I breathe again!  
Trances of thought and mountings of the mind  
Come fast upon me ............."

2. For instance the sonnet 'To the River Lodon'. A comparison of this sonnet with the thematically related sonnets of Bowles.
was followed by Thomas Russel (1762-86) who, for instance, in his sonnet "To Walclusa" made the subject of poetry a landscape which for him as a sonnet composer was rich in historical associations. Much more important than Warton and Russel was William Lisle Bowles who (1762-1850) exercised his influence on Wordsworth and Coleridge. In 1789 Bowles published his first fourteen sonnets on nature, written chiefly on picturesque spots during a journey. Bowles' poems show a concrete conceptual property, a striking imagery of language and the romantic inclination to project subjective feelings and moods on nature. Nature exercises in these poems a soothing influence on the sick human soul. For Bowles tries, after a brief description of nature to link this perception of nature with personal experiences and views. A big flaw of his sonnets -- sentimentality -- becomes apparent here. He dwells upon sorrow full of tears which wells up frequently at the thought of transitory nature of everything human and which occasionally mars his 'natural diction', a quality extolled by Coleridge. This sentimentality and some other phenomena in his poems, as for instance, the numerous personifications of the abstract also bring him close to many a representative of the later sentimental rationalism. Standing at the boundary between classicism and romanticism, Bowles is an important link in the development of the poetry descriptive of nature. As one of the first he composes sonnets descriptive of nature in considerable number and thereby gives to romanticism a new and fruitful topic for sonnet composition: His significance does not lie so much in poetical excellence as rather
in the stimulus he gave to Wordsworth and Coleridge. In 1796
Coleridge wrote to an acquaintance about Bowles' sonnets. 'They
have given me more pleasure and done my heart more good than all
the other books I ever read, except the Bible'. What struck
Coleridge in his sonnets was the unity between nature and the human
thought and feeling. He writes in Biographia literaria that Bowles
along with Cooper was the first "who combined natural thoughts with
natural diction and who reconciled the heart with the head". Coleridge
even echoes Bowles in some sonnets as for instance in 'To the River
Otter. Only a few years later he was able to get rid of his influ­
ence. Wordsworth, on the contrary, was never too much under the
influence of Bowles. Nevertheless, he was appreciative of these
sonnets of nature and they served as stimulus to him if not as a
model. It was left for him to turn the sonnet descriptive of nature
into an indigenous meter in the English literature and at the same
time to raise it in his best poems to heights rarely attained.

The sonnets descriptive of nature included in miscellaneous
series are studied in this chapter in two phases. The first phase
includes those sonnets which are purely descriptive of the various
objects of nature and express the poets' delight in them and in the
later phase are dealt with those sonnets which are not purely descrip­
tive but indicate something deeper i.e. express Wordsworth's faith
in nature. Wordsworth's use of nature is very wide. It embraces all
those objects which are not human. They include birds, animals, stars, planets, hills, rivers, torrents, clouds, rills, and scenes. All these objects occupy quite a large space in his sonnets. Sonnet XV offers a vivid description of natural things. The wild Duck does not own the sylvan bower or gorgeous cell but a low structure wherein the birds spreads her brooding wings. The structure is under the yew tree. There is another species of birds called 'A volant tribe of Bards' the nests of which hang in the fluttering Zephyrs. They think themselves secure there. The calm of the sky and the tranquility of silent hills is preferred by the birds. In both these sonnets the poet dwells upon the contrast between vain human life and the calm life of nature. He writes:

I gazed -- and, self-accused while gazing, sighed
For human - kind, weak slaves of cumbrous pride!

(XV)

Sonnets XI, XIV, XXXIV, XXXV, of part III tell us about the Red-breast, Cuckoo and Thrush. The poet praises the Red breast, and feels a kinship with the bird because

For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the ground
Who gives his Angels wings to speed through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue profound;
Then peck or perch, fond Flutterer! nor forbear
To trust a Poet in still musings bound.

(XI)

Sonnet XV The wild Duck's nest 1819 (Misc.Sonnets Part I)
XXXIV A Volant Tribe of Bards on earth are found 1833 (Misc.Sonnets Part I)
XI In the Woods of Rydal 1827 (Misc.Sonnets Part III)
XIV To the Cuckoo (Misc.Sonnets Part III)
XXXV 'Tis He whose yester evenings high disdain 1838 (Misc.Sonnets Part III)
To Wordsworth there is one spirit moving through all things. He likes
the shrill cry of the Cuckoo which gladdens the sick room from which
is shut out the air and the sun. He feels that the eagle race may
perish, the lion's roar may be heard no more, the crow may cease to
rouse the down but the Cuckoo will continue to be faithful to the
spring. He wishes us to listen to the song of the thrush who against
all heavy odds of roaring winds sings to his Love: The poet will also
like to carol like him. He writes of the effects of the song of the
Thrush on himself:

Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in moment charmed my cares to rest.

(XXXIV)

Then, the poet points to the subdued note in the song of the Thrush
at day-break and so exhorts the sun to rise so that the songster may
pour forth his ecstasy and fill the heaven and the earth with his
joyous spirit:

Animals have also attracted Wordsworth and he has praised the
lamb in one sonnet. He notes how the lamb being dependent on nature,
gambols, enjoys and is satisfied. The poet concludes:

Why to God's goodness cannot We be true,
And so, His gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new?

(XXX)

Sonnet XXXIV  Hark! Tis the thrush undaunted...1833(Misc.Sonnets Part III)
XXX  Composed on May Morning 1838 (Misc.Sonnets Part III)
Flowing water has been an attraction to Wordsworth since childhood. The river Derwent had been his playmate. Hence, besides a series on the river Duddon and stray sonnets on rivers, brooks, and rills like the Danube in 'Memorials of tour on the Continent, 1820', the Avon in 'Yarrow Revisited', the Greta, the Derwent, the Eden in 'Poems during a tour in summer of 1833', he devotes a few sonnets in the series of Miscellaneous Sonnets also to the same subject. The limpid rill Ema quivering down the hill has made a deep impression on the heart of the poet and he affirms in the following lines:

Months perish with their moons; year treads on year;
But, faithful Ema! thou with me canst say
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they;
The Immortal spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Kill, in vision clear.

(VI)

In sonnet XXXI the sight of a brook renews the poet's weary spirit and gives him unwearied joy. He does not like to humanize it as the Grecians had done because he finds in it 'the eternal soul clothed'. He is satisfied with tracing it through rocky passes and flowery creeks as the painters generally do. In sonnets X and XVIII he is curious to know the name and the place of birth of a torrent. The river Rotha he calls 'Rotha, my Spiritual child', because he has derived spiritual nourishment from it. It reminds the poet of the past:

1. See 'Prelude', Book I

Sonnet  VI  There is little unpretending rill (Misc. Sonnets Part I)
        XXXI  Brook! whose society the poet seeks (Misc. Sonnets Part II)
           X  To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge

       (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
A memorial theme
For others; for thy future self, a spell
To summon fancies out of Time's dark cell.
(XVIII)

Similarly the poet speaks of water flowing through the caverns and giving life to herbs, bright flowers, berry-bearing plants and insects. In the absence of the stream the forests pant, the hart and the hind and the hunter languish and droop. Even the perturbed human souls do not remain unaffected.

Wordsworth was a true nursling of the mountains and it was under their shadows that his life had thriven. It was in daily contemplation of simple natural life on the mountains that, after the sullen despair which fell upon him when with the reign of terror his hopes of worldwide regeneration had been shattered, resoluteness of spirit, sanity and joy of mind were restored to him. It was among the mountains that Wordsworth, as he says of the Wanderer, felt his faith. It was there that all things breathed immortality.

He put into words, as no other poet has, the spirit of the mountains.

Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountain; each a mighty voice.
(XII)

Noble descriptive pages relating to the mountains abound in his works, notably in The Excursion. Hazlitt has rightly observed that from Wordsworth's poetry one could infer that it is written in a mounta-

Sonnet XVIII To Rotha Q — (Misc. Sonnets Part III)
XII Thought of a Briton on the subjugation of Switzerland
(Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty Part I)
Inous country with its bareness, its simplicity, its loftiness and its depth. In sonnet V he describes Pelion, and Ossa flourishing side by side. He also does not forget Olympus and mountain Skiddow which is nobler and from whom springs many sweet streams. Sonnet XIV celebrates the first sight of snow on the mountains seen one day as he looked up at the Langdale Pikes from the vale of the Brathay:

How, clean, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from you distant mountain's head,
Which, strewed with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun - on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars.

(XIV)

With mountains are bound valleys, chasms and rocks which also find their place in his sonnets. Sonnet III tells us how the poet forgot all the past saddening incidents when he entered the vale:

But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crept
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small!
A Juggler's balls Old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

(III)

Sonnet XXXV gives us the description of Gordale Chasm through which flows the stream forcing its way to 'Salt sea Tide.' The poet is also impressed by the high rock wherefrom he has seen the imperial castle.

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<td>Pelion and Ossa flourishing side by side, (Misc. Sonnets Part I)</td>
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<td>XIV</td>
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standing with its towers catching the gleams of the golden sunnet.

Wordsworth was also carried away by the sight of rows of flowers. In Sonnet XVI the poet addresses the Snowdrop:

Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

The Snowdrop grows in the creek and it spreads its odour with a bent head because of fear of offending others. The objects of sky as stars, planets and clouds also impressed Wordsworth and so he has also sung in praise of them. Sonnet XLI is devoted to the planet Venus approaching nearer the earth and yielding its mystery with the advance of science. The poet is pained to think by way of contrast of the human world which is full of hatred for each other. He queries:

But are we worth enriched in love and meekness?
Aught dost thou see, bright star! of pure and wise
More than in humbler times graced human story;
That makes our hearts more apt to sympathize
With heaven, our souls more fit for future glory,
When earth shall vanish from our closing eyes,
Ere we lie down in our last dormitory?

Sonnet XXVIII describes the alluring beauty of the clouds on which are falling the golden rays of the setting sun. The poet feels sad at their disappearance:

Behold, already they forget to shine,
Dissolve -- and leave to him who gazed a sigh.
Not both to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whensoe'er it may,
Peace let us seek, -- to steadfast things attune
Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bowers,
The house that cannot pass away be ours.

Sonnet XVI  To a Snowdrop  (Misc.Sonnets Part II)
XLI  To the Planet Venus  (Misc.Sonnets Part III)
XXVIII  The most alluring clouds...  (Misc.Sonnets Part III)
He speaks fervently when he writes of the moon in two sonnets

XX and XXIII

The Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
'Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!'
Forthwith that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered; dazzling the Beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparaged,
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went;
And huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured -- content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

(XX)

In sonnet XXIII he draws the picture of the moon climbing the sky and wishes that he had the power of Merlin:

The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be;
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue heaven;
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

(XXIII)

Sonnet XXII is about the approach of twilight on a mountainous coast and breathes an oppressive sense of the antiquity both of the earth and of man. Sonnet II of Part II shows the poet in raptures and fancies that wild rose flower in the wood is like a bold girl playing pranks with the mountebank surrounded by a vast crowd below. Herein he humanizes nature.

Sonnet XX

The Shepherd, looking eastward, (Misc. Sonnets Part III)

XXIII With how sad steps, O Moon. (Misc. Sonnets Part II)

XXII Hail, Twilight. ....(Misc. Sonnets Part II)

1: See 'To the Moon, composed by the seaside—on the coast of Cumberland'.

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The relation between man and nature so important for Wordsworth's poetry receives an explanation in the sonnet 'NUNS fret not ......' while Wordsworth concludes that the sonnet form can be a wholesome restriction for one who has experienced the danger of great freedom, he presents to the eye a series of pictures that are taken from the world of man and from nature. On close examination these pictures show a carefully measured inner harmony. At first, pictures from the domain of human beings: Nuns and hermits, i.e. men and women of the vita contemplativa

2. Maids and weavers, i.e. men and women of the vita activa, 3. Students who connect both the first groups with each other, are contented within the confines of their lives. With this Wordsworth achieved a unity of the basic human types. But before he now comes to the application of these examples to his case and draws the conclusion ('In truth the prison, unto which we doom ourselves no prison is'), he brings one more picture, that of the bees which at one moment fly in the highest peaks and at another moment buzz in narrow foxglove flower. This picture of the bees stands with other pictures from human life. Within the framework of the thought of this poem the bees are attributed equality with nuns, hermits, students, maids and weavers. In this context no difference is made between the law which governs the human and the one which governs the sub-human nature. Man and nature are closely connected with each other. 2 This relationship becomes most obvious in the case of


2. Compare the first line of the poem 'The Daffodils' in which the poet speaks about himself, 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' not 'Like a cloud'.
human beings who on grounds of age, manner of living or profession
stand in close contact with nature. With regard to age, children
deserve the special love and adoration of the poet. As to manner
of living or vocation, it is the people in the countryside, the
farmers, the simple folk whose rhythm of life is in harmony with
nature. Wordsworth liked best to keep company with them.

But nature signifies something more for Wordsworth. She is
for him the revelation of the divine. Not only man and nature but
also God and nature constitute a unity and the nearer man is to
nature as child and simple person, the nearer he stands to the
divine also. Let us hear what Wordsworth says in this sonnet:

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Sun
Breathless with adoration, the broad Sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
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 by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine;
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'est at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

(XXX)

1. Compare the programmatic forward to the Lyrical Ballads
of the year 1800 with its condemnation of the 'Poetic
diction' and its demand for a simple, plain and prosaic
language in poetry also.

Sonnet XXX It is a beauteous evening calm and free
(Miscellaneous Sonnets Part I)
This sonnet composed on the beach near Calais in the autumn of 1802 and the sonnet "The world is too much with us" composed in 1806 are notable in this context. The first sonnet shows several characteristics typical of Wordsworth's sonnets on nature. The first five lines give a description of a beautiful summer evening in which the peaceful calm is especially emphasized by several words and phrases. Sentences such as "The broad sun is sinking down..." reveal a pronounced plastic imagery. The very word "broad" calls forth a clear visual image. The sun close to the horizon appears to the human eye bigger than when high in the sky. Moreover, the rays of the evening sun seem to spread wider than when at noon. The following sentence "the gentleness of heaven broods o'er the sea" also has a strong pictorial element. In the word "broad" is also visible the change-over from a picture of external senses to an impressionistic picture which is also evident in other expressions, as for example, the sun sets "in its tranquillity" or in the solemn line "The holy time is quiet as a nun, breathless with adoration". This mellow silence of evening and the holy hour produces in Wordsworth a mood in which he experiences in nature the powerfully operative presence of the divine being. For in the silence of nature a quite new and living current suddenly breaks through with the word "listen!", after the first five lines, and the words "mighty, awake, eternal motion, sound
like thunder" make a breath-taking and effective contrast to the soft
calm of the first verse. Just the solemn "tranquility" of the evening
comes to the poet as a revelation of the eternal thunder like movement
of the divine in nature. The strange sounding words "The mighty
Being is awake" obviously denote a divine Being operating in nature's
lap and more or less coinciding pantheistically with nature, a Being
whose existence is made known to the poet by the evening silence. The
divine power is operative not only in nature but also in human beings
as part of nature. That is why W.W. says to the child in line 11
"Thy nature is not therefore less divine" and here he gives expression
to what is always found in his poetry namely, that the child stands
in a deeper and firmer relationship with this unity of God, man and
nature than does the grown-up man. When the child remains uninfluenced
by thoughts such as the poet expresses here -- indeed for this very
reason, he stays closer to the primordial and natural. "Thou liest in
Abraham's bosom all the year" means that the child rests just there
in nature where he is thoroughly interwoven with the divine. With
utter disregard for the meddling intellect the child stands "at the
temple's shrine". Only thus can we understand the intense adoration
Wordsworth displays for the child. What is important to note in the
sonnet is that nature is not equivalent to "order" as in classicism,
but is a secret, a creative healing primitive force, a revelation of the
divine. The dedication of nature is raised to its climax by Wordsworth,
As he himself says that he found his creed not in the Bible but in nature.

In the second sonnet Wordsworth complains against those who have no appreciation for nature:

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon.
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not -- Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Save sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

(XXXIII)

The principal theme of the sonnet is indeed the lamentation about the fact that we have given ourselves up to the noisy world with its influences and distractions, diversions and waste our energies there and have no more feeling for nature, above all for the divine forces in nature, in connection with which Wordsworth lets Proteus and Triton stand here as personified forces of the one divine natural Being for the latter itself (the divine natural Being). It is for him a very important desire, for in the ninth line he gets excited "It moves us not -- Great God!" and he finally would rather be brought up in an impotent and obsolete pagan creed (for) then he would possess

Sonnet XXXIII The world is too much with us (Misc. Sonnets Part I)
a greater inner readiness to absorb the wonderful and the divine in nature as he now seems lost in the profane and lifeless nature. Wordsworth perhaps means that along with the diversion through the world, an intellectual outlook is guilty of this lack of appreciation for nature and that there is greater proximity of a pagan belief to the primordial and the natural—hence the man who professes this creed has a sensitive sense for the divine in nature. As nature bears the divine character, and man who is next to nature stands against— as above — next to the divine. Only it is not here the child or the man leading a simple life, but the pagan, who living in a primitive stage of civilization and professing a natural religion, is nearer to nature in her divine relationship. For the rest the poet's yearning for Pagan religion must not be literally understood— otherwise he would have not attributed (the Adj.) "outworn" to the "creed" of the pagan, but out of the momentary seal and desire to emphasize unequivocally the value of the sight of nature. In line 5—7 two beautiful pictures produce the consciousness of living nature. One is that of the sea baring her bosom to the moon and the other is that of the calm of the moon light.

The sonnet "Upon Westminster Bridge" shows to what heights Wordsworth raised the sonnet descriptive of nature.

Earth has not anything to show more fair: Dull would he be of soul who could pass by A sight so touching in its majesty: This City now doth, like a garment wear The beauty of the morning; silent, bare, Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie Open unto the fields, and to the sky: All bright and glittering in the smokeless air Never did sun more beautifully steep In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill; Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep! The river glideth at his own sweet will: Dear God! the very houses seem asleep: And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Sonnet XXXVI Composed upon "Westminster Bridge" (Misc. Sonnets Part II)
In this unrivalled sonnet written on his way to France in 1802, Wordsworth's feelings of ecstasy over the morning freshness and purity of meadows contrast with the foggy atmosphere and ceaseless bustle during the day time. The poet is struck by the silence of the dawn and feels sorry for those who do not feel exalted at this beauty. The sonnet records a moment of vision in which Wordsworth for once is able to achieve a satisfactory ordering of the complexities of the city. This is made possible by the silence of the morning and by the poet's freedom from involvement in the labyrinths of the town. From the river the city is seen not only as confusion of houses, but as a complex scene which can be ordered by the human mind. It is seen as something silent, grand, and everlasting and lulled in sleep. The first lines record the rousing of the imagination and the whole scene is unrolled with the help of personifications which is different from that of Gray and Collins. The pictures of things like ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples given most economically are seen not as individual things all shining in the smokeless air but also, a part of a garment worn by the city as an organic living being with "mighty heart" from which life is spread through the whole nation. The nature pictures of the valley, rocks and hills bathed in the glorious light of the rising sun and of the river Thames flowing at its sweet will are very beautiful that move the poet and expresses the poet's mood at peace and calm which the poet so dearly and deeply loved.
Thus, there is no mere cataloguing or listing as we find in many early poems of Wordsworth\(^1\). His nature stands by the side of man as was the case with many 19th century romantic poets as that of Keats\(^2\). His attitude is exactly in conformity with the 19th century swing of interest towards wild, sublime, natural forms of mountains and oceans whose obscurity, greatness and infinity could be described as beyond human conception but amidst which the human figure is eminent. In the sonnets published in the volume of 1807 nature appears not as something sinister, grand and powerful as in *The Prelude* but as a source of pleasure, comfort and delight.

The feeling of elation is expressed in sonnet XI of part II when the poet is bewitched by the 'tempting with groves in the sea' but with a subdued feeling of melancholy. He writes:

> We should forget them; they are of the sky,  
> And from our earthly memory fade away.

And he imagines the Indian citadel and temple of Greece which will fade away with the fall of shades of the evening.

---

1. The cock is crowing,  
The stream is flowing  
The small birds twitter,  
The lake doth glitter,  
The green field sleeps in the sun;  
The oldest and the youngest  
Are at work with the strongest;  
The cattle are grazing,  
Their heads are raising;  
They are forty feeding like one.

2. Keats’ statement "Scenery is fine but human nature is fine".
PART - III General Sonnets In Miscellaneous Series

Among the general sonnets in the Miscellaneous Series are included the sonnets addressed to Sleep, Ship, Fancy, Antiquities, Cloisters, and Portraits but important among them are those which contain a criticism of public life which was growing materialistic and impious. Many of them tell us about the poet's growth and two of them are written in defence of the sonnet form. These sonnets cover a period over fifty years. Sonnet XI shows us the poet remembering an Indian citadel, Greek temple and a tower expressing silent rapture at the time of sun-set with which the heavenly scenes also fade away. Sonnets XII, XIII, XIV are addressed to Sleep in which the poet likens sleep to a fly that flies over the fretful river. He knows that it is addressed by many as "Dear bosom child" and "Balm that tames all anguish" and "Saint that evil thought and aims takest away", but the poet does not get it when he wants it. He knows the importance of sleep before which the "Wealth of morning" is nothing and so he concludes:

Come blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health.
(XIV)

The sonnet XXXI speaks of the inquisitiveness of the poet to know whither the ship is bound without caring for the tropic suns and the polar snow. Sonnet XXXII was singled out by Wordsworth himself for he took the ship's coming in his view as representing the sudden unimpeded onrush of poetic inspiration. It tells us about the process of his poetic inspiration.

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<td>Composed after a journey across the Hambleton Hills, Yorkshire 1802 (Misc.Sonnets Part I)</td>
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creation. When the poet cast his eyes on the sea sprinkled with ships, his mind started floating up and down among them in a kind of dreamy indifference. It is in this state that he sees the object—a ship which may be said to come on a mission of the poetic spirit. His mind "wantons with grateful joy" in the exercise of its own powers and love of its own creation.

"This ship to all the rest I did prefer" because

"Where she comes, the wind must stir"

and then concludes

"On went she and due north her journey took"

and then the poet's mind rests.

From Wordsworth's letter to Lady Beaumont for a piece of critical analysis.

1. "I am represented in the sonnet as casting my eyes over the sea sprinkled with a multitude of ships, like the heavens with stars, my mind may be supposed to float up and down among them in a kind of dreamy indifference. All at once, while I am in this state, comes forth an object, an individual and my mind, sleepy and unfixed, as awakened and fastened in a moment the ship in the sonnet may be said to come on a mission of the poetic spirit. My mind wantons with grateful joy in the exercise of its own powers, and, loving its own creation.

This ship to all the rest I did prefer, making her a sovereign or a regent, and thus giving body and life to all the rest, mingling up this idea with fondness and praise.

Where she comes the winds must stir; and concluding the whole with

On went she and due north her journey took. Thus taking up again the Reader with whom I began and inviting him to rest his mind as mine is resting."

Quoted in Mary Moorman's A Biography, The late years 1803-1850 Page 26

From Middle years ! 30l Page 129 CF Hazlitt's description of Wordsworth's manner, of talking about his poetry in 'The Spirit Of The Age.'
He is reminded in sonnet XXII of the good old days when "Matrons and Sires" without caring for the Christmas snow or Easter winds went to the Scuptured stall out of devotional fervour, and regrets the decay of such piety in his own times.

WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe; and joy, for human-kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!

(\textit{XVY})

In sonnet VI the poet moralizes in the vein of the 16th century poets. He draws a lesson from the slowly sinking star that, while man struggles with fate for health, power and glory, life loses its brightness which it cannot regain as the other does.

\begin{verse}
\textit{So the poet advises in sonnet V to utilize the "Fair Prime of Life" in}
\end{verse}

pursuing the path of steep ascent and lofty aim. He asks the man to shun that joy which slights this idea. Many sonnets record his feelings amidst different situations. Sonnet XV contains the tumult of the poet's soul due to the fierce cold wind shivering \textit{\textbf{29a}} to the core and the poet taking 'an amure disk—shield of Tranquility' for providential goodness.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
XXII & \textit{Decay of Poetry} 1827 (Misc. Sonnets Part I) \\
XXXV & \textit{Weak is the will of Man} 1815 (Misc. Sonnets Part I) \\
VI & \textit{I watch and long have wasted} 1819 (Misc. Sonnets Part II) \\
V & \textit{Fair Prime of Life} 1827 (Misc. Sonnets Part II) \\
XV & \textit{Composed during a storm} 1819 (Misc. Sonnets Part II) \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
Sonnet XVIII notes the poet's reaction to adverse public criticism of the style and matter of Peter Bell. In sonnet VII he recapitulates his boating when all memories and hopes crowded his fancy while his own true love was seated by his side. He regrets that natural object like cloud, grove, and sky do not find place in human heart. The most important among the miscellaneous sonnets are the sonnets on sonnet itself. They are sonnets No. II and I taken up for discussion in previous chapters. In sonnet XXVII he talks of poetic inspiration suddenly seizing him till he has expressed himself fully. Wordsworth does not favour the idea of a poet's growth according to certain rules and regulations. He firmly believes that the poet's growth cannot be through a formal mould but from "its own divine vitality". He writes:

How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
But from its own divine vitality

A poet can grow in untroubled peace and concord and not necessarily in wars, conflicts, struggles and afflictions. This is the theme of sonnet VIII. In sonnet XLVI he bemoans the encroachment of Railways

1. Keats also said that poetry must come like leaves to a tree and Coleridge also held the idea of the organic growth of unity.

XXVII A Poet! He both put his heart (Misc. Sonnets Part III) 1842
on the seclusion and beauty of the wild mountains. Sonnets XLVII and XLVIII are memorable as the last word of a fighter in an unending struggle. The poet deplores the wreck and ruin brought about and praises the constructive role of nature.

That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing. 
See how her ivy clasps the sacred Ruin, 
Fall to prevent or beautify decay; 
And, on the moulder'd walls, how bright, how gay!
The flowers in pearly dews their bloom renewing! 
Thanks to the place, blessing upon the hour; 
Even as I speak the rising Sun's first smile 
Gleams on the grass - crowned top of your tall Tower, 
Whose cawing occupants with joy proclaim 
Prescriptive title to the shattered pile, 
Where, Cavendish, thine seems nothing but a name!

(XLVII)

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Sonnet  XLVII  At furness Abbey 1845 (Misc. Sonnets Part III)  
XLVIII  At furness Abbey 1845 (Misc. Sonnets Part III)  
IX  Retirement 1828 (Misc. Sonnets Part II)  

1. See "Tables Turned"