The original design of Wordsworth's conception of the common man is inherent in Wordsworth himself, and Coleridge's comment on The Excursion, recorded in his Table Talk, July 31, 1832, supports this view. Says Coleridge:

"He was to treat man as man — a subject of eye, ear, touch, and taste, in contact with external nature, and informing the senses from the mind, and not compounding a mind out of the senses; then he was to describe the pastoral and other states of society, assuming something of the Juvenalian spirit as he approached the high civilization of cities and towns, and opening a melancholy picture of the present state of degeneracy and vice; thence he was to infer and reveal the proof of, and necessity for, the whole state of man and society being subject to, and illustrative of, a redemptive process in operation, showing how this idea reconciled all the anomalies, and promised future glory and restoration. Something of this sort, I think, agreed on".

Coleridge himself could not afford to suffer with those whom he saw suffer because of his 'too much personal and domestic discontent'. So Wordsworth, as a logical inevitability, engaged himself in exploring the conditions of lives of common people to
present significant and unprecedented images of human beings. A review shows that the contentions of Coleridge are no simple exaggerations of poetical or philosophical mood, or of some philanthropic attitude, but are indicative of what Wordsworth himself thought. Says Wordsworth:

"Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature."

(Preface to *The Lyrical Ballads.*)

Wordsworth is a poet of the highest order, and is conscious of the poet's responsibility of presenting the true pictures of men. So his men are as men are within the realm of exactitude. They are low and humble, but contain in themselves special marks of excellence for their definite attitudes to life, and leave the impressions of seriousness for their astounding power to reconcile to the existing conditions of life. They are distinct and distinguished, markedly individual and single for
possession of unexpected strangeness and peculiarity in their demeanour. The poet's preference goes for them because these people are capable of finding almost ethical values in the conditions of life with the original power and potentiality of mind, and are also capable of building the principles for maintenance of self-existence by overthrowing the contrary elements through the conflict between internal and external forces. The conflict contains in itself the seeds of condemnation of the established values and absolutes—social, political and religious—and leads to the apprehension of an almost mystical absolute in the form of what may be called fortitude through sufferance and endurance. So the phenomena of life of these people evoke the passion in the poetic mind on a greater scale than any other factor can do to share the sufferings of the sufferers, because they offer a comprehensive idea instead of providing glimpses of the virtue in of silence and patience in pains. Wordsworth knows this theory as Shakespeare too does:

0, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer/

The Tempest, Act I, scene ii.

Poetry is the "noble and profound application of the ideas to life" (1) and Wordsworth receives distinction for 'powerful application' of the ideas 'on man, on nature, and on human life', to the ordinary people, because he treats life as the conscious
existence of man in the world of reality with the actions and
reactions of the essential qualities of life to the established
values of the social phenomena. It is through reliance on this
fundamental concept that the poet presents common people in their
usual shapes and forms, colours and tempers far away from
the scope of asserting them as speculative and contemplative
images. The common people are always exposed to social apathy
and finally to moral vices because the problems of maintenance in
the world of reality enforce them to resort to humble means and
ignoble actions and they appear in their completeness and entirety
within the real conditions of life without any veil around them.
These people manifest the humble feelings of mind and the simple
thoughts inherent in the situations and incidents of life in
their totality for the revelation of the real images of men
through the illumination of the inner qualities primarily through
the flux and re-flux of the outer conditions of life, and lastly
through purgation. So the poet's realisation of the phenomena of
living of these people is objective, and accordingly, he neither to philosophise nor to moralise, but to present the
human figures as vivid and life-like, far from illusion and
obscurity, with the elementary conditions of their lives: joys
and sorrows, pleasures and pains, delights and miseries, sufferance and endurance, and in all occasions, they remain
individualistic, with the ideas springing from the sensations of
daily life.

In a general sense it is very difficult to say the last
word on the poet's choice of the common man. But it is true that
Wordsworthian common people are the reflections of 'the inner
necessity that impelled him from within and accordingly, the poet "watched intently the surface of things so as to read their inner meaning, listened to the words of simple people, beggars, children, rustics, even idiots, to draw from them hints and signs of the ultimate truths that he was after". (2) So Wordsworth's poetry depicts the real picture of man. He justly probes into the mind of the common man, wisely describes the truth concerning the secrecy of his heart, firmly establishes the mysterious relation between the heart of his man and that of Nature, and ultimately presents a true thing. So the poet not only collects objects of self-expression from the common man, delights in his joys and happiness, and sympathises with his sorrows and miseries, but also loves him from the very core of his heart:

'Love had he known in huts where poor men lived'.

It is on reliance on this feeling that the poet has discovered 'the dignity of untaught peasants' and the infinite power in beggars, pedlars, tramps, vagabonds and the like.

The poetic intuition has already made him conscious of the intrinsic greatness and inherent infiniteness of every human being, but the poet is not content with the realisation only because he has discovered a new meaning, a new spirit in the humble and simple lives, and consequently has "set himself, with the hard tenacity of his nature, to examine the facts for himself. He would not give up his hopes for man till he had

(2) The Poet Wordsworth
Helen Darbishire
tested human nature in its elements. How was this to be done?

'By stripping our own hearts naked, and by looking out of our selves towards men who lead the simplest lives, and those most according to Nature, men who have never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, effiminate ways of thinking and feeling'. In his wanderings on the country roads he found in the humblest human beings a strength and energy that surprised him. He saw into the depth of human souls,

Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes.

"He bent in reverence
To Nature and the power of human minds,
To men as they are men within themselves.

"The power that surprised him in tramps' and beggars and outcast women was not the thing that Godwin valued in man. It was feeling, not reason, that Wordsworth found when he groped to the bottom. The elementary feelings, the essential passions of the heart are at their purest and simplest, he found, in humble and rustic people. These are powers in human nature, which are like the primal energies of Nature: Their strength, force, and beauty seem to spring from the same source; through them men and Nature are one. This was his discovery". (3)

The poet's interest for the humble and deplorable aspects of life has provided him with an almost superhuman power of appreciation, and accordingly, his study of the common people emits the essence of philosophy of life. So, though Wordsworth is not a philosopher in the truest sense of the term,
his poetry is not devoid of philosophical elements. But this philosophy is not didactic; rather it is humanistic in nature and arises out of the poet's contact with the earth and 'men as they are men within themselves'. The common people contain in themselves the immense treasure, and Wordsworth has discovered in it 'the dignity of individual man'. So he is always in search of such man, and is eager to hear:

From mouths of lowly men and of obscure
A tale of honour; sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fair.

_The Prelude_ (1805), Book XII, lines 182 - 184.

The poet treats his man with a reverential attitude and says:

Of these, .... shall be my Song; of these,
If future years mature me for the task,
Will I record the praise; making Verse
Deal boldly with substantial things, in truth
And sanctity of passion, speak of these
That Justice may be done, obeisance paid
Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,
Inspire, through unadulterated ears
Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope, my theme
No other than the very heart of man ....

_The Prelude_ (1805), Book XII, lines 231 - 240

Lastly, the poet finds the reality in the most common and ordinary men and his treatment reminds one of Shakespeare's thoughts. King Lear utters: 'Thou art the thing itself', and seeks the reality in the destitute beggar. Wordsworth goes a step further. He not only discovers the real image of man in
the figures in destitution, but also identifies himself with them and there remains "no real difference between the poet and other men". (4) So, Wordsworthian common men form a sort of constellation in which Wordsworth himself is the Pole-star. This constellation consists in itself men and women of various categories, but on all occasions they are distinct and individualistic -- distinct with the peculiar process to reconcile the facts of life, to maintain integrity and cohesion within themselves, and individualistic with the strange psychic make-up to preserve sovereignty within the realm of existing conditions. The poet's treatment of these figures evinces the spirit of historical necessity. The Leech-Gatherer, the Shepherd, the Old Beggar, the Farmer, the Mad Mother, the Forlorn and Destitute Women, the Innocent and Solitary Girls, the Old Men and Women, even the Idiot Boy, the Gipsies and the Criminal have singleness and individualism despite their social conditions and sufferance. They are organically normal, basically forceful. These elemental qualities constitute the mystery of the unintelligible world: possession of the power of endurance and tolerance, immunity from pain and sufferance.

Now, the poet's conception of, and attitude to, the common man are to be analysed categorically in reference to his poems.

An Evening Walk presents a human group -- a Beggar Woman and her two children. Privation caused their sufferance and misery and the two children perished in the storm which

(4) Wordsworth
Peter Burra.
Duckworth: London
1950.

p. 96.
overtook them subsequently. The female beggar as revealed in the poem is in the state of absolute destitution and desolation which spring from the devastation of war and its subsequent vices. The condition of her life contains in itself the seeds of sufferance and the loss of the two children aggravates the situation to complete the cycle of tragedy by throwing her in the dreary isolation with agony and anguish as the constant companions — agony originating from the hardships of life and anguish coming out of the consequences of the unnatural and premature death of the children. But the woman possesses the singleness of character for the habitual power of tolerance and, as an eventuality of the state of her mind, she suffers in life calmly and silently. She raises no voice of resistance, nor does she accuse anybody for her lot, nor does she resort to abnormal means to manifest the condition of her mind, but simply goes on enduring the sorrows of life and a sense of passivity pervades through the whole atmosphere. The poet discovers dignity and majesty in the woman's power of endurance, and accordingly, the female beggar is painted neither as a heroine of tragedy, nor as a character of super-human stature, but is celebrated as a wretched woman within the realm of exactitude with the elementary conditions of life — pain and punishment, sufferance and perturbation. But the spirit of endurance has its own value and the woman seems to be bathed in consecrated light through the suffering of life, and emerges anew from the state of morbidity with glowing radiance in her eyes and

"Her angel face
As the great eye of Heaven shined bright,
And made a sunshine in that shady place". (Spenser.)
The Borderers is Wordsworth's study in criminal psychology. Wordsworth's common men are generally humble and are apt to reconcile the conditions that befall them consequential upon disintegrity and incoherence — social, political and economic. But the figures of The Borderers are quite different in characters. It is a drama in five acts, and depicts the activities of a band of outlaws indulging in foul and corrupt activities in the 'Border' where no law prevails. Marmaduke is the leader of these outlaws, and is in love with Idonea. Idonea is the only solace of her father, Herbert, who is now old and blind, helpless and feeble. His conditions are extremely miserable in every respect. Oswald is one of the lieutenants of Marmaduke, and is aware of the love-affair between Marmaduke and Idonea. He discovers 'the beauty of things truth' in this love-affair, and utilises this as an instrument of evils. So he ultimately deceives Marmaduke to murder Herbert and to lose his Idonea.

Now, the feelings and instincts of Oswald originate from the hypersensibility to his own idiosyncrasy and he involves in a sort of war against the world, and engages in diabolical malignity of motivelessness for self-complacency in a society which has shaken off his religious and moral obligations. So his act of destruction has its basis in a sense of allergy and subsequent 'contempt' for the emptiness of the established values and accordingly, it is free from the dilly-dallying attitude of a classical villain or the revulsion of an epical quality, but testifies to the direct action of a common man for the failure of instinctual accomplishment. So, an analytical penetration into the inherent instincts and qualities of his
character and psychology and their reactions and reactions to a given condition of the social structure prove that Oswald is a common man of disintegrity haunted by the spirit of nihilism and the dynamic and assertive qualities of his character are governed by not by reason but by impulse, and, consequently, his actions are decisive, but devoid of rationality; positive, yet contrary to the codes of ethics and justify the development of psychic phenomena of a common man who is a victim of the apathy of the social order. He is the common man of extraordinary type who develops malice of mind as the creed of life, and consequently, resorts to mischievous means to retaliate the failure in the world of reality. He is not an Iago, nor a man of repulsive character who indulges intentionally in vile or detestable means to take vengeance against an individual acting upon a pre-conceived device, but a common man enforced to direct his violent attitude against the social force itself to satisfy his passion. So Oswald's act is more a process of a common man of abnormal psychology for self-gratification than an isolated incident.

Marmaduke, on the contrary, with his amiable disposition and passionate feelings, serves as a foil to Oswald. He is also a common man, and is subject to the 'tumultuous age'. But an eschatological review shows that Marmaduke does not act in accordance with the decree of his own conscience, but sets himself in action in maintenance of a relation with other human beings as well as with his susceptibility to trans-human principles and values of life. He becomes a victim of seduction for his deficiency in the power of judgment, and is thrown into the vortex of shameful action through commission of a crime of homicide, and ultimately suffers from the pangs of guilty-consciousness through
the realisation of the depth and gravity of the misdeed. He asks himself:

Will I wander on —
A Man by pain and thought compelled to live,
Yet loathing life — till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

(The Borderers, lines 2350-2353)

This sort of introspection is quite adaptable to the psychological reflexion of a common man in whom the instinct of crime and the revival of senses act in quick succession for the elementary simplicity of heart, and the man, consequent upon self-analysis, endures pains in life unto the last in silence for the act of indecision through deception, being haunted by a sense of guilty-conscious and creates a tragedy of errors.

So Marmaduke reveals the true picture of a fallen man of unique stature with the crime of murder as an accident and the forbearance of anguish and disgust as the finality of life — the retribution. He possesses neither the self-terrorising attitude of Macbeth after the assassination of Duncan, nor is seized with the instinct of self-destruction of Othello after the murder of Desdemona, but advances towards penitence apprehending an immediate eclipse in life. He achieves a merger in an interior darkness of mortification with the oppression of the soul following the process of retrogression.

Guilt and Sorrow or, Incident upon Salisbury Plain, like The Borderers, is a study of some questions of criminal psychology. The man, who is a sailor, becomes himself a victim of poverty and hunger 'for fraud took all that he had earned'. (Line 64) He
becomes desperate, and

met a traveller, robbed him, shed his blood;

And when the miserable work was done

He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's fate shun.

(lines 70 - 72.)

The sailor indulges in an act of desperation, but except a single act of recklessness the character of the sailor testifies to benevolence. The female vagrant who is a destitute war-widow relates the story of her sufferance to this man after her return from America. She provides a description of her father,

a man

Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred, (Lines 199-200)

who after twenty summers 'fell into decay' 'through severe mischance and cruel wrong'. She continues her description as to how she 'lived in peace and comfort' and was 'blest with daily bread; by constant toil supplied', and had 'three lovely babes' upon her breast. But 'an evil time was come', and her 'happy father died' and 'war reduced the children's meal'. There was much dismay and they 'reached the western world'. 'Disease and famine, agony and fear' come down on their heads and,

All perished -- all in one remorseless year,

Husband and children / one by one, by sword

And ravenous plague, all perished: (Lines 302 - 304)

And she returned again to her land.

The sailor and the female vagrant become fellow travellers, and meet eventually with the victimised sailor's wife in her dying condition. The sailor asks her forgiveness

...
before she expires, and
Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight
He journeyed, and forthwith his crime declared:

(Lines 649 - 651.)

He gives himself up to justice, and is hanged in chains, while
women and children were by Father brought to see the miserable spectacle.

The sailor is a common man and his action is the subject-matter of the poem. He commits a crime of heinous type, yet his attitude is not diabolic because he resorts to the devilish mean?, which is an act of levity thrust upon him through deception of 'the slaves of office' and the 'wrong of a social system', finding no alternative to it for maintenance of self-existence. On the contrary, the sailor, corresponding to the inevitability of the essential simplicity of mind and its actions and reactions to the psychology of crime and retribution, regains his senses from the temporary eclipse of reason, alike Marmaduke of The Borderers. But unlike Marmaduke, he instantaneously inclines to the positive course of atonement through capital punishment instead of being tormented perpetually into pieces through anguish and disgust. The instinct of admittance of the crime which he committed in seclusion is complementary to the spirit of repentance and the courage of sufferance, and bears testimony to the motivelessness of the crime. So the sailor with his attitude and demeanour is an incarnation of guilt and sorrow -- guilt springing from a vile act to maintain self-existence and sorrow originating from the revival of the senses through the realisation of the gravity of
the crime for the simplicity of the heart. So the tragedy of the sailer is neither forward-looking nor backward-moving, but an end in itself, a perdition.

The female vagrant is a common woman, who is an instrument in the hand of social evils. She is thrown into a land where 'no hope, no relief could gain'. But she is neither a tragic heroine with pomp and grandeur of character, nor a woman with abstract and complex ideals of life, but is a humble woman, dazed and grief-stricken, yet an incarnation of forbearance and fortitude. She is at the end of her life with no provision for reparation of the loss sustained or means for the solace of mind. She has to endure the pains of sufferance perpetually. Thus the female vagrant is a visible embodiment of grief and sorrow, agony and anguish, but alike her counterparts, the female beggar of An Evening Walk and Margaret of The Ruined Cottage is not terrorised by any sense of crisis, and maintains her mental equilibrium against violent torments and afflictions. So the power of endurance appears as a reaction against sufferance, and manifests itself into the force of character and the potentiality of mind immersed in the light of organic rationality. The female vagrant proceeds towards self-annihilation with the tension of mind and matter, but occasions the elevation of patience without end to shine as no more than a painful climax of ruin and destruction with calmness and sobriety of mind and as a woman of fortitude.

Shakespearean villains are always repulsive and we have nothing but extreme hatred for them, but Wordsworthian criminals, despite their horrible acts, are common men with the
essential simplicities of mind and arouse such feelings in our minds that make us feel for them before we condemn their guilt. Wordsworth's tragic heroes, alike Shakespeare's, stir up our emotion, but do not affect us with awe and wonder, nor do they lull our critical faculty, but deserve our sympathy as fellow men and we weep to reconcile their states of affairs in the subliminal states of our minds.

Now, turning from criminals and tragic heroes and heroines to simple farmers, the same attitude of the poet can be found. The poor man of The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale is a farmer. He is 'simple in thought' and familiar with the poor. In the days of prosperity he 'gave them the best that he had.' But

At length, what to most is a season of sorrow,

His means are run out, -- he must beg, or must borrow.

The farmer had to migrate to London to earn his livelihood by casual labour, yet he could not forget 'a thousand soft pictures' of his native place and had 'his heart all the while' 'in Tilsbury Vale'. The farmer as revealed in the poem is never seized with no sense of anguish or despair for the condition of his life, rather he maintains an absolute integrity within himself with the passion for reminiscence and the instinct for survival.

The farmer of the Tilsbury Vale "is the masculine counterpart of Poor Susan". (S) Susan of the poem, The Reverie of Poor Susan, is a maid-servant, a poor outcast. She has nothing, but

(5) : William Wordsworth
A Biography
The Early Years
1770-1803,
Mary Moorman.
a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's; the only dwelling house on earth that she loves. Susan is extraordinarily wretched with the conditions of life. But she does possess the courage to accept the state of isolation or destitution with the pious belief that endurance brings in its vital dividend from within. So, the woman's spiritual illumination because, notwithstanding the earthly trivialities, 'her heart is in heaven'.

Now, the farmer of the Tilsbury Vale and poor Susan, who are destitute figures, are also simple people. They have suffering in life, but they suffer in silence. They never cause the annoyance of others for their sad lots, nor do they vitiate the social environment to express their hardships and sorrow in life; but reconcile the actual state of affairs with meek endurance. The states of these people and their attitudes to life are commonplace, but not trivial and the poet develops a sense of harmony between the conditions of life of these people and the usual changes in the Natural phenomena to attribute a spirit of dignity to them. So, with the deterioration of Susan, the objects of Nature fade,

The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes;
And, when an ultimate end will bring cessation to the physical reality of old Adam

May one blade of grass spring up over thy head;
and the 'grave'

Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.
It is a matter of poetic conciliation, but the delicacy of feeling and catholicity of sublimation make the inherent simplicities and potentialities of minds of these people fascinating, and transmute the episodes of life into something higher. The poor people shine with the unique soundness of character, as they seem to discover dignity in sufferance and excellence in endurance, which make them distinct with fundamental sanity of common people.

Michael in the poem of that name is a shepherd who suffers in solitude. The story of Michael was known to the poet since his boyhood, and endowed him with the keen power to think on man, the heart of man, and human life. (Line 33)

The story itself is intrinsically interesting with magnificent simplicity and conclusive assertion of life — a life with a beginning, a middle and an end. It is an object correlative:

in Grasmere Vale

There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
And old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs. (lines 40 - 45)

So, Michael's life has many incidents

'Of hardship, skill of courage, joy and fear'. (line 69)

It is vastly dynamic and the dynamism has been accelerated by

A pleasurable feeling of blind love,

The pleasure which there is life itself. (lines 76 - 77)

He had a 'Helpmate' who was a woman of a stirring life', and 'an only child'. The family was happy with 'fields', 'hills', and other things. The entire family worked hard and was a proverb in the vale.
For endless industry. (line 94)
Time marched on. The son, Luke, grew up and,
He was his comfort and his daily hope. (line 206)
But, suddenly 'there came
Distressful tidings', and
Old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture
A grievous penalty. (lines 214 - 216.)
The shepherd's 'sole resource' was gone and Luke was to go abroad
to regain the loss. At first,
A good report did from their Kinsman come (line 431)
but,

Meantime Luke began
To slaken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas. (lines 442 - 447)
Michael could not resist the 'heavy news',
And never lifted up a single stone. (Line 466)
Such is the story of Michael 'full of just pictures of what human
life ought to be'.

Now, an objective analysis of the conditions of the shepherd
shows that he is extremely alone and consequently a solitary man
endowed with rationality of mind and stateliness of manner. He has
powerful a scheme of life for life's sake with the feeling of human
heart: the parental affection and the love of property, a sense of
dedication to work and an almost spiritual veneration for the dignity
of labour. So when the crisis begins in life, the shepherd, to maintain his existence, establishes a harmonious relation of endurance and sufferance through the concept of love:

There is comfort in the strength of love;

'T will make a thing endurable, which else Would overset the brain, or break the heart: (lines 448-450)

But sufferance has also its own ethics and the shepherd's power of tolerance is not inexhaustible. So, when he becomes old, and is shaken by the loss sustained in life, he cannot endure his pains despite his attempts

To look his trouble in the face, (line 222)

and finally is exposed to vulnerability with the fall of Luke. Now sufferance in life turns itself into agony of mind through the disillusionment of love and affection consequent on the shameful imbecility of his own son, Luke. The old shepherd anyhow bears his existence as a visible embodiment of tragic experience and painful reminiscence being seized by a sense of morbidity for the failure of his plan in life. The old man is lost and exhausted, but maintains his distinction with an almost mystical power of unification with the existent conditions of life. The pathos of life is bathed, as if, in the light of necessitarianism and the man shines as "a rational solitary in the classical tradition; a shepherd, a very old man who has reached perfect solitude through perfect sympathy with his environment". (6)

The man in The Last of the Flock is also a shepherd in whom

(6) : The Egotistical Sublime.
A History of Wordsworth's Imagination.
John Jones.
(Chatto and Windus) -
the instinct of survival is supreme against poverty. The man 'after youthful follies' married, and from a 'single ewe' raised 'Full fifty comely sheep', and 'was rich'. But in course of time he had his 'woeful time' as his 'flock is seemed to melt away' :

'They dwindle, Sir, sad sight to see /
From ten to five, from five to three,
A lamb, a wether, and an ewe ;-
And then at last from three to two ;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one :
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas / and I have none ;-
To-day I fetched it from the rock ;
It is the last of all my flock'.

The man as an eventuality of evil days is in misery, but he is not seized by the element of negativity. The shepherd, corresponding to the organic force of character, is assertive, and combines in himself harmoniously the two qualities of life: the power of endurance of the evils of life and the feeling of love for material things -- the former he considers as a resort to counter-act the sufferance in life and the later he develops as a means to ensure existence. So the shepherd with basic potentialities of mind is realism incarnate and asserts that existence in the world proceeds from the struggles in life and grow together in complete coalescence to bring in the positive absolute. So the shepherd reveals the true picture of a Marxian man with the fundamental instinct of survival through struggles, and progresses towards relief from 'distress' and 'woeful time', 'evil time' with the courage of character.
Peter Bell in the poem of that name is a rustic character whose 'countenance, gait, and figure are taken 'from a wild rover' who had been a wild and woodland rover;

He was a Carl as wild as rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all ;- He had a dozen wedded wives.

Peter Bell, alike the wanderer of The Excursion, is a typical solitary, but he is not self-contented and self-educated, sober and serene, but wild and hostile. He combines in himself the instincts of crime and sensibility, and as an inevitability, of the common man's psychology of guilt and purgation, suffers, after commission of a series of crimes, from guilty-consciousness for susceptibility to superstitions and ultimate belief in the existence of 'some ugly witchcraft'. The realisation brings in a great change in his nature and the more this feeling pervades his senses, the more he becomes restless and ultimately

Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobs even like a child,

'Oh / God, I can endure no more /*

Peter Bell with his aboriginal idiosyncrasy is captured by the
spirit of all-nescience which prompts him to commit crime after crime. The state of affair is what may be called a singular insistence on the self-annihilation into an inner perplexity. But as Peter is neither a born criminal nor a traditional rogue, he is amenable to the general principles of revival of senses through the influence of Nature. So the history of Peter suggests an approximation of the absolute conversion of a cruel person into a 'good and honest man' through submission to God. It is the reflection of the restrainedness of restless ego for the attainment of eternal calmness. Peter, thus, advances towards redemption through self-restoration from darkness and intricacy springing from indecision.

The Waggoner is Wordsworth's another study of a low and rustic figure against the background of natural scenery:

'Tis Benjamin the Waggoner;
Who long hath trod this toilsome way,
Companion of the night and day.

Bejamin is the driver of a waggon, and is engaged in his duty of driving the distance from Ambleside to Keswick where he is to deliver up the waggon to his master. But he cannot complete his journey, and fails to carry away the task unto the last because "he is finally the victim of malicious Fate". (7)

The Waggoner maintains an inseparable identity between himself and the toils in life with a 'Spirit of beautiful tolerance in it'. The man himself and his devotion to duty, which is the principal force of life, are like two concentric circles. So he

indulges in the course of driving portending and inauspicious evils, and courts the decree of fate ungrudgingly. The tragedy of the Waggoner is the history of the failure to accomplish the end in life vis-a-vis an absolute overthrow of a man possessed by the sense of dedication to labour into a grim destiny, despite possession of fundamental sincerity and perfectibility of character. But the sad unfulfilled mission has its own restoration, and accordingly the effacement of the waggoner finds its compensation in the recognition of his skill and patience, because the man with his endeavour and the related experience of suffering leaves the impression that toil in life is a contending force whether or not it achieves victory. So the waggoner is a 'Conqueror' for the efforts in life despite failure to reach the destination.

Wordsworth's conception of man concerns him intensely with sufferance of various types. The man in Animal Tranquillity and Decay is peculiar in nature and temper, despite pains in life, and suffers as a foil to others of his category. He is a man with common phenomena of life — hardships and miseries, toils and tumults, but he is not overwhelmed with the sense of anguish and anxiety in any occasion. He possesses sufficient power of endurance, and is calm and serene. He appears to relinquish all efforts, and absorbs himself in some sort of meditation with stoical indifference both to pain and pleasure. The poem not only depicts the man, but also suggests the way of presenting him. It is a drama of life — complete in itself with a beginning, a middle and an end:
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression; every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seem forgotten; one to whom
Long patience hath such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect that the young behold
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.

The air, the poem breathes, bears no sense of extravagance, nor is it sedative, nor does it lull the critical faculty, but gives the picture of a very old man, who is alone, yet pleased in own-self, and progresses towards the state of self-consciousness with a sense of equipoise in loss and success.

Real conditions of life of the common man in distress have always shaken up the poetic mind of Wordsworth and he has never missed any chance to bring out the common qualities of such figures. The leech-gatherer of Resolution and Independence is what may be called a 'visionary dreariness' with alarming loneliness, ghastful appearance, ghost-like movements and the man with the horrifying conditions of life looks like an almost supernatural apparition indulging in self-contrivance. On this occasion the poet himself says:

"I described myself as having been exalted to the highest pitch of delight by the joyousness and
beauty of nature; and then as depressed, even in the midst of these beautiful objects, to the lowest dejection and despair .... lonely place, 'a pond by which an old man was, far from all house or home' : not stood, nor sat, but was -- the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible -- I cannot conceive a figure more impressive than that of an old man like this, the survivor of a wife and ten children, travelling alone among the mountains and all lonely places, carrying with him his own fortitude, and the necessities which an unjust state of society had laid upon him". (8)

The poet met the man with his eyes fixed 'upon muddy water'

To gather leeches, being old and poor:

Employment hazardous and wearisome / (lines 100 - 101)

The leech-gatherer "was of Scotch parents, but had been born in the army. He had a wife, and a 'good woman and it pleased God to bless us with ten children'. All these were dead but one, of whom he had not heard for many years, a sailor. His trade was to gather leeches, but now leeches are scarce and he had not strength for it. He lived by begging". (9)

The impression the leech-gatherer leaves with the state of his life, appearance, mode of living is gloomy and depressive. Deprivation brings in the sufferings and miseries and subsequent depression of the poor man. But the mortifying destitution does not

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(8) : *Memoirs of William Wordsworth, Vol I.*
Christopher Wordsworth. pp. 172-173.

(9) : *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, Vol I.*
develop in him the yearning for self-loss or annihilation, nor does it progress towards suspension of actions. On the contrary, the man contains in himself the instinct to survive, and involves himself in a sort of war to maintain his existence against the unsurmountable adversity in the world which fails to afford him even the bare necessity of life. The leech-gatherer's effort at survival bears an element of perpetuity in patience and serves as a reaction against the social repudiation, and the old man, who is isolation incarnate, preserves balance and integrity within himself, being endowed with an abnormal strength of mind and makes a life for himself in the manner that conditions permit. The pattern of behaviour of the leech-gatherer is so assertive against the inadequacy of provision that it seems to be immersed in the light of spiritualism despite pain and obsession and the poet evokes force of transcendence to 'think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely moor' for having 'so firm a mind'.

Simon Lee reveals the picture of another common man in distress. He is now old, 'a little man'. But 'he once was tall' and had 'proud days', but now there is 'heavy change', and, — bereft

Of health, strength, friends, and kindred see /
Old Simon to the world is left.

Simon's wife, 'Ruth does what Simon cannot do'. But this is also 'very little'. The 'scrap of land they have' is of no advantage and, they

Are poorest of the poor.

Simon has no means for survival, and

the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.
The condition of Simon's life itself is deplorable and infirmity joins poverty to complete the cycle of tragedy. So, Simon has to pass through evil days with his wife in the state of destitution.

The tragedy of Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman, suggests the gradual decaying of human life through the march of time. Both Simon and his wife are physically infirm, poor, and consequently unfortunate. The contingencies of the world of reality are detrimental to the existence of the man, and the impending obliteration from the face of the universe. But Simon does not disdain life being seized by the spirit of escapism, nor does he apprehend an immediate eclipse in life, rather indulges in pursuing the forces for survival by any means. Simon's endeavour to maintain his existence may be deplorable, but it brings in a sense of confidence, or more approximately of what may be called positive sensibility to life. So Simon with his wife leaves the impression of instinctual tenacity and patience of men through endurance of hardships in life. Simon is a victim of the situation which follows the logic of the sufferings in life, but he never laments the state of affairs, nor does he resort to abnormal process to mitigate the severity of sufferance, but pushes forward the painstaking means to guard against self-loss with an imperturbable calm, and becomes stability itself with a keen instinct of survival within himself.

Wordsworth's treatment of beggars is also indicative of his concern for common and ordinary people.

The Old Cumberland Beggar depicts the picture of heart-breaking reality of human existence. The figure of the poem is an 'aged Beggar' — 'a solitary man' — poor, humble, docile, tender. The conditions of the man reflect the different strands of deprival
of values of the phenomenal world except the intrinsic potency that
penetrates existence, and the man is presented in a sordid manner
with oldness, the solitude, the attempt to eat and the birds approa-
ching him to share his food:

In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate his food in solitude:
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

The poet's accuracy of observation and subtlety of revelation
present the spectacle of a man who is no less or no more than a
beggar— a dreadful entity encircled by numerous negative elements.
Want and poverty pervade the conditions of life, and offer a compre-
hensive image of human sufferance, but cannot tell upon the habitual
discipline of mind, nor it can wipe off the ultimate instinct
inherent within — the desire for survival however mean that may
be and the absolute power of endurance complementary to sufferance
and depression. The old man, on the contrary, continues with the
contingencies of existence without being seized either by any sense
of passivity or morbidity or being haunted by the sense of self-
destruction for the hardships of life. The beggar belongs to no
society, nor is he protected or provided for, and consequently has
developed an almost mystical unconsciousness to pain and pleasure.
Thus the old Cumberland beggar with the peculiar attitude to human conditions reveals a life which has neither the anxiety for the causes of self-maintenance nor the boredom for apprehension of self-loss, but has a paralysed consciousness of self-existence in the abyss of darkness. The life is 'the meanest of created things'. Divorced from good -- a spirit and pulse of good yet a life with its existence in the world of reality.

Wordsworth's treatment of beggars in the poems Beggars and A Jewish Family are different from conventional beggars both in colour and nature. They are exceedingly poor, and are in distress but are not guided by any mean or vile instinct for their continuance. They develop in themselves the spirit of rationality to accept misery in life as accident and it is on the concept that they gather force for survival against hardship and distress. The sense that controls their passion and sets them in action is not only organic but also argumentative, and accordingly, these figures of fortitude maintain integrity and cohesion within themselves with a stoical indifference to the state of destitution in life, and progress towards preservation of 'a living light'.

in spite

Of poverty and wrong.

Goody Blake and Harry Gill gives the picture of an old woman who in absolute distress and poverty:

Old Goody Blake was old and poor;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who passed the door
Might see how poor a hut she had.
She has an ordinary profession in life

All day she spun in her poor dwelling,
but the produce is not adequate for her survival. So the physical
and economic conditions of the woman are gloomy and depressive.
Cruelty of Nature aggravates the entire state of affair and she
has no alternative than to resort to the means of theft for her
continuance. And

When the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could any thing be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?

So,

now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

The old woman is suspected and caught at last, and, 'kneeling on
the sticks', curses Harry Gill - 'may he never be warm'.
Harry Gill falls a victim of the curse, and suffers unto the last.

Goody Blake is different from others of her category with
her passion, psychic make-up and attitude to life. The woman has
she extreme sufferance in life, but has not the meek endurance of
character to reconcile the condition calmly. So she has developed
in herself the passion for theft to redress hardship and to

guard against immediate extinction in reliance upon the concept
that theft is not a crime, but means to ensure
self-existence. Poverty and theft are correlated, and accordingly,
the impulse of the woman for Harry's hedge has its basis on the
necessity to live, and her hatred of, and curse for, Harry Gill, who condemns her, have the authenticity of reason of the poor people in whom the instinct of theft is engendered by poverty. The poem thus involves not only material problems but also 'psychological principles' and the old woman emerges as an objective reality of the fusion of these two elements, and symbolises the universal instinct of self-sustenance against the background of poverty and the abject misery it begots. The old woman advances towards victory instead of being obliterated through the immanence of an Absolute power because God helps those whom He sees to suffer, and she appears to be bathed in the spirit of infinitude and the entire episode is transferred to the realm of thought to give permanent value to the character of the woman.

Wordsworth's treatment of common women also shows the poet's interest in ordinary people. The women, he presents, are of different natures and varieties, and are sharply singular within their surroundings.

The mother in Her Eyes Are Wild (The Mad Mother) is a frantic woman with 'a fire' in her 'brain', and 'a dull, dull pain' afflicts her perpetually. But the woman has the essential and elementary feelings in her mind: affection for her 'little babe' and sympathy for her husband. Love for her child is supreme in her mind and it is love in consciousness.

The crisis which haunts the woman originates from her reaction to the bewildering and heartrending incidents in her life and the mother with the unbearable perplexity of mind remains morbid, defenceless, but inclines to dwell on thoughts which provoke rational intelligence. The state of mind of the woman may be defined as what may be called fretful irritation in isolation and it reveals
the pathos of love and affection in her quest for relief and solace through conversation with the 'little babe':

'Sweet babe / they say that I am mad,
But nay, my heart is far too glad,
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
****   ****
And I will always be thy guide.
****   ****
I am thy father's wedded wife.
****   ****
But he, poor man / is wretched made;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

The woman, unlike Hamlet, maintains a method in her state of agitation and it is the clarity of preference which provides her with the force to throw aside the throbbing and nauseating conditions of life for self-restoration through self-contrivance contrary to mental anguish and agitation. So the woman does not tend to deterioration, rather advances towards definite determinism in the process of life through establishment of an inter-relation with the objects of love.

The mother in The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman is a pathetic figure with desertion, loss of child and of an imminent death, and leaves the impression of 'the last struggles of human being at the approach of death, cleaving in
solitude to life and society". The woman is extremely 'alone' being thrown in the state of desolation, and apprehends the end of her life at any moment because the elemental forces are all extinguished, and the total eclipse in her life. So says the woman herself:

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet it is dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.

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My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood:
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

The conditions of life are tragic, but the separation of the woman from her child makes the situation gloomy and depressive. The intensity of feeling for the child and the agony of the mind for her severance from the 'little joy', 'little pride' haunt her with a sense of dejection and the woman, in conformity with the existent situations of life, visualises the end in life:

I shall not see another sun.
It is definitely the picture of grief and pain. The state of being presents an objective impression of the woman's individual, but

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precious experience in life, and lastly, foreshadows the pathetic situation of the state of becoming. The woman, on all occasions, maintains the equilibrium with her almost stoical power of endurance, and remains cool and calm even in the face of an inevitable ruin. Thus she serves as a unison between the pains of existence and the dungeon of death.

The woman as presented in The Thorn "is a vision of desolation and alienation from human society which is similar to that of other poems about betrayed or unfortunate women written in the post-Godwinian period". (11) The woman is in the state of absolute disgrace and sunken conditions of life for the failure of courtship, pre-marital betrayal and dejection of love. These have completely agonised her mind and the love for the poor child of whom 'No mortal ever knew' has augmented the condition. She has become completely frantic, and cries to herself:

``Oh misery / Oh miser /
Oh woe is me / Oh misery``

The sole identity of the woman is misery and it has its origin in the failure to accomplish the amour scheme of life:

The poor woman being disgruntled in mind takes refuge in the wilderness for mental relief and the entire situation is carried from sensuousness to metaphysics in the fusion of the bewildering attitude of the woman with natural scenes -- the thorn with its gloomy, yet beautiful accomplishment, 'a little muddy pond', hillock, 'the moss' 'spotted red' with the drops of blood of an

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infant. The loquacious narrator, who is 'credulous and talkative from indolence', 'prone to superstition' and a man of 'deep feelings' observes the woman in her deplorable plight, and, alike the narrator of The Ruined Cottage not only tells the history of Martha, but also throws light on the question at issue, i.e., the woman's answerability to the conditions of life.

The woman is haunted by a sense of dilemma because life "is not admitted as acceptable, nor is the denial of life willed: what we have is madness, something in whatever space there is between murder and suicide, madness brought on by a hurt beyond endurance that the victim is unwilling any other creature should share: a deadlock of anguish and compassion". (12) So the woman is the positive assertion of agony which has its origin in the sense of negativity and ends in a total collapse. The feeling of frustration coming into existence from betrayal and dejection is sufficient to bring in the psychic abnormality and the apprehension for the child completely upsets the mental equilibrium. The two elements combined together create the tragedy of life which has neither the classical ingredients for its determinism, nor the traditional principles as its basis, but originates from the reaction of an ordinary woman put into the abyss of chaos culminating in a terrible derangement of mental order through arbitrary overthrow. So the tragedy of the woman not only centres round the failure of the plan of life -- a life humble, but decisive, ordinary, yet assertive, but also testifies to the annihilation of consciousness through suspension of senses for

(12) : The Simple Wordsworth (Studies in the Poems : 1797-1807)
John F. Danby.
(Routledge and Kegan Paul) —
final retrogression.

The mother in the poem, *The Affliction of Margaret*, is also haunted with the doleful anguish for her son because she has received 'No tidings of an only child'. The sense of anxiety pervades the existence of the woman and culminates in an absolute frustration 'beyond relief'. But the primitive hostility of the crisis finds its partial appeasement, though not final solution, in the appeal of the woman to her son:

Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end;
I have no other earthly friend!

The woman thus protects herself from total eclipse in life and perpetuates the continuance of herself against destructive elements through this spirit of compromise.

The woman of *The Forsaken* which is considered as 'overflow' from *The Affliction of Margaret* is different from others of her category in mental colour and temper. The woman has also the 'pain' in life, but she has the courage 'to know the worst'. She is not perturbed by any hostile sense, rather a belief in supreme power for the mitigation of mental crisis controls the passion:

The heaviest storms not longest last;
Heaven grants even to the guiltiest mind
An amnesty for what is past;

So the woman instead of being tormented into pieces for anguish advances towards self-restoration through self-confidence:

I think that he will come again.

*Maternal Grief* produces the picture of a mother aggrieved
and anguished at the loss of her children:

Death

like a ravenous bird of prey,

Death in a moment parted them, and left

The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse

Than desolate.

The woman is thrown into the state of morbidity and anguish. The elemental forces of life are destructive, but she is overpowered with no instinct of self-annihilation, and the condition of her mind causes neither frenzy nor lunacy. The woman finds ultimate solace in calm resignation to God:

Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,

Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,

0 teach me calm submission to thy Will /

And thus she proceeds towards self-preservation against dense and suffocating darkness in reliance upon the supreme design.

The Sailor's Mother depicts the picture of a woman who is in the state of distress and bereavement. She has to beg for her subsistence and she had a Son, who many a day

Sailed on the seas, but he is dead.

But the woman, despite adversity in her life, is not out of mental order. She preserves herself against the abyss of gloom and depression with the fundamental power of endurance and the rationality of mind. It is protection against extinction.

The Emigrant Mother is the study of some principles of psychology. The woman has 'left a babe at home', and 'his hour
is come'. The woman is seized by a sense of anguish for the son, but finds the solution of the crisis in the manifestation of her love for another child:

'While thou art mine, my little Love,
This cannot be a sorrowful grave;
Contentment, hope, and mother's glee,
I seem to find them all in thee.'

It is love in consciousness and the woman preserves herself against dismay and discord through amorous indulgence in self-instinct. She is revelation immersed in the spirit of restoration.

Wordsworth's idea of the women in solitude is decisively pertinent to the assertion of his conception of the common people. The girl of The Solitary Reaper, Lucy Grey, Ruth — all indulge in their affairs in solitariness and obtain various experiences for achievement of supreme absolutes in life.

The solitary reaper is a poor working-girl, the female counterpart of Poor Susan. She has 'loneness' of mind, 'the hardness of her lot and pathos of solitude'. The state of affairs of the girl is complex, yet she, not the perplexities of mind. She possesses the power to maintain the habitual self-control and the discipline of mind to maintain integrity within herself against the background of melancholy and pensiveness.

Ruth depicts another picture of a woman in solitude. Unlike the girl of The Solitary Reaper, she is in a state of mental frenzy. She is a tragic figure like the mothers of The Thorn, Her Eyes Are Wild ('The Mad Mother') and also like
Margaret of The Ruined Cottage or the female vagrant of Guilt and Sorrow in her solitude and madness. The only difference is that she has no child either to augment the gravity of the tragedy or to comfort her in her madness.

Ruth is an innocent child of Nature,
An infant of the woods.
She is free from the complexities of life, but the dejection of her husband, a 'slave of low desires', poverty and subsequent 'pains' have distraught her mental equilibrium and she is put in the state of absolute 'wretchedness' with no scope for restoration. But the woman never resorts to abnormal means either for manifestation or mitigation of the state of mind. She endures sufferance in life and agony of mind in seclusion with no sense of vexation and irritation and thus the girl of fortitude keeps herself in existence against depression with cheerful spirit in 'loneliness':

with a flute

Her loneliness she cheers.
Ruth, the girl of solitude preserves herself against self-loss for the strength of character in herself.

Lucy Grey in the poem of that name is The Solitary Child, and is lost in wilderness. Lucy has not the perplexities of the mechanical nature of human life and the reality of human values is even denied to her. What she has is absolute 'Solitude' and consequently, the loss of Lucy is nothing but alienation from the external world for preservation of her being as the physical reality of solitude with her emergence in solitary atmosphere,
performance, and extinction far from the knowledge of the mortal world. The girl is redemption incarnate.

Wordsworth is earnestly preoccupied with man and the phenomena concerning man, but his thoughts of man proceed along with his almost religious veneration for natural objects. "To him every natural object seemed to possess more or less of a moral or spiritual life, to be capable of a companionship with man .... " (13)

Lucy in the poem of the same name is a 'natural object', a product of Nature in the form of a human girl with 'her cottage', 'Orchard-plot', 'bowers' and also with her 'lips', 'her hair'.** She is an innocent girl living in solitude within the calm and quiet atmosphere of Nature. She is also alone. But the loneliness or solitude does not tarnish her image, rather serves as an element which offers the opportunity for maintenance of singleness and intactness as the objective reality of Nature herself. The girl has neither the trivialities or intricacies of human conditions, nor the problems of life. On the contrary, she has an inseparable identity with Nature. So the solitary girl standing by herself does not evoke a sense of uncomfortable consciousness of being alone, and is irritated with no repulsive or painful feeling originating from the state of absolute separation from the human world, but becomes an

(13) : "Wordsworth' in Appreciations
Walter Pater.
Rupa and Co., Calcutta. 1967. p. 32

** Before
She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love.

Manuscript 1799 has:
My hope was one, from cities far,
Nursed on a lonesome heath;
Her lips were red as roses are,
Her hair a woodbine wreath.
object of sympathy and love for the innocence and simplicity inherent in her. The girl perpetuates her existence against isolation not as a woman of fortitude but as a corporeal entity of Nature herself with an almost spiritual power of self-assertion independent of the values of the phenomenal world. The state of isolation does not tarnish the image of the girl in solitude by bringing the sense of passivity, rather presents herself with the regality of form and character:

Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her Eys:
In every gesture dignity and love.

Paradise Lost, Book VIII, lines 488-489.

Lucy lived almost unknown to the world, so did she die. But Matthew in the poem of that name is known to all. The man is a tragic figure, but he has neither the delicacy and subtlety of Shakespearean tragic heroes, nor the greatness and whimsical attitude of classical figures. The man does possess an astounding power of endurance and patience which gives his tragedy a uniqueness. Matthew is tired of life, but his tiredness does not beget repulsive reluctance towards life. Rather,

The tears which come to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

So the man is an embodiment of gaiety and brightness because sorrows of life cannot repel him. He sips the cups of woe with all the gusto of an epicure. Thus he gains remarkability and wins universal love and respect. His death amounts to public mourning and the dirge in Address To the Scholars of the Village School of —— peculiarly envisages an unusual choric strain:

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Mourn, Shepherd, near thy old grey stone;
Thou Angler, by the silent flood;
And mourn when thou art all alone,
Thou Woodman, in the distant wood /
And the poet mingles his tune with the melody:

-- Thou soul of God's best earthly mould /
Thou happy Soul / and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
And all that must remain of thee?

The Two April Mornings and The Fountain are sequels to Matthew.

The Two April Mornings gives the picture of an aged man, a 'Village Schoolmaster' and a boy set against the background of natural ecstasy. The sun is seen rising and Matthew says:

'The will of God be done!'

Matthew is bereaved, but the pathos of his life cannot jeopardise the business in the material world. He submits himself unconditionally to the will of God. So no sense of morbidity or anguish can tell upon the firm conviction of mind. The coalescence of the vision of Emma, the lost daughter of Matthew and the sight of the 'blooming girl' exposes him to vulnerability of complex. But the man finds consolation in the principles of submission to 'the will of God' instead of being haunted with the sense of agony or anguish. It is the spirit of conciliation through acceptance of the existent conditions of life that protects the simple man from the grip of self-loss and the man enjoys the serenity of mind which springs from integrity within.

The Fountain again reveals Matthew as age incarnate. He
discovers the transitoriness of life, feels joys and pains, and sees creation and destruction in life simultaneously. But he has not "an old man's nostalgia for the youth", nor does he "regret the former days, envy of the past. What we have in fact is something quite different: a highly complex sorrow". He admits:

'But we are pressed by heavy laws;
and,

'My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me / but by none
Am I enough beloved'.

Definitely Matthew suffers from a sense of loneliness and frustration, but he calmly reconciles the inevitability of life which is apparently void. Reason controls the passion of life despite mental depression. So when the boy says

'And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I 'll be a son to thee/'
At this he .......... .......... said,
'Alas / that cannot be'.

This is Matthew, an ordinary man, who is sombre in mind, but sober in expression. An archetypal figure of pathos and tragedy and an incarnation of endurance with an almost religious veneration to the divine decree. Matthew is an end in himself. He never strives to confound by brilliancy, beauty and cleverness.

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(14) : The Simple Wordsworth (Studies in the Poems) 1797 - 1807

(15) : loc. cit.
when he lives in the world, nor does he awake awe and wonder when he ceases to be. He has neither the titanic passion of Lear, nor does he wail in madness like the mother in Synge's Rider to the Sea, where the mother behaves wildly at the loss of her children. He is ever calm, ever serene. Matthew's life is a life of business with vast dynamism, but he pursues the course of life silently and secretly without any hope for appreciation. No trumpet blows to make his existence known on earth, no comet falls when he dies a peaceful death. Loss and subsequent sufferance serve as purgation in life and the old man shines as an incarnation of revelation consecrated in the light of a mystic spirit.

Man is always supreme in the eyes of Wordsworth, however repulsive and disgusting the form and nature of man may be. A lunatic or an idiot is generally subject to contempt and disgrace, but the poet sees something unique in him, divulges the idiosyncratic characteristics, endows him with certain supernatural qualities, and ultimately establishes him in the realm of exuberant cheerfulness thence to spiritual gracefulness by creating him as an object of singularity and distinction. On this occasion, Wordsworth, in a letter to John Wilson, speaks:

"... the loathing and disgust which many people have at the sight of an idiot, is ... owing in a great measure to a false delicacy, and, ... want of comprehensiveness of thinking and feeling. Persons in the lower classes of society have little or nothing of this: if an idiot is born in a poor man's house, it must be taken care of ....
"I have often applied to idiots, ... that sublime expression of Scripture, that their life is hidden with God. They are
worshipped, probably from a feeling of this sort, in several parts of the East. Among the Alps, .... they are considered, .... as a blessing to the family to which they belong. I have, indeed, often looked upon the conduct of fathers and mothers of the lower classes of society towards idiots as the great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love, ....... (16)

Wordsworth's conception of, and attitude to, idiots and lunatics are explicit from the above letter. He ascribes to his choice an angelic intelligence which has the basis on the thoughts and feelings of his own heart and an innocent passion is brought off for an unpredictable joy out of this. The idiot boy in the poem of that name is as innocent as the child of Blake. In Blake 'Infant Joy' is supreme, and the child says:

'I happy am,

Joy is my name'.

The idiot boy's heart also 'was so full of glee' he enjoys absolute serenity and calmness of mind for the qualities inherent in him; innocence and indifference -- innocence originating from the absolute purity of soul and indifference springing from the sense of detachment from the phenomenal world. The affairs of the idiot boy commonplace, but not trivial. These are definitely devoid of grandeur and glamour, but contain in themselves some sort of mystic elements, which offer a comprehensive image of the idiot.

boy with exact and natural, but salient, features, and affix a sense of dignity to the existent state instead of transporting him to another world or extolling him to the state of elevation. The idiot boy indulges in the world of reality with his own idiosyncrasies by involving him in simple, but pertinent and precious issue of human condition in the manner particularly suited to him. This state is neither manifestation of self-gratification of an idiotic mind, nor means for self-protection against derogation of lunacy, but is indicative of what may be called a process of life, rather a coherent development of progress towards redemption with the fundamental simplicity of mind.

Wordsworth always sees man as man and as a result of this angle of vision, his conception of man is free from prejudice. Man as man is the prime factor and his position in the society is of little or no concern to him.

The convict in the poem of that name is the supreme manifestation of the poet's sympathy and love for the humblest aspect of life. The convict is an 'out-cast of pity'. The physical condition of the man is deplorable, and leaves the impression of 'terrible images' of both the body and mind:

His bones are consumed, and his life blood is dried,

With wishes the past to undo;

And his crime, through the pains that o'erwhelm him, descried,

Still blackens and grows on his view.

The convict is a 'poor victim' of physical persecution which has its origin in the severity of the penal measures and the repression of the policy of colonisation. He leads a life

In the comfortless vault of disease
with sufferance and anguish as constant companions. The man has the astounding power of endurance and patience to put up with the distressingly disgraceful conditions, but he can visualise no prospect of protection against self-protection loss. So the man is haunted with the sense of imminent obliteration, and proceeds towards regression as an entity alienated from the values of human world and thrown into the state of absolute gloom. The poet neither discovers dignity in sufferance, nor elevates him for endurance, but celebrates him within the realm of exactitude. The poet's belief in the values of life is lost and he resorts to the means of poetic conciliation for the restoration of the man:

'At thy name though compassion her nature resigns,
Though in virtue's proud mouth thy report be a stain,
My care, if the arm of the mighty were mine,
Would sent thee where yet thou might'st blossom again'.

The range of Wordsworth's conception of the common man is vast that even the outcasts are not exempted from his account. *Gipsies* presents the pictures of 'men, women, children' who serve as an unbroken knot

Of human Beings,

being out-of-doors.

The gipsies are humble by 'birth', and lead a life of full of 'strife'. But no sense of anxiety haunts them, nor are they seized by any instinct of torpidity for apprehension of self-loss against the state of deprivation and dispossession. What they have are somehow different things -- a sturdy spirit of tolerance and an
astounding power of immunity to suffering in life. So the gipsies possess the peculiar, but precious quality of character to disregard the eventuality of life with an almost stoical indifference to pain and pleasure, and progress towards perpetuity of existence against the probability of effacement and remain as

-- they are what their birth
Are breeding suffer them to be;
Wild out-cast of society.

Wordsworth's conception of, and attitude to, children also provides a clue to his conception of the common man. The poet's treatment of children is diversified, and is free from complexities. The poet sees into the hearts of the children, and presents them as distinct with the individualistic qualities inherent in them. These qualities are essentially common and ordinary and the poet's treatment serves as a defence of the poet's fundamental concept of the common people through maintenance of an inter-relation between the two regions of life -- childhood and manhood.

The boys in the poems There was a Boy and The Danish Boy are understood as creatures of loneliness and solitude and they shine as distinguished in the calm and gentle atmosphere of solitariness with their respective qualities of minds -- the former through maintenance of a relation with Nature and the latter by keeping the existence 'in his flowery core' where

From bloody deeds his thoughts are far.

The child of the poem Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old is also unique with the elementary quality of her mind.
Innocence serves as the element of happiness in her life and the child appears to be self-sufficient within herself in the realm of solitude:

this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.

Thus the girl achieves happiness through innocence and self-indulgence in a solitary atmosphere and it is happiness in possession.

The blind boy in the poem *The Blind Highland Boy* is the supreme manifestation of Wordsworth's idea of children. The boy ne'er had seen one earthly sight,

but

he neither drooped nor pined,
Nor had a melancholy mind;
For God took pity on the Boy,
And was his friend; and gave him joy
Of which we nothing know.

The boy possesses an earthly entity with physical deficiency, but is completely unified with God. But the unification is achieved not by retrogressive means through the denial of instinct but by acceptance of the decree of instinct through imagination. The boy is redemption incarnate.

*The Norman Boy* and *The Poet's Dream*, the sequel to *The Norman Boy*, depict the picture of a 'ragged Norman Boy' 'tending a few sheep and goats'. The boy is holy and pure, and courts the natural inclemency through patience fortified with 'a prayer of earnest heart'. The boy indulges in the commonest
affairs in the world of reality, but satisfies the concept that 'the life's appointed way' finds its culmination in its performance through establishment of a communion with God, and thus contains in himself the seeds of distinction.

The little girls of the poems, We Are Seven and Alice Fell (or, Poverty), are somehow different with their attitude and demeanour.

The former is a simple girl with her peculiar, but pertinent attitude to life. She considers death as a particular phase in the process of life, not an end, and proceeds towards insistence on the elimination of the stage of segregation between life and death. The contemplation of life is what may be called ignorance, but it is neither trivial nor vulgar. On the contrary, this concept involves the question of eternity of life, and attributes a permanent value to the sentiment of the girl, who shines as an incarnation of simplicity and innocence free from the perplexing attitude to life.

Alice Fell is a 'fatherless and motherless' child with poverty as the identity of life. The girl is susceptible to material loss and gain, and manifests the precious instinct of self-maintenance through material gain. The girl's attitude is somehow commonplace, but significant in as much as it contains in itself the fundamental question of life — material relief as means of comfort for restoration from distress and the 'little orphan, Alice Fell' continues as an objective reality of poverty and its related phenomena.

Wordsworth's conception of man proves that his love of man is paramount and man is the centre of his interest. It is
the poet's persistent purpose to 'exhibit man in his essentially human character and relations — as child, parent, husband' irrespective of his socio-political locus standi and to show him as a being formed for a destined end in all conditions. The poet's attempt to represent the common man is thus maneuvered into magnanimity, rectitude, and ultimately into conciliation. Metaphor passes away, the poet becomes 'a man speaking to men', and lives 'un-apart in the plains of humble and rustic life'. The physical existence of the poet is merged into celestial realm. "The living Wordsworth is never easy to keep before our eyes. The man vanishes into a voice, a vehicle of prophecy*. (17) The prophecy is the prophecy of merger of man with the all pervasive power and the poet proves that "... man is not merely 'a natural organ subject to sense', but as a living soul which has God for its passion and is itself of the divine nature*. (18)

(17) : Worsdworth
Peter Burra
Duckworth: London.
1950. p. 140

(18) : An Introduction to the Study of Blake
Max Plowman.
Chapter: 3.
Section: II.

The Wordsworthian conception of a common man.
(Studies in The Prelude and The Excursion.)

Wordsworth, prima facie, is a poet of Nature to a great mass of readers; but a study of The Prelude explains a change in his attitude, and makes it evident how Nature herself has helped in the transition and ultimate transformation of the love of Nature into the love of man by a process, serene and calm, harmonious and continuous. Nature has a perenial and benign influence on him, and has contributed to the formation of his mind. Helen Darbishire's account is worth quoting in this regard:

"Wordsworth's creed may be said in three words: God, Man, Nature. These three were divine: it might almost be said that they were one divinity. God was necessarily greatest, Man came next, and Nature, which had taught him to know the divinity of man, was last yet first, the source of his inspiration and first step in all his vital knowledge". (1)

This knowledge has inspired the poet to discover an infinite power in man and the discovery has greatly influenced his approach to the 'mystery of man'. The poet confesses:

How oft, amid those overflowing streets, 
Have I gone forward with the crowd, and said 
Unto myself, 'The face of every one 
That passes by me is a mystery' —

_The Prelude, Book VII, lines 626 - 629._

and also apostrophises:

_O Man,
Earth's paramount Creature /

_The Prelude, Book V, lines 4 - 5._

and exalts the human mind in his 'Prospectus' to _The Excursion_:

_For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink Deep — and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds To which the heavens of heavens is but a veil. All strength — all terror, single or in bands, That ever was put forth in personal form — Jehovah — with his thunder, and the choir Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones — I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not The darkest pit of lowest Erebus, Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out By help of dreams — can breed such fear and awe As fall upon us often when we look Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man —

My haunt, and the main region of my song._

The poet as a consequence of the deep concern for man has abandoned intellectual approach to external objects, and has engaged himself in the study of man:
My thoughts by slow gradations had been drawn
To human-kind, and to the good and ill
Of human life.

The Prelude, Book VII, lines 677-680.

because he has found

Once more in Man an object of delight,
Of pure imagination, and of love;

The Prelude, Book XII, lines 49-50.

and has perceived

The dignity of individual Man,
Of Man, no composition of the thought,
Abstraction, shadow, image, but the man
Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
With our own eyes

The Prelude (1805), Book XII, lines 83-87.

The perception has made the poet proceed to study the common man

born

Of dust, and kindred to the worm; a Being
Both in perception and discernment, first
In every capability of rapture,
Through the divine effect of power and love;
As, more than anything we know, instinct
With godhead, and, by reason and by will,
Acknowledging dependency sublime,

The Prelude, Book VIII, lines 487 - 494.

in such places where he could be found in his actual state of affairs without any veil of sophistication. The poet's
perception

bred an anxious wish
To ascertain how much of real worth
And genuine knowledge, and true power of mind
Did at this day exist in those who liv'd
By bodily labour, labour far exceeding
Their due proportion, under all the weight
Of that injustice which upon ourselves
By composition of society
Ourselves entail. To frame such estimate
I chiefly look'd (what need to look beyond?)
Among the natural abodes of men,
Fields with their rural works.

The Prelude (1805), Book XII, lines 97-108.
The poet feels an urge from within and from without to exhibit
men as they are men within themselves

The Prelude, Book XIII, line 226.

with a reverential awe, and goes out on the roads, into the
cottages and fields in search of such men, and himself admits:

when I began to enquire,
To watch and question those I met, and speak
Without reserve to them, the lonely roads
Were open schools in which I daily read
With most delight the passions of mankind,
Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears, revealed;
There saw into the depth of human souls,
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes. And - now convinced at heart
How little those formalities, to which
With overweening trust alone we give
The name of Education, have to do
With real feeling and just sense; how vain
A correspondence with the talking world
Proves to the most; and called to make good search
If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked
With toil, be therefore yoked with ignorance;
If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,
And intellectual strength so rate a boon—
I prized such walks still more, for there I found
Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
And steadiness, and healing and repose
To every angry passion. There I heard,
From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
Replete with honour; sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fair.

The Prelude, Book XIII, lines 160 - 185.

This conception of the ordinary man has inspired the poet with
the highest ideal of serving mankind as a poet and of building
"a character of the most enlightened wisdom and serene and
gracious temper".(2) So the poet is "bent especially upon
exploring and exhibiting the life of the poor as rich in
opportunities of ennobling emotions",(3) and has been captured

(2) : William Minto in his essay 'Wordsworth's
Great Failure in Wordsworth's Mind and Art,
ed. A.W.Thomson.
(3) : loc. cit.
with a sense of dedication to sing songs of such men and the resolution of dedication is not the outcome of mere poetic ecstasy, nor philosophical persiflage, but it is the feeling of a man for a man. This sort of feeling of human quality is almost Hegelian, and, as a logical necessity, it is incumbent upon him to do justice to this. It appears to him to be a reverential decree and the poet employs his sacred office to express his feelings:

Also, about this time did I receive
Convictions still more strong than heretofore,
Not only that the inner frame is good,
And graciously composed, but that, no less,
Nature for all conditions wants not power
To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,
The outside of her creatures, and to breathe
Grandeur upon the very humblest face
Of human life.

The Prelude, Book XIII, lines 279 - 287

The poet has no thought other than man. Man is an object of reverence to him and he possesses an almost religious veneration for man, the agency of his delight:

And thus my heart was early introduced
To an unconscious love and reverence
Of human nature; hence the human form
To me became an index of delight,
Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.

The Prelude, Book VIII, lines 277 - 281.
humble and rustic figures are not only objects of awe and reverence, of delight and pleasure to him, but his conception of man brings to a stand a question at issue. The question is the 'problem of humanity'. The discharged soldier and the beggar in particular and other minor figures in general are indicative of the problem of stark poverty and helplessness in society. They are epitomes of pathetic solitariness and despicability, yet these figures are not devoid of dignity of patience and power of endurance. Their conditions awake pity in the poet's mind and the poet discovers something uncommon in his most common figures.

The poet has seen the discharged soldier leaning against a milestone by the roadside while returning from a dance. There is moon-light and the natural scenery is congenial to the manifestation of the strangeness of the solitary figure:

He was of stature tall,
A span above man's common measure, tall,
Stiff, lank, and upright; a more meagre man
Was never seen before by night or day.

The Prelude, Book IV, lines 391 - 394.

The man is alone - a survivor of the American war and his utter state of isolation in the moonlit night frightens the poet at the first sight. The man groans, and talks to himself in a murmuring voice. The poet is seized by compassion and curiosity simultaneously, and comes forward to sympathise with him in his plight. The discharged soldier tells his 'soldier's tale' and the poet takes him to a comfortable place, and advises him before leaving that it is better to 'ask for timely furtherance and help' than 'to linger in the public ways'. To this the soldier gives a
disconcerting reply:

My trust is in the God of Heaven,
And in the eye of him who passes me /
The Prelude, Book IV, lines 459-460.

Wordsworth's conception of the discharged soldier is obviously realistic. The soldier is a victim of war and its subsequent vices, and is in the state of deplorable plight. But he neither becomes frantic, nor does he philosophise on his discomfiture, nor does he refuse the shelter offered to him, but simply reconciles himself to the actual state of affairs with calmness and serenity of mind. The endurance of ailments, the sobriety of coherence with the heavy odds appear to be conspicuous in his nature in connivance with the principles of peaceful co-existence and accordingly, with the characteristics quite common to him, he does not rail against the society, rather goes pulling on with what befalls him with God as his supreme resort, and maintains his reliance on His supremacy over all things. This sort of attitude primarily may appear as no more than a dying consolation of a man in distress, but the poet analyses his misfortune vis-a-vis his reliance on God from a materialistic viewpoint, and realises that the tranquillity of the man's mind is the consequence of his realistic views of life free from any sort of obscurity. So the discharged soldier is the depiction of the real picture of a common man, a pathetic solitary. In the one hand, he has deprivation and dispossession as the essential conditions of life, on the other, a staunch belief in God and a titanic power of endurance complementary to this absolute faith as means to stand the test of life.
Wordsworth gives the picture of the blind man (beggar) whom he saw in the street of London with a label on the chest telling

The story of the Man, and who he was.

The Prelude (1805), Book VII, line 614.

The poet says:

My mind did at this spectacle turn round
As with the might of waters, and it seem'd
To me that in this Label was a type,
Or emblem, of the utmost that we know,
Both of ourselves and of the universe;
And, on the shape of the unmoving man,
His fixed face and sightless eyes, I look'd
As if admonish'd from another world.

The Prelude (1805), Book VII, lines 615-622.

Wordsworth's conception of, and attitude to, the blind beggar is not conventional. Other pathetic figures of Wordsworth appeal to our pity, and evoke a sense of compassion and sympathy in us. But the blind beggar leads us to the realm of realisation far above the thoughts of the cosmic world. The portraiture of the blind beggar is a figure of experience: it is a revelation. So the poet does not pretend to be involved in philanthropic activities like his evangelical contemporaries, but feels himself 'admonished', and becomes identical with the beggar.

The experience leads him to think

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? (Hamlet, Act. 3, scene 1.)
The self-criticism enables him to realise the real image of the beggar, and helps him to ascertain the pathos of the life on the one side and the dignity on the other -- the gloomy and horrible destitution and the essence of distinction springing from stoical tolerance respectively. The poet is lost in the labyrinth of confusion and indecision, and appears to echo Hamlet:

What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? (Hamlet, Act 3, scene 1.)

Now, a beggar is generally considered as a pest of the society, a 'social nuisance', and reserves no right to claim anything from the society even for the maintenance and upkeep of his existence. But Wordsworth appears "to see the Beggar as a person, not a target of heartless hygiene but a constituent part of the community. The Beggar is still within the circumambience of living sympathy". (4) So the beggar with his blindness, physical infirmity and other associated uncongeniality for survival is a man, a constituent part of the entire chain of human creation. The poet realises this truth with a passionate feeling, and discovers in the beggar the shape of man which haunts him for ever, and he seems to echo King Lear in his new invention:

Thou art the thing itself:
unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor,
bare, forked animal as thou art, (King Lear, Act 3, scene iv.)

and finally celebrates the blind beggar as despicability and

(4) The Simple Wordsworth, (Studies in the poems 1797-1807)
despondency incarnate with hellish dreariness and gloomy depression in life - a life repulsive, yet distinct, loathsome, but just.

Wordsworth's concern for the common man is confined to his treatment of the humble and rustic figures with the adversities of life, but he also delights in, and views with the finest aptitude of mind, every incident of their lives minutely. Wordsworth's description of the 'rustic fair' is a unique illustration of his attitude to, and perception of, the events of their lives. The fair is a festival to them and a Delightful day it is for all who dwell
In this secluded glen, and eagerly
They give it welcome.

The Prelude, Book VIII, lines 18-20.

Common men and women of different types assemble there, and engage themselves in various offices:

Long ere heat of noon,
From byre or field the kine were brought; the sheep
Are penned in cotes; the chaffering is begun.
The heifer lows, uneasy at the voice
Of a new master; bleat the flocks aloud.
Booths are there none; a stall or two is here;
A lame man or a blind, the one to beg,
The other to make music, hither, too,
From far, with basket, slung upon her arm,
Of hawker's wares -- books, pictures, combs, and pins-
Some aged woman finds her way again,
Year after year, a punctual visitant /
There also stands a speech-maker by rote,
Pulling the strings of his boxed raree-show;
And in the lapse of many years may come
Prouder itinerant, mountebank, or he
Whose wonders in a covered wain lie hid.
But one there is, the loveliest of them all,
Some sweet lass of the \textit{xxi}x valley, looking out
For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?
Fruits of her father's orchard are her wares,
And with the ruddy produce she walks round
Among the crowd, half pleased with, half ashamed
Of her new office, blushing restlessly.
The children now are rich, for the old to-day
Are generous as the young; and, if content
With looking on, some ancient wedded pair
Sit in the shade together.

\textit{The Prelude, Book VIII, Lines 20 - 47.}

Wordsworth's description is vivid, and represents common men and women of various colours. They include in themselves blind and crippled men, hawkers, aged women, lovely girls, some wedded pairs, and represent lowly people of different stages of life. The fair is an assembly of persons distinguished in different dispositions. The poet's description is living and indicative of his intense interest in their affairs. The vividness and accuracy of delineation show that they are the objects of his delight and the pursuits of his research. And,

gaiety and cheerfulness prevail,
Spreading from young to old, from old to young,
And no one seems to want his share --
\textit{The Prelude, Book VIII, Lines 53 - 55.}
and the poet himself also is not deprived of his share of the pleasure as he is one with them in season and out of season, from within and from without. He weeps with their sorrows, delights in their happiness. The poet appears to be an anthropologist who is engaged in his study of social anthropology, and accordingly, sees with his eyes, hears with his ears, and finally feels with a passionate heart. The 'rustic fair' is a kind of laboratory for his research and the poet carries his experiment on man with the poetic sagacity of outlook, and reveals the findings of his study to show man as man under any circumstances.

Wordsworth's conception of the common man has developed into a peculiar type of art in The Excursion, and the poet's study reveals "the effacement of individuality in his sketches of human life, treating each life as an instance merely of some good or evil quality, some trait of moral beauty or depravity, a harmony or a discord with the central Good. It is not without design that the characters of 'The Excursion' are all nameless, destitute even of that first and most rudimentary attribute of individuality, a separate and distinctive name". (5) The peculiarity lies in his deep attraction to these characters and in his inclination to share the conditions of their life without embitterment and depression. A sense of serenity and

calmness centres round each individual despite sufferance and agony and the poet succeeds in investing humble and insignificant traits of human life with grandeur of patience and endurance because he is always in search of spiritual dignity in humble life, the dignity which in practical life appears to be an impossibility. But the poet's absorption in the sufferings of his characters, his consciousness of their isolation, and his ultimate unification with them cause emergence of a spirit of loving observation and higher human affections in him which have guided him to the realm most appropriate for the faithful delineation of the tragedy of his figures without an iota of exaggeration or bitterness, resentment or vexation.

Wordsworth's attitude to, and study of, his figures in *The Excursion* emit the essence of personal attachment. An identity of the poet is revealed in his description of the figures. The poet's own pain and sufferance in life, morbidity of mind and the gnawing pain of conscience are identical with his characters. The Pedlar of *The Ruined Cottage* who becomes the Wanderer of *The Excursion* and the Solitary are true Wordsworthians with tenderness of heart, sensuousness towards natural phenomena and passionate feelings for realism of human life. Their sufferings in life, isolation from the society consequent upon loss in personal lives, wanderings, mental despondency and restoration and ultimate conviction of the values of life are the flux and re-flux of the poet's own conditions of mind. So,

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** Note appended to line:
Who now, with no appendage but staff, at page 413,
The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth,
Vol.5 ed. E.de Selincourt and H.Darbishire.
(Oxford at the Clarendon Press)
1949.
the poet perceives the imagesxjs# of the figures to afford his sentiment and feeling a great opportunity for a greater express expression, and intends to write:

Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
And melancholy fear subdued by Faith;
Of blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing:

In The Excursion Wordsworth dignifies the elementary instincts and passions of human beings by his enthusiasm and sympathy for humanity. The Wanderer is the supreme manifestation of this feelings for man. He is

a Man of reverend age,

But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.

The Excursion, Book I, lines 33 - 34.

He is a conventional wanderer but is 'endowed with highest gifts'. He comes of a poor but virtuous family, and his parental background has enabled him to acquire spiritual dignity:

Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where, on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor /
Pure lives were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on English Ground.

The Excursion, Book I, lines 108 - 117.

He is a self-educated man, and represents the lower class.
Things are not helpful for the 'growth of his intellect' and with
the benediction of his parents he has to resort to the profession
of wanderings far from 'his native hills'. He becomes a prototype
of the eighteenth century wanderers, and

much did he see of man,
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements.

The Excursion, Book I, lines 341 - 346.

The Wanderer himself has endured the pains and sufferings which
are apt to spring from the disadvantages of the conditions of
life of the low and humble people. But the sufferance of life
has caused no annoyance in him, nor has it disturbed the peace
and serenity of his mind:

In his steady course,
No piteous revolutions had he felt,
No wild varieties of joy and grief.
Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
His heart lay open; and, by nature turned
And constant disposition of his nature
To sympathy with man, he was alive
To all that was enjoyed where 'er he went.
And all that was endured; for, in himself
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
He had no painful pressure from without
That made him turn aside from wretchedness
With coward fears. He could afford to suffer
With those whom he saw suffer.

The Excursion, Book I, lines 358 - 371.

So, the Wanderer is a true Wordsworthian with his personal
sufferance, sensitiveness to the sufferance of fellow men, and
with his desire to share this load of curse ungrudgingly. The
Wanderer's psychic make-up emits an essence of passive tolerance,
and appears to be peculiar in as much as he is occupied neither
with a sense of resentment towards over-throwing of man into the
state of sufferings either by misrule of man or by mischance,
nor with the tendency to undo the causes thereof, but is absorbed
in himself. So he is an end in himself -- indifferent to pain
and pleasure and amenable to the existent reality. But he is
rich in experience and wise in observation of the affairs of
daily life of man, and consequent upon his 'knowledge gathered
up from day to day' he 'liv'd a long and innocent life' --
serene and calm, and far from disturbance and perturbation
despite misery and hardship in personal life:

Plain his grab;

Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
For sabbath duties; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have passed without remark.
Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye; that, under brows
Shaggy and grey, had meanings which brought
From years of youth; which, like a Being made
Of many Beings, he had wonderous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

The Excursion, Book I, lines 420 - 433.

Thus the Wanderer as the very title suggests is appropriate to the occasion and relevant to the purpose for the delineation of the figure of a common man who is self-sustained despite exhaustion, settled in mood, contrary to affliction and grief.

The poet next presents the figure of Margaret who is the outcome of an objective study of human sufferance. So he employs a narrator other than himself to tell the history of Margaret. The narrator is a detached observer. So is the poet. He "does not smile, .... deplore, or applaud, he simply states. There can be no question here of either the guilty conscience or the grudge against society that was certainly present in 'Salisbury Plain'. The pride that he had been wrestling with in 'The Borderers' has been replaced by a healthy humility. Wordsworth, upto a point, is simply a recorder of events .... But though a
good observer may make a good report, a good poet must also be emotionally involved. A strong subjective element is also present in the poem, if it is not so easily defined. Margaret is poverty and sorrow incarnate. She is the counterpart of 'the Female Vagrant' of Guilt and Sorrow and Ruth of the poem of the same name with the difference that she is settled in her own hut instead of wandering about different places like 'the Female Vagrant' or Ruth. Margaret is

A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal Keenly industrious.

The Excursion, Book I, lines 518 - 523.

Margaret's life was comfortable and peaceful. But the failure of crops consequent upon natural calamity added by 'affliction in the plague of war' puts into jeopardy the normalcy of life. Yet Margaret

Went struggling through those calamitous years

The Excursion, Book I, lines 548 - 549.

but ultimately she fails to fight out the adversities of life, of disease, of unemployment, and war ravages the integrity of the family, and it is broken into fragments. Robert

had joined a troop

Of soldiers, going to a distant land

The Excursion, Book I, lines 676 - 677.

---

and Margaret had parted with her elder child:
To a kind master on a distant farm.

*The Excursion*, Book I, lines 760 - 761.

And her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone.

*The Excursion*, Book I, lines 856 - 857.

So Margaret leads a life of affliction and agony, dejection and desolation, yet she has not lost her faith in God, and she says

"that God
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home."

*The Excursion*, Book I, lines 774 - 776.

But the course of decay and destruction does not cease to function until she is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave.

*The Excursion*, Book I, lines 507 - 510

The life of Margaret is full of tragic incidents, but it is not repulsive because the woman "does not resent her sufferings, nor does the Pedlar resent them for her: we feel that Wordsworth also ceased to resent them. Pity and sympathy are the emotions which Wordsworth wants to evoke; and the whole story is made lovely and vivid by the wealth of detail about the
Cottage, and its gradual decline from cheerful prosperity to complete ruin. The figure of Margaret is beautifully harmonious with her sufferings". (7) A fragment about Margaret not incorporated in the final text gives evidence of this harmony:

She was of quiet mood,
Tender and deep in her excess of love,
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own heart. By some especial care
.... Should live on earth a life of happiness.

Her person and her face
Were homely, such as none who pass her by
Would have remembered, yet when she was seen
In her dwelling place a grace was hers
And Beauty which beginning from without
Fell back on her with sanctifying power.

The tale of Margaret's life is pathetic but not disgusting as the 'incidents' are not 'horrifying' and reveal the affairs of an ordinary life. So "the knowledge ... of human sorrow and the sufferings of the poor kindles our sympathy and respect rather than our imagination. Margaret, like the Old Cumberland Beggar, and like many of Wordsworth's characters ... makes her appeal and achieves her victory by her meek endurance, without hatred or any thought of revenge for her undeserved wrongs". (8) Margaret is a simple woman who suffers in silence and the sufferance in life does not evoke

(7) : William Wordsworth: A Biography
The Early Years, 1770-1803.
Mary Moorman
pp. 314-315.

(8) : op. cit. p. 316.
any sense of horror or awe which is apt to spring from the ultimate ruin and destruction of classical tragic heroes or heroines. No shrill cry of lamentation, nor any act of bustling to express the depth and gravity of mental torments vitiate the situation, but a sense of passive reconciliation pervades conspicuously through the whole atmosphere. She is an ordinary woman of fortitude, maintains her existence against the perpetual pains in life without losing the calmness and serenity of mind, and finally courts an ordinary end of life far away from the knowledge and cognisance of others. So the poet finds occasion to discover some sort of spiritual dignity in the mode of her endurance of the hardships in life and also in the process of her maintenance of patience of mind against the elements of irritation. Thus Margaret, who begins her life alone, suffers singly, and finds an end in herself, is a pathetic figure in isolation, yet distinguished, forsaken, but possesses the state of elevation of mind and character.

The Solitary in The Excursion is

One who lives secluded there,

Lonesome and lost:

The Excursion, Book II, lines 159 - 160.

Sorrows of life have caused his retirement in life, and has made him melancholic. He leads the life of a hermit far away in 'a small apartment dark and low', and says:

'This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will --
I love it better than a snail his house.

The Excursion, Book II, lines 650 - 652.
He is subject to the rejection of life and this rejection has gone to such an extent that his life appears to have been paralysed. He is realistic, and serves as a foil to the Wanderer despite his sensitiveness to natural phenomena and passionate feelings for human beings. The Wanderer has confined himself to his confirmed belief in imagination, but introspective qualities of mind, viz., spiritual quest and imagination find no place in him:

Ah! what avails imagination high
Or question deep? What profits all that earth,
Or heaven's blue vault, is suffered to put forth
Of impulse or allurement, for the Soul
To quit the beaten track of life,
The Excursion, Book III, lines 209 - 213.

He is dejection and despair incarnate:

Night is than day more acceptable; sleep
Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
A better state than waking, death than sleep;
ly
Feeling/sweet is stillness after storm,
The Excursion, Book III, lines 277-281.

The Solitary has the private grief of his life and the consequences of the grief are so deeply rooted in him that he has become completely disillusioned of the happenings of life, and no enterprise for worldly affairs can put him in action. Life has been futile, fruitless, and purposeless:
my business is,
Roaming at large, to observe, not to feel
And, therefore, not to act.

The Excursion, Book III, lines 891 - 893.

He is not devoid of tender qualities of life, but "is unable, however, to believe in a benevolent orderly nature and the goodness of man because such a belief conflicts with his experience. As a result he is tortured by questions concerning life, death and, immortality". (9) This state of mind has led him to the extent of agitation, and ultimately to an agitated enquiry:

Then my soul
Turned inward, -- to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed; and life was put
To inquisition, long and profitless /
By pain of heart -- now checked -- and now impelled --
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way /

The Excursion, Book III, lines 695 - 701.

Wordsworth perceives the figure of the Solitary as a common man who is endowed with the finer qualities of life. He is gentle, courteous, susceptible to the beauty of nature and sympathetic to the pains and sufferings of his fellow-men. He is not even bereft of the common aspiration of man for peaceful and comfortable life. But the adversities of life have made him

a wanderer and he is an epitome of pessimism and disillusionment. He, like the Wanderer, suffers in silence, and there is dignity of patience in his sufferance; but, unlike his friend, he is devoid of any belief in the munificence of Nature's course of action and also in man's essential disposition to do good. Experience of the realities of his life has made him psychologically melancholic in nature and he has had recourse to seclusion to suffer in silence a life of frustration and effectuality.

Now for the persons that are celebrated by the poet are lying in the churchyard, except 'One picture from the living'. This is the story of a 'wedded pair'.

The picture of the 'wedded pair' in the Pastor's tale is vivid and life-like. The pair lives in

A rough abode — in colour, shape, and size.

The Excursion, Book V, lines 697.

The dame is found in her solitary hut and the man labours hard till dusk at a place 'far-distant' from the abode. They are poor and 'through Heaven's blessing' they 'gain the bread', yet lead a peaceful life. They have inconvenience in life, but it is free from frustration and chaos. It is a calm and austere life in solitude despite toils and struggles. Thus they depict the real pictures of simple people of low origin, but possess the excellence of mind within the realm of humble atmosphere and 'the best gift of heaven hath fallen on them'.

The hapless lover of the Pastor's tale is another figure of a man who
being crazed in brain
By unrequited love,


is lost in vain suing of his love. This man

From nature's kindness received a frame
Robust as ever rural labour bred,

*The Excursion*, Book VI, lines 100 - 101

and

'deeply loved,
Loved fondly, truly, fervently:

*The Excursion*, Book VI, lines 118 - 119

a lady who

Was wedded to another, and his heart
Was forced to rend away its only hope;

*The Excursion*, Book VI, lines 129 - 130

because

She lives another's wishes to complete.

*The Excursion*, Book VI, lines 140.

The man suffers from the pain of rejection, but does not throw curse on the lover to avenge the consequences of deprival, rather he cries:

"Joys be their lot, and happiness", ....

"His lot and hers, as misery must be mine/"

*The Excursion*, Book VI, lines 141 - 142.

But the man actually is haunted by the abyss of nothingness for dejection in life, and becomes a solitary wanderer in rocks, caves, and woods

In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
To cure his malady /

*The Excursion*, Book VI, lines 111 - 112.
And finally he
Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth
With keener appetite (if that might be)
And closer industry.

The Excursion, Book VI, lines 152 - 154.

It is the irony of fate that has caused the unhappiness and unpleasantness, and subsequent pains and anguish of mind, but the man has the patience of submission to the decree of lot to face any eventuality. He has a strange reaction by which he manages to escape temporarily the mental boredom and finds consolation in his erstwhile lover's acceptance

Of his possession that which most he prized.

The Excursion, Book VI, line 204.

The attitude of the man amounts to negative sensibility towards life. There is definitely dignity in the mode of endurance, but he has no scope for any achievement in life and in this perspective the life of the unhappy lover is a failure. But Wordsworth is a poet of conciliation, and accordingly delineates the character as an epitome of poor, but decisive relief with an almost metaphysical inclination to the 'search for truth' to forget the distress and the man being immune from deterioration is found progressing towards mental cohesion and integrity for maintenance of self-existence despite the severity of agony and anguish.

The Miner is the true picture of a man, who
taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
And trusting only to his own weak hands,

The Excursion, Book VI, lines 219-220
has become 'Perseverance' incarnate. When the band of keen adventurers to unite their pains
In search of precious ore:

_The Excursion_, Book VI, lines 215 - 217

failed, the miner alone has pursued his pursuit, and has found the treasure after 'twice ten years' of labour.

The solitary figure has carried on 'the stubborn work', and is 'pitted, as insane mind' for the spirit of tenacity. But nothing can dissuade him from sticking to the purpose, and he is ultimately able to

greet

A world, his rich discovery /

_The Excursion_, Book VI, lines 234 - 235.

The discovery does not cause any derangement of the miner, nor is it proclaimed through 'a transport of joy', but the solitary miner ever remains calm and silent even in the _midst_ of victory. The man contains in himself the element of negativity for self-expression, but perseverance _brings_ in its own reward and the miner is paid a glorious tribute. So

The path .... that linked his cottage-door
To the mine's mouth; a long and slanting track,
Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
Worn by his daily visits to and from

****

is named, in memory of the event,

_The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE._

_The Excursion_, Book VI, lines 245 - 248 & 252 - 253.

The miner's life is pervaded by work and he is an active partner in the phenomenal world in solitude and silence: a contending
force with perpetual toil and labour as driving elements to progress in life for identity and shape.

The Prodigal as revealed in the Pastor's tale is a contrast to the Miner. He is 'a fickle Ingrate', and serves as a foil to the Miner. He is

volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
Or could perform; a zealous actor, hired
Into the troop of mirth, a soldiér, sworn
Into the lists of giddy enterprise ——

The Excursion, Book VI, lines 282 - 286.

The Prodigal is destined to be tortured in an endless chain of self-contradictions and contraries, and cannot attain permanent settlement in life despite possession of merits because the rise and fall of the man come up in quick succession as a pre-ordained course. So there is no method in his life as Hamlet has no method in his madness and it is the vacillation of mind that makes him plunge into the vortex of corruption without any hesitation. And

The city, too,

(With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
As there to linger, there to eat his bread,
Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment;

The Excursion, Book VI, lines 351 - 355.

and thus the Prodigal, who is neither a great man nor a villain is thrown in awful crises, and breathes his repentant last in the 'irksome world',

-: 93 :-
when Mercy made him.

One with himself, and one with them that sleep'.

The Excursion, Book VI, lines 374 - 375.

The Prodigal's process of life is suffocating and ignominious, yet it is free from repulsion and awe, and bears testimony to a mystical union with 'mercy' for the cleansing of his faults. So the fall of the man is not an end in itself, rather leaves the impression of an interesting suggestion for appeasement of the errors and perplexities in life through sublimation to carry the state of condemnation to the realm of synthesis.

Next comes the Matron. The matron as depicted by the poet is:

Tall .... her complexion dark
And saturnine; her head not raised to hold
Converse with heaven, nor yet deprest towards earth
But in projection carried, as she walked
For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
Was her broad forehead; like the brow of one
Whose visual never shrinks from a painful glare
Of overpowering light.

The Excursion, Book VI, lines 678 - 686.

The matron is endowed with various good qualities. She has 'keen desire of knowledge', but she has also the history of failure. She is seized by detrimental 'passions', which frequently disturb her mental harmony and, as a logical inevitability, a 'strenuous mind' is captured with 'ceaseless
pains' : there is combustion and commotion in her mind as the woman is haunted by what may be called a 'Dread life of conflict'. She is in a state of complete agitation, and is seized by a 'sudden illness' consequent on mental disorder. Providence predominates and the matron is fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost 
To anger, by the malady that gripped
Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power, 
As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb?
The Excursion, Book VI, lines 745 - 748.

Her spirit also becomes sullen and
She, who had rebelled,
Was into meekness softened and subdued;
The Excursion, Book VI, lines 771 - 772.
and is 'remembered with deep awe' for the end she courts.

The matron lives by common contraries, and, alike her male counterpart, the Prodigal, fails in life for the accidental disintegrity and disharmony, but she has a positive experience of communion with the 'element' of mystical world to be safe from the 'sorrows' of life and accordingly, the conditions of her life evokes a sense of grief, and leaves a mortifying reflection because she suffers from a painful emotion silently and encounters an end in life through a conflict of perpetual nature. So the termination of life is but an appeasement of the self-immersed contradictions -- an annihilation or self-loss progressed towards putting an end to her heart-breakings for ever.

Wordsworth's next presentation is the Mother, 'poor'
Ellen.

She is an 'unhappy young woman', who is 'delivered to distress and shame' by

The weakness painful and most pitiful.

*The Excursion, Book VI, line 846.*

The hapless woman is despised, but finds consolation in her child, a 'pure and spotless gift' and an object of pride to her. Ellen's heart is full of joyous spirit. She says:

I breathe
The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake,
My Infant /

*The Excursion, Book VI, lines 923 - 925.*

It is the ideal state of mind for poor Ellen, but subsequently the woman being haunted by scruples leaves her child in the care of 'a kind parent', and undertakes

with dutiful content

A Foster-mother's office.

*The Excursion, Book VI, lines 947 - 948.*

Now the crisis begins. Ellen is denied of 'all communion with her son'. She is afflicted, and is seized by a sort of malady. But Heaven's will adds fuel to the fire. The child dies and the mother gains

Permission to attend its absequies.

*The Excursion, Book VI, line 972.*

The loss of the child makes her mind rueful and to console her mind she

urged her steps:
Hither she came; here stood, and sometimes knelt
In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene /

*The Excursion, Book VI, lines 985 - 987.*
In the course of time, this also being denied, the woman returns to her 'mother's house' on being released from the shackles of bondage of her office. She has no 'concerns of fear, or hope, or love', and her Spirit longed

For its last flight to Heaven's security,

_The Excursion_, Book VI, lines 1022 - 1023

and

Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
And pleasure in endurance.

_The Excursion_, Book VI, lines 1026 - 1027.

So the woman is endowed with an almost stoical sense of renunciation and an astounding power of tolerance, and consequently, requires no means for compassion. She suffers from the conditions of life, and endures the sorrows and pains of mind without any resentment or annoyance unto the last. This sort of reaction to pain is not organic, but quite rational and accordingly, she gathers strength of mind and solace of soul in her reliance on the divine design: So says the woman:

"He who afflicts me knows what I can bear;
And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
Will mercifully take me to himself."

_The Excursion_, Book VI, lines 1046 - 1048.

It is the form of life in which the degree of sufferance and the power of tolerance are set in complete balance through acceptance of the conditions of life as decisive and final.

Then comes Wilfred Armathwaite. The man is unfortunate with the perpetual disfavour of fate. He is bereft of pleasure
and peace and noticing the gravity of anguish and agony that weighs on him, resorts to a mysterious quest to mitigate the pains of life. He breaks away the marital obligation in his absolute perturbation, and becomes a solitary wanderer in wilderness, being seized by the spirit of nothingness. The objects of the world are of no attraction to him and the church even is 'to him a sickness and reproach'. The serenity of his mind is completely shattered and he lives a life of agitation and disgust for his discovery of negative propositions in the objects of the phenomenal world:

Wretched at home, he gained no peace abroad;
Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
Asked comfort of the open air, and found
No quiet in the darkness of the night,
No pleasure in the beauty of the day.

_The Excursion, Book VI, lines 1098 - 1102._

Man feels pity on him, God has pardoned the conditions of his life, but

> He could not find forgiveness in himself;
> Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

_The Excursion, Book VI, lines 1113 - 1114._

and ultimately dies 'through remorse and grief'.

Wordsworth's revelation here is Shakespearean. Macbeth has the same state of mind after the murder of Duncan. In mental frenzy and franticness, which are the consequences of his realisation of the gravity of the vice, he finds no means to hide the heinous crime. So he himself becomes a terror to himself, and is seized by a panic of fear to bear his own existence. He disdains
himself, and says:

To know my deed, 't were best not known myself.

Macbeth, Act II, scene ii.

Macbeth's mind is tormented and he finds peace nowhere. Wilfred has the same state of mind, and maintains a life of perpetual agony and affliction. The man perceives life as absolutely negative and this attitude to life is the outcome of mental breakdown or what may be called psychosis. A feeling of self-contempt originating from his guilty conscience afflicts him constantly and the man is lost in some sort of abysmal darkness. But he is not denied the scope of restoration, and consequently is 'absolved by God' as the natural course of final settlement in life.

The poet then celebrates the characters of a deaf man

a gentle Dalesman ....

From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn

The precious gift of hearing.

The Excursion, Book VII, lines 400 - 402.

and a man 'blind and alone' who is bereft of

'Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things /

Guide of our way, mysterious comforter /

The Excursion, Book VII, lines 482 - 483.

These people suffer from organic deficiencies, but the sufferance cannot vitiate the calmness and serenity of their minds and the physically handicapped persons enjoy absolute peace of mind despite 'sad privation' — the deaf man with his rural labour 'dutiously' performed and the blind man with the keen perception of cosmic affairs carefully pursued. Thus the deaf and the
blind men shine as epitomes of contentment with the existent conditions of life, and proceed forward for individuality and distinction.

Now, Wordsworth's study of, and attitude to, man as revealed in The Prelude and The Excursion are definitely significant in as much as the poet does not only confine his feeling to conventional sympathy and compassion for those whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong

Than to do wrong, The Excursion, Book VI, lines 1070 -1071.

but also extends his perception of man to the realm of sublime -
tion where he learns

To prize the breath we share with human kind;
And look upon the dust of man with awe.

The Excursion, Book V, lines 656 - 657.

He extols the dignity of man to the highest pitch, and looks at him with a religious veneration. The thoughts and feelings for man is his primary preoccupation, rather relief to his mind, and solace to his soul and in his affliction he tends to confident repose

In God; and reverence for the dust of Man.

The Excursion, Book VII, lines 1056 - 1057.

The 'narratives' of 'calm and humble life' satisfy his mind and help him gain his 'end'; the 'daily toil for daily bread' is hailed by him in honour:

'praise to the sturdy plough,
And patient spade; praise to the simple crook,
And ponderous loom;'

The Excursion, Book V, lines 602 - 604.
and this conception of man instills in him a sense which enables him to feel that

Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;

_The Prelude, Book VI, lines 604 - 605._

and fills his heart with a gracious and benign influence. The poet feels that God is man, man God; and this becomes the creed of his poetry, which is the psalm of life.