

Series.

23

WORDSWORTH'S
Ode to Duty

AND

Laodamia

F. WINCKLER, B.A.

198/1/190

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1-1900

W O R T H
O D E D U T Y
A N D
L A O D A M I A

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

E. WINCKLER, B.A.

Principal, Hindu College, Tinnevely

In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty.

MADRAS

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF WORDSWORTH'S LIFE.

- 1770, April 7th, WILLIAM WORDSWORTH born, at Cockermouth in Cumberland—son of John Wordsworth, law-agent to the Earl of Lonsdale, and Anne Cookson, of Penrith, his wife.
- 1778, his mother died—goes to the Grammar-school of Hawkshead.
- 1783, his father died—Wordsworth is taken care of by his uncles. In Hawkshead Grammar-school Wordsworth wrote his earliest verses—"The Summer Vacation."
- 1787, enters St. John's College, Cambridge.
- 1791, takes an ordinary B.A. Degree: visits London—goes to France, then in the throes of the Revolution.
- 1792, returns from the Continent.
- 1795, Wordsworth and his only sister, Dorothy, make their first home at Racedon in Dorsetshire—gets £900 as a legacy from Mr. Calvert. At Racedon, experiments in satire and tragedy.
- 1796, finishes his only tragedy, *The Borderers*: meets Coleridge at Bristol.
- 1797, Wordsworth and his sister remove to Alfoxden in Somerset, within a mile and a half of Coleridge's house.
- 1798, jointly with Coleridge publishes *Lyrical Ballads*: Wordsworth, his sister and Coleridge visit Germany.
- 1799, begins *The Recluse*, the 'long poem' on the development of his own mind: settles at Dove Cottage, on the northern side of Grasmere.
- 1802, marries Mary Hutchinson—begins his *Sonnets*, 'dedicated to National Independence and Liberty.'

- 1803, goes on a six weeks' tour in Scotland; meets Scott; his eldest son, John, is born.
- 1804, his eldest daughter, Dora, is born.
- 1805, loses his brother John, Captain of an East Indiaman: in May, finishes *The Prelude*, in fourteen Books: writes *Ode to Duty*.
- 1806, spends the winter at Coleorton in Leicestershire: his son, Thomas, is born.
- 1807, publishes *Poems* in two *Volumes*, including the *Ode to Duty*.
- 1808, removes to Allan Bank, near Dove Cottage—publishes *Convention of Cintra*, and *Guide to the Lakes*, his daughter, Catherine is born.
- 1811, his daughter, Catherine, dies.
- 1812, his son, Thomas, dies.
- 1813, removes to Rydal Mount: appointed Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland on £500 a year.
- 1814, writes *Laodamia*: revisits Scotland; meets Hogg: *The Excursion* is published.
- 1815, publishes *The White Doe of Rylstone*, and *Laodamia*.
- 1816, publishes *Dion* and a series of *Odes* and *Sonnets* on the fall of Napoleon, &c., completing 'Poems dedicated to National Independence and Liberty.'
- 1817, publishes *Ode to Lycoris*.
- 1819, publishes *Peter Bell*, and *the Waggoner*.
- 1820, publishes *The River Duddon, a Series of Sonnets*; visits the Rhine, Switzerland, and the Italian Lakes.
- 1822, publishes his *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*, and the series of *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*.
- 1823, takes a trip to the Netherlands.
- 1824, makes a tour in North Wales.
- 1828, visits the Rhine.
- 1829, visits Ireland.
- 1831, pays his fourth visit to Scotland.
- 1833, pays his fifth and last visit to Scotland.

1835, publishes *Yarrow Revisited and other Poems*.

1837, goes to Rome.

1838, the degree of D.C.L. is conferred on Wordsworth by the University of Durham.

1839, Oxford confers the same Degree.

1842, gets a pension of £300 a year.

1843, appointed poet Laureate.

1847, writes an *Ode on the Installation of H.R.H. Prince Albert as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge*.

1850, died at Rydal Mount—his remains lie buried at Grasmere.

“Wordsworth's faculty is in describing those far-reaching and intense feelings and glimmerings, and doubts and fears, and hopes of man, as referring to what he might be before he was born, or what he may be hereafter. He is a great being, and will hereafter be ranked as one who has a portion of the spirit of the mighty ones, especially Milton; but as one who did not possess the power of using that spirit otherwise than with reference to himself, and so as to excite a reflex action only; that is his great characteristic.”

“The more I see of Wordsworth the more I admire, and I may also say love, him. It is delightful to see a life in such perfect harmony with all that his writings express, ‘true to the kindred points of heaven and home’.”

“His words have passed
 Into man's common thought, and week day phrase;
 This is the poet and his verse will last.”

INTRODUCTION.

1. *Ode to Duty.* (a) This fine *Hymn* (as it may well be called) is generally found in that section of Wordsworth's works entitled *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*. In *form* it does not possess the features of the *Great Ode*. The latest form of the Greek *Ode* (*ode*, a song, from *aeido*, I sing) was a poem with a *triple* movement—the first part was called the *strophe*; the metrical wave in the *strophe* was answered by a counter-wave in the second movement, called the *antistrophe*; the third movement, the *epode*, was a blended echo of the two former movements. Wordsworth's 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality' is more a proper *Ode* than the 'Ode to Duty'.

Wordsworth's own comments on this *Ode* are as follows: "This ode is on the model of Gray's *Ode to Adversity*, which is copied from Horace's *Ode to Fortune*. Many and many a time have I been twitted by my wife and sister for having forgotten this dedication of myself to the stern lawgiver. Transgressor indeed I have been from hour to hour, day to day: I would fain hope, however, not more flagrantly or in a worse way, than most of my tuneful brethren. But these last words are in a wrong strain. We should be rigorous to ourselves, and forbearing, if not indulgent, to others; and, if we make comparison at all, it ought to be with those who have morally excelled us."

(b). *The metre.* The Poem is in eight-lined stanzas of seven *iambic tetrametre* lines, with a closing *Alexandrine* (*iambic hexapeter*), rhyming—the rhyme formula is *ababccdd*.

2. **Laodamia.** This beautiful Poem was written in 1814. In preparing his son for Cambridge, Wordsworth renewed his acquaintance with Vergil and other classical poets. The out-come was a series of poems on classical subjects.

The Poem may be regarded as an illustration of the position that, "this life is only a discipline under imperfect conditions, and to be set free from the passion and fretfulness of existence is the choice and longing of the wise." Heard remarks;—"The idea that underlies the poem is the same conception of 'Piety' which Vergil has embodied in the *Æneid*. 'Piety' embraces all the duties of life that are based upon the affections—love of home and parents and children, love of the gods of our fathers, and a reverence for that great order of things in which man finds himself a part. The 'pious' man believes in a destiny, or order transcending his own will: to exalt any passion, however innocent, above this, is a rebellion; to intensify any passion, so as to disturb the appropriate calm of resignation, is to act irreverently against the Gods. Lesser duties must give way to greater; love of wife must give way to love of country, and the sorrow of bereavement must not obscure the larger issues of life. Thus, not only did Laodamia's yearning for the rest restoration of her husband to life show a failure to recognise the fixity of eternal laws, but her death was 'a transgression of the ordinance of destiny', and in reason's spite; it was after all, *self-will*, and could not win the favour of heaven."

Wordsworth himself says:—"The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts, and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the ancients who have treated of it. It cost me mere trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written.

(a) *The Classical Story*.—Laodamia was the daughter of Acastus, and wife of Protesilaus. When her husband was slain before Troy, she begged the gods to be allowed to converse with him for only three hours. The request was granted, and Hermes led Protesilaus back to the upper world; and when Protesilaus died a second time, Laodamia died with him. Protesilaus, son of Iphiclus, was a native of Phylace in Thessaly. He led the warriors of several Thessalian towns against Troy, and was the first of all the Greeks who was killed by the Trojans, being the first who leaped from the ships upon the Trojan shore. According to the common tradition he was slain by Hector. Wordsworth's poem is founded on the *sixth book* of the *Æneid*.

(b) *The metre*. The poem is generally spaced into six-lined stanzas, more from the *rhyme scheme* than from any real pause *in thought* between the stanzas. The lines are *iambic pentametre*, rhyming; the rhyme formula being *ab-abcc*. The twenty-sixth stanza has *seven* lines, the rhymes being *ababccc*. The last stanza has eleven lines, the rhymes being *abbcdaadaee*.

Criticism. "In Vergil Wordsworth might seem to discern his own spirit endowed with grander proportions, and meditating on sadder facts. Among the poets of the battle-field, of the study, of the boudoir, he encountered the first Priest of Nature, the first poet of Europe who had deliberately shunned the life of courts and cities for the mere joy in nature's presence. And thus it was that the study of Vergil, and especially of Vergil's solemn picture of the Underworld, prompted in Wordsworth's mind the most majestic of poems, his one great utterance on heroic love. Under this powerful stimulus with unusual labour, and by

a strenuous effort of the imagination, Wordsworth was enabled to depict his own love *in excelsis*, to imagine what aspect it might have worn, if it had been its destiny to deny itself at some heroic call, and to confront with nobleness an extreme emergency, and to be victor in an Olympian contest of the soul. For, indeed, "the fervent, not ungovernable love", which is the ideal that Protesilaus is sent to teach, is on a great scale the same affection which exists in domesticity and peace, it is love considered not as a revolution but as a consummation; as a self-abandonment not to a laxer but to a sterner law; no longer as an invasive passion, but as the deliberate habit of the soul. The language of the poem is majestic, but it is no longer magical. And yet we cannot but feel that he has put into this poem something which he could not have put into the poems which preceded it; that it bears the impress of a soul which has added moral effort to poetic inspiration, and is mistress now of the acquired as well as of the innate virtue. For it is words like these that are the strength and stay of men; nor can their accent of lofty earnestness be simulated by the writer's art. Literary skill may deceive the reader who seeks a literary pleasure alone; and he to whom these strong consolations are a mere imaginative luxury may be uncertain or indifferent out of what heart they come. But those who need them know; spirits that hunger after righteousness discern their proper food; there is no fear lest they confound the sentimental and superficial with those weighty utterances of moral truth which are the most precious legacy that a man can leave to mankind."—
(Myers).

2. "WORDSWORTH conceived a plan for the regeneration of English poetry, protesting against the barren conventionalism, 'the over-elaborateness, and artificiality—the unspontaneity—of the School of Pope', but whatsoever may have been his theories, it is certain he was himself a most scrupulous and careful workman. His best pieces both in structure and phraseology are finished and refined to the utmost. He is a conscious artist. His language is singularly choice, often abounding in 'curious felicities' as Coleridge points out. He acted up to the noble maxim he himself inculcates in his own exquisite manner :

'Give all thou canst : High Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more.'

Wordsworth is essentially the poet of reflection and thought. Of *dramatic* power and of *epic* he possessed little.

"The moving accident is not my trade
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts ;
'Tis my delight alone in summer shade
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts."

—*Hart-Leap Well, II.*

He vaguely meditated an epic poem after the manner of Milton or rather of Spenser, but he lacked the *objective* faculty. His genius was rather introspective and interpretative. He loved to look on the face of nature, but to him this face was precious as the index of the soul. He was eminently a spiritual poet. In the mere description of Nature many have surpassed him ; but no one has ever entered so far into the secrets of her heart, or partaken so deeply of her inmost communings. There was no rock, no flower, no creature, in short, human or other in the wide world, but for him it was one of Nature's words ;—

'To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'

What he cultivated in himself was a calm quiet mind, vexed by no tumults such as might make that pure refined voice inaudible to him."—(*Hales*).

3. I challenge for this Poet—*First*—An austere purity of language, both grammatically and logically; in short, the perfect appropriation of the words to the meaning. *Secondly*—A corresponding weight and sanity of the thoughts and sentiments, won not from books but from the poet's own meditations. *Thirdly*—The sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs; the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction. *Fourthly*—The perfect truth to Nature in his images and descriptions as proving a long and intimate acquaintance with the very spirit that gives a physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. *Fifthly*—A meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought, with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man. *Lastly*,—the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of fancy, Wordsworth, to my feelings, is always graceful and sometimes recondite. The likeness is occasionally too strange or demands too peculiar a point of view, or is such as rather appears the creature of predetermined research than spontaneous presentation. Indeed his fancy seldom displays itself as mere unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a manner perfectly unborrowed and his own."—(*Coleridge*).

4. "The aim of all Wordsworth's endeavours in Poetry, as he has stated it, has been that they should be fitted for filling permanently a station, however humble, in the literature of his country. It is remarkable that in not a line can be detected any lowering of that aim to the

secondary objects of authorship: no trace of mercenary motive, no paltering with artificial tastes, no sacrifice of truth and nature for the gain of notoriety, no dallying with fashion, betray a faltering in the purpose to which he devoted himself. This demanded extraordinary self-possession—all the fortitude, the magnanimity of genius—to preserve its composure. He moved on fearlessly, following the call of his own imagination; and it is a grand thing now to behold the young and ingenuous, the older and thoughtful, vying with each other in rendering to him the tribute of a grateful admiration.

No poet has ever yet so devoted his imagination to the study of the face of nature as Wordsworth. He has communed with her in all her woods, and contemplated the ever-varying expression of her countenance. It would transcend even the expansive limits of these lectures to illustrate his descriptive poetry, and I can only endeavour to give some idea of the spirit of it. In the last lecture I had occasion to show how dangerous the love of nature may become if perverted into a sentimental and insidious materialism. In the heart of Wordsworth the passionate love of nature has not been so betrayed. It is coupled with the faith that infinite wisdom has so formed the earth, the elements, and the physical heavens, that the soul, during its abode in its mortal tenement, can gather, from all that meets the senses, food for its noble faculties:—

‘The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes, •
Auxiliar to divine.’

Deep and habitual as is Wordsworth’s devotion to nature, it is no idolatry of what is material. The worlds of the eye and the ear, like the senses that observed them, are subject to decay; and it is not the characters of his

genius to pause upon what is perishable. He never fails to impress on us that the forms of nature, loved as they are, are fugitive, valueless, except when contemplated in their relation to man and to his Maker; that the earth—the dear, green earth—will darken in the absence of imagination. Nay, more: rising to the height of as lofty aspiration as ever was conceived, either in poetry or philosophy, he proclaims the awful truth that the universe itself—the material universe—is a hollow shell, from which the ear of faith alone can hear mysterious murmurings of eternity. This moral is expounded by means of one of the finest images that ever entered into the heart of poet to conceive, —beautiful in itself and sublime in its application:—

● ‘ I have seen
 A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
 Of inland ground, applying to his ear
 The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell,
 To which, in silence hush'd, his very soul
 Listen'd intensely, and his countenance soon
 Brighten'd with joy; for, murmuring from within,
 Were heard sonorous cadences, whereby
 To his belief the monitor express'd
 Mysterious union with its native sea.
 Even such a shell the universe itself
 Is to the ear of Faith.'

The purpose which the poet proposes to himself, in his descriptive poetry, was to show how the mind and the external world are fitted to each other, and to accomplish this by rescuing from neglect the unheeded impressions perpetually made upon us, and giving us a distinct consciousness of them when shaped by poetic imagination. Wordsworth's poetry abounds with manifestations of the deep impression he receives from slight hints, such as occur to any of us in daily life; and it is this which makes

a genial admiration of his writings so precious an acquisition. It is a companionship which clings to humanity in all its paths. Once open your heart to it, and its benignant light will be shed on your domestic hearth, upon all your intercourse with your fellow-men, upon your civic responsibilities to your country and the sublimer relations in which man is placed. Feelings that are apt to run to waste ripen beneath the influence of his imagination, hope is cherished, and the best impulses confirmed the noblest aspirations sustained. Hence comes that ardent affectionate gratitude for moral and intellectual obligations which, from so many hearts, is the silent tribute to the aged poet:—

‘Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
 From earth’s materials—waits upon my steps;
 Pitches her tents before me as I move,
 An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
 Elysian, Fortunate Fields,—like those of old,
 Sought in the Atlantic main:—why should they be
 A history only of departed things,
 Or a mere fiction of what never was?
 For the discerning intellect of Man,
 When wedded to this goodly universe
 In love and holy passion, shall find these
 A simple produce of the common day.

By words

Which speak of nothing more than what we are
 Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
 Of death, and win the vacant and the vain
 To nobler raptures.’

But the noblest dedication of Wordsworth’s genius has been in his communion with his fellow men,—a sympathy as expanded as ever filled the human heart, comprehensive of the highest and the lowliest of the race, and shedding a glory on all conditions of humanity:—

'Tis nature's law
 That none, the meanest of created things,
 Of forms created the most vile and brute,
 The dullest or most noxious, should exist
 Divorced from good,—a spirit and pulse of good,—
 A life and soul to every mode of being
 Inseparably link'd. Then he assured
 That least of all can aught that ever own'd
 The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
 Which man is born to, sink, how'er depress'd,
 So low as to be scorn'd without a sin,
 Without offence to God, cast out of view,
 Like the dry remnant of a garden flower
 Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement
 Worn out and useless.
 No! man is dear to man; the poorest poor
 Long for some moments in a weary life
 When they can know and feel that they have been
 Themselves the fathers and the dealers out
 Of some small blessings, have been kind to such
 As needed kindness, for this single cause:—
 That we have all of us one human heart.'

This principle is the great moral element of Wordsworth's poetry,—the sameness of the human heart. I am painfully conscious of the injury I am doing to it by these hurried comments. He has vindicated the sensibilities of mankind in humble life, and, by showing their susceptibility to kindness, has fostered the natural love between man and man. He thus silences a common plea of selfishness, in treating the story of the ingratitude of the poor as a thing only heard of at a distance.

In Wordsworth's highly-cultivated affection for human nature, of course, is comprehended that reverence of womanly nature, which we have observed as an element in the genius of all the great English poets. It is part of his comprehensive scheme for elevating and purifying

humanity, to throw the light of his imagination upon the meek majesty of the female heart, its faithfulness, its fortitude, its heroism. What can be more touchingly beautiful than the account of a woman's slowly wasting spirit, in the story of the "Deserted Cottage", in the first book of the *Excursion*? The sanity of Wordsworth's genius admits of no romantic exaggeration or vapid sentimentality on this subject. While it is his delight to show how divine a thing a woman may be made, he regards her moving in the orbit of domestic life, not as enshrined by a superstitious chivalry, but the being that god gave because it was not good for man to be alone. It is a worthy and no light effort of poetic genius to take from the extravagances of romance all that is attractive, and to blend it with the daily household worth of woman, and, thus preserving its beauty, to reveal the spiritual and the practical which in their harmony make up the perfection of female loveliness." —(*Reed*).

5 "Wordsworth's poems are remarkable for their clear spirituality : this is their characteristic. Perhaps we may get a better idea of their tone and manner from the material universe. They are not like nature, when the sun first glimmers in the orient, and when there is a fresh awakening of birds and perfumes and a coolness and a sweetness cast around everything : they are not like the time when the king of day glows splendour in the zenith, and when the whole creation welters in golden glory—when every tarn is lighted up, and every forest looks greener verdure, when stillness reigns on moor and mountain : they are not like the dim evening stealing over the universe of God, and giving bewitching softness to every object and sound : no, they remind us of none of these. They have

no such features, there is no rich colouring, no orange, blue, and crimson. But there is what is higher, better, and more ethereal. They are like night when the stars come out, and shake the heavens with silvery beauty. You have often looked up, reader, on those spiritual glancing worlds, and you have felt them breathe a lofty, nay, a sublime spirituality, pure, clear, bright, and holy; a spirituality unsullied, a spirituality hallowed and blessed, piercing into the darkest recesses of the soul and taking the spirit captive with their untainted and unblemished meaning. This is Wordsworth's poetry; the silver stars beaming down upon thee as "an eye from the depth of immensity." Not early dawn, so dewy and so sweet to the heart, not noon day with all its magnificence of light, not evening with its tints of loveliness, are illustrative of these poems, but the still silent stars of night pouring down their subtle significance into thine inner shrine.

We think this high spirituality may be discerned in almost every poem. There are indeed some one or two passages which are more deeply tinted with the golden colouring than with this silvery beauty; but the leading idea one has when laying down his works, after a thorough perusal, is that they are instinct with spirituality; pure as, and not dissimilar to, that of the stars.

After all that had gone before in the preceding century, the affectation, conceit, bombast, glitter, and show, we needed something simple and beautiful; we needed the soul once more, and not the mere adorned body. And Cowper in his pure English strains, Coleridge in his dreaminess, Southey, Wilson, and other memorable ones, in their fine and lofty measures, did much to exalt the mind once more to its legitimate sovereignty. They were

all different men, sang different hymns, awoke different thoughts ; but all they wrote tended to one great object, even this, of bringing back the spirit to its ancient realm. And perhaps, after Cowper, Wordsworth's muse has had the greatest influence in achieving the victory ; its piercing spirituality and its pure and exquisite language have more or less powerfully worked a change in the minds of our present writers.

Besides this, there is another and perhaps greater good which his poems have produced ; indeed it has already been strikingly remarked by one fine spirit of the New World : and that is, the doctrine he has taught or again brought back, of looking into the spirit, and not the literality of a thing. How this pervades all ranks now ; and yet it was our poet who first began the movement : until his time the letter was all—so long as that was obeyed, no matter how fared the other. But Wordsworth, like the beautiful and pure glancing stars of night, pierced deeper the significance of man's heart, and spoke again in giant-tones of the workings of the soul.

Indeed this would naturally proceed from his lofty spirituality ; it was the necessary consequent, the sequence immediately following. And hence we cannot conceive anything better as a prelude to hearing the mighty hymn of nature, than to listen awhile to the fine spiritual language of our poet. "In the 'sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused', in the feeling that, behind the forms, hues, and sounds of the material universe, there is something more than meets the external senses, something which defies analysis, undefined and ineffable, which must be felt and perceived by the soul—in this intense spiritualism, mingled with the mildest and sweetest

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humanity, we see the influence and acknowledge the power of Wordsworth." No other of the poets of the ancient or modern world ; no other vates of times long gone by or during the present era, ever saw so much in creation : no one ever heard such deep tones of inward meaning. To them nature was beautiful and gorgeous ; but they heard not the inner sounds, saw not the inner visions. At times indeed they caught some consciousness of all this ; but it was not a dweller with them, it was not their attendant spirit." —(Lester).

6. " *Southey*.—When the occasion permitted it, Wordsworth has not declined to treat a subject as an ancient poet of equal vigour would have treated it. Let me repeat to you his *Laodamia*.

Porson.—After your animated recital of this most classic poem, I begin to think more highly of you both. It is pleasant to find two poets living as brothers, and particularly when the palm lies between them, without any third in sight. Those who have ascended to the summit of the mountain, sit quietly and familiarly side by side ; it is only those who are climbing with gravel in their shoes, that scramble, kick, and jostle. You have recited a most spirited thing indeed. I never had read it. Now to give you a proof that I have been attentive, I will remark two passages that offend me. In the first stanza,—

With sacrifice before the rising morn
 Performed, my slaughtered lord have I required ;
 And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
 Him of the infernal Gods have I desired. (1—4)

The second line and the fourth terminate too much alike : *have I required* and *have I desired* are worse than prosaic. In another,—

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
 In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;

No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,
 The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
 Spake, as a witness, of a second birth
 For all that is most perfect upon earth. (97—102.)

In a composition such as Sophocles might have exulted to own, and in a stanza the former part of which might have been heard with shouts of rapture in the regions he describes, how unseasonable is the allusion to *witness* and *second birth*, which things, however holy and venerable in themselves, come stinking and reeking to us from the conventicle. I desire to see Laodamia in the silent and gloomy mansion of her beloved Protesilaus; not elbowed by the godly butchers in Tottenham-court-road, nor smelling devoutly of ratafia among the sugar-bakers at Blackfriars,

Mythologies should be kept distinct: the fire-place of one should never be subject to the smoke of another. The gods of different countries, when they come together unexpectedly are jealous Gods, and, as our old women say, *turn the house out of windows*.

A current of rich and bright thoughts runs throughout the poem. Pindar himself would not, on that subject, have braced one into more nerve and freshness, nor Euripides have inspired into it more tenderness and more passion. I am not insensible to that warmly chaste morality which is the soul of it, nor indifferent to the benefits that literature on many occasions has derived from Christianity."—*(Landor)*.

7. "It may, I think, be affirmed that Milton's *Lycidas* and my *Laodamia* are twin immortals.' You (*Landor*) have given me minute criticism of *Laodamia*. I concur with you in what you say of the first stanza, and had several times attempted to alter it upon your grounds. I cannot,

however, accede to the *second birth*, merely because this expression has been degraded by conventiclors. I certainly meant nothing more than the *eadem cura* and the *largior æther*, etc., of Vergil's *Æneid*. All religions owe their origin or acceptation to the wish of the human heart to supply in another state of existence the deficiencies of this, and to carry still nearer to perfection whatever we admire in our present condition; so that there must be many modes of expression, arising out of this coincidence, or rather identity of feeling common to all mythologies; and under this observation I should shelter the phrase from your censure; but I may be wrong in the particular case, though certainly not in the general principle."—(*Wordsworth*).

8. "It is style, and the elevation given by style, which chiefly makes the effectiveness of *Laodameia*... I have a warm admiration for *Laodameia* and for the great *Ode*; but if I am to tell the very truth, I find *Laodameia* not wholly free from something artificial, and the great *Ode* not wholly free from something declamatory."—(*Arnold*).

9. "*Laodameia* is a very original poem: I mean original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation."—(*Lamb*).

10. "Wordsworth himself, as Hazlitt has well observed, has a pride in deriving no aid from his subject. It is the mere power which he is conscious of exerting, in which he delights; not the production of a work in which men rejoice, on account of the sympathies and sensibilities it excites in them. Hence he does not much esteem his *Laodamia* as it belongs to the inferior class of poems founded on the affections. Yet in this, as in other peculiarities of Wordsworth, there is a *German bent* in his mind."—(*Robinson*).

Laodamia.

“ WITH sacrifice, before the rising morn
Performed, my slaughtered lord have I required ;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal Gods have I desired :

5 Celestial pity I again implore :—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore !”

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the suppliant heavenward lifts her hands ;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
10 Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands ;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows ;
And she expects the issue in repose.

Oh terror ! what hath she perceived ?—O joy !
What doth she look on ?—whom doth she behold ?
15 Her hero slain upon the beach of Troy ?
His vital presence ? his corporeal mould ?
It is—if sense deceive her not—’tis he !
And a god leads him, wingèd Mercury !

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
20 That calms all fear : “ Such grace hath crowned thy
prayer,

Laodamia ! that at Jove’s command
Thy husband walks the paths of upper air :
He comes to tarry with thee three hours’ space :
Accept the gift, behold him face to face !”

25 Forth sprang the impassioned queen her lord to
clasp :

Again that consummation she essayed :
But unsubstantial form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made
The phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
30 And re-assume his place before her sight.

“Protesilaus, lo ! thy guide is gone !
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice :
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne ;
Speak, and the floor thou tread’st on will rejoice.
35 Not to appal me have the Gods bestowed
This precious boon,—and blest a sad abode.”

“Great Jove, Laodamia ! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
40 But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain ;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

“Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
45 Should die ; but me the threat could not withhold :
A generous cause a victim did demand ;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain ;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

“Supreme of heroes—bravest, noblest, best !
50 Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
That then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore ;
Thou found’st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

- 55 " But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
 Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave ;
 And He, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
 That thou should'st cheat the malice of the grave :
 Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
- 60 As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.
- " No Spectre greets me—no vain shadow this ;
 Come, blooming hero, place thee by my side !
 Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
 To me, this day, a second time thy bride !"
- 65 Jove frowned in heaven : the conscious Parcæ
 threw
 Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.
- " This visage tells thee that my doom is past :
 Know, virtue were not virtue, if the joys
 Of sense were able to return as fast
- 70 And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
 Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains :
 Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.
- " Be taught, O faithful consort, to control
 Rebellious passion : for the gods approve
- 75 The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul ;
 A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
 Thy transports moderate ; and meekly mourn
 When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—"
- " Ah, wherefore ?—Did not Hercules by force
- 80 Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb
 Alcestis, a re-animated corse,
 Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom ?
 Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
 And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

85 "The gods to us are merciful—and they
 Yet further may relent : for mightier far
 Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
 Of magic potent over sun and star,
 Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
 90 And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's
 breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow—" "Peace" ! he said—
 She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered ;
 The ghastly colour from his lips had fled ;

95 In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
 Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
 Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel
 In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;
 100 No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
 The past unsighed for, and the future sure ;
 Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
 Revived, with finer harmony pursued ;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
 105 In happier beauty : more pellucid streams,
 An ampler ether, a diviner air,
 And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
 Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
 Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

110 Yet there the soul shall enter which hath earned
 That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
 "The end of man's existence I discerned,
 Who from ignoble games and revelry
 Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
 115 While tears were thy best pastime, day and night ;

“ And while my youthful peers before my eyes
 (Each hero following his peculiar bent)
 Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
 By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
 120 Chieftains and kings in counsel were detained ;
 What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

“ The wished-for wind was given :—I then revolved
 The oracle, upon the silent sea ;
 And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
 125 That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
 The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
 Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

“ Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
 When of thy loss I thought, beloved wife !
 130 On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
 And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
 The paths which we have trod—these fountains,
 flowers ;
 My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

“ But should suspense permit the foe to cry,
 135 ‘ Behold they tremble !—haughty their array
 Yet of their number no one dares to die’ ?
 In soul I swept the indignity away :
 Old frailties then recurred :—but lofty thought,
 In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

140 “ And thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
 In reason, in self-government too slow ;
 I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
 Our blest re-union in the shades below.
 The invisible world with thee hath sympathised ;
 145 Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend
 Towards a higher object.—Love was given,
 Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for this end ;
 For this the passion to excess was driven—
 150 That self might be annulled : her bondage prove
 The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”—

Aloud she shrieked ! for Hermes re-appears !
 Round the dear Shade she would have clung— 'tis
 vain

The hours are past—too brief had they been years—
 155 And him no mortal effort can detain :
 Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
 He through the portal takes his silent way,
 And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved !
 160 Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,
 Was in a trance of passion thus removed ;
 Delivered from the galling yoke of time
 And these frail elements—to gather flowers
 Of blisful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

165 Yet tears to human suffering are due ;
 And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
 Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
 As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
 Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)

170 A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
 From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
 And ever, when such stature they had gained
 That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
 The trees' tall summits withered at the sight :

175 A constant interchange of growth and blight !

Ode to Duty.

'Jam non consilio bonus, sed more eductus, ut non tantum rectè facere possim, sed nisi rectè facere non possim.'

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God !

O Duty ! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove ;

- 5 Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe ;
From vain temptations dost set free ;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye

- 10 Be on them ; who, in love and truth
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth :
Glad hearts ! without reproach or blot ;
Who do thy work, and know it not :

- 15 Long may the kindly impulse last !
And Thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand
fast !

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light, .

- 20 And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

- 25 I, loving freedom, and untried ;
 No sport of every random gust,
 Yet being to myself a guide,
 Too blindly have reposed my trust ;
 And oft, when in my heart was heard
 30 Thy timely mandate, I deferred
 The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
 But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.
 Through no disturbance of my soul,
 Or strong compunction in me wrought,
 35 I supplicate for thy control ;
 But in the quietness of thought :
 Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
 I feel the weight of chance-desires :
 My hopes no more must change their name,
 40 I long for a repose that ever is the same.
 Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face :
 45 Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
 And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
 And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee, are
 fresh and strong.
 To humbler functions, awful Power !
 50 I call thee : I myself commend
 Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
 Oh, let my weakness have an end !
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
 55 The confidence of reason give ;
 And in the light of truth thy bond man let me live

NOTES.

1. ODE TO DUTY.

“ Now I am good not from deliberation, but so impelled by habit, that I am not only able to act rightly, but also I am not able to act unless rightly.”

1. *stern*=steadfast; referring to the uncompromising nature of the demands of *duty*: *the Voice, etc.*; Wordsworth finely describes *Duty* as the off-spring* of ‘God’s Voice’ speaking to man; *i.e.*, of the *human conscience*, which is always spoken of as the ‘Voice of God.’ In his *Ode to Adversity*, Gray uses the expressions—‘Daughter of Jove, relentless power,’ and ‘Stern rugged Nurse.’

2. *duty*; here the *sense* of duty which man possesses is personified: *love* is *subjunctive* after *if*.

3. *a light, etc.*; these metaphors are Biblical echoes; in *Psalms* CXIX, 105, we read—“Thy word is a *lamp* unto my feet, and a *light* unto my path”, and in *Psalms*, LXXXIX, 23, “Then will I visit their transgression with a *rod*.”

4. *check*=restrain.

5. *who* givest victory over the fears that assail the human soul, and becomest the law, the rule, of its life.

7. *vain*=foolish, wicked.

8. *strife*=the struggle between good and evil in the soul of man; see *Romans* (New Testament), VII, 23.

9. *there are who*; this omission of the antecedent (*those*) before *who* is a *Latinism, i.e.*, an imitation of a Latin idiom:

ask, etc. = never need to trouble themselves with the reflection whether their acts are in accordance with thy demand: Cowper has the same thought in his *Task*, Bk. II, 788—793.

11. *misgiving* = distrust, doubt.

12. *genial* = kindly, sympathetic.

14. *who* unconsciously fulfil thy dictates.

15. *long*; such as Wordsworth is describing are *young* persons; and he therefore prays that this intuitive spring of action, *viz.*, the 'genial sense of youth' may continue with them even when their youth is passed; for this line Wordsworth had—'may joy be theirs while life shall last!'

16. *but*; another reading is *and*; the *but* implies the poet's doubt whether, 'the genial sense of youth' can be an effective substitute for 'the sense of duty': *totter* = be ready to fall, appear to fail: *fast* = firm; we have it in this sense in 'steadfast.' For lines 15 and 16, the early editions had—

'O! if through confidence misplaced

They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast."

17. *serene* = calmly happy; unbroken by the vexations of life.

18. *happy* = harmonious, serenely calm.

19. *love*; *i.e.*, universal *love*; love of our fellow men: *unerring* = infallible, never leading us astray.

21. *course, etc.* = life may live.

22. *even now* = even in this world: *not, etc.* = whom we cannot accuse of being unwise for their boldness. For ll. 21 and 22, another reading is;—

'And blest are they who in the main

This faith, even now, do entertain.'

23. *spirit* as distinguished from the *letter*; so we talk of the *spirit* of a *law* to distinguish it from a merely literal interpretation: *e.g.*, the rule that Christ gave his disciples.—"If

thy enemy smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also"—the *spirit* of this teaching is that we should not *resent injuries*; the *letter* is actually offering the other cheek to our enemy—which, of course, is simply ludicrous: *this creed*—that *love* is a sufficient law for men.

24. *yet, etc.*; another reading is—'yet find that or the strength'; *i.e.*, the sense of duty.

25. *loving, etc.*=not willing to be in bondage to the stern requirements of duty—loving to do my own will: *untried*=not subjected to any great temptations.

26. *no, etc.*; and, on the other hand, not merely tossed about by every wind of passion; *i.e.*, not yielding to every impulse of my passions.

27. *yet, etc.*=trusting to my own strength of will,

28. *too, etc.*=I have found that I have been often misled.

29. *oft, etc.*=many a time, when in opposition to my inclination thy monitions were whispered in my conscience, in time to save me from a bad act: *timely*=opportune.

30. *I, etc.*=I put aside the course of action suggested by thee as being too irksome, and chose the more pleasant course of yielding to my own inclinations.

31. *smoother*=less rugged; *i.e.*, easier (paths) of self-indulgence.

32. *would*=wish to: *serve*=obey: this idea of *servicing* duty is repeated in more forcible language in the last line of the poem: *may*; used etymologically, *can*.

33. *through*=on account of: *no* inward conflicts raging in my soul.

34. *compunction*,=remorse, grief, at the sense of *guilt*: *wrought*=worked, produced.

35. *for*; *supplicate* is usually a *transitive* verb.

37. *me* at the *beginning* of the sentence is *emphatic*: *unchartered*=unrestrained by law; a *charter* is at once a *privilege* and a *restraint*; see *As You Like It*, II, ii, 48.

38. *I, etc.* I now feel now how dangerous it is to trust to the will to control the passions—a sudden impulse often proves too strong for the mere will to resist: *chance*=occasional, accidental, unforeseen.

39. *my, etc.*=I must no longer base my hopes on a principle that is always changing.

40. *I* yearn to have that fixed calmness, serenity, which only a life regulated by duty can give.

41. *yet*; although thou art *stern*.

42. *the, etc.*=the gracious benignity of God himself.

44. *the smile, etc.*=thy *approval* of our conduct; the knowledge that we have *done our duty* is the highest joy man can know—hence, Nelson's last words were—"Thank God, I have *done my duty*."

45. *flowers, etc.*; *i.e.*, even outward nature appears more beautiful to one who has thy approval.

46. *fragrance, etc.*; for a similar thought see *Laodamia*, 34.

47. *thou, etc.*; even inanimate nature follows, in a lower sense, the law of duty: the stars and planets revolve in accordance with *their laws*.

48. *and* the Universe itself is preserved by obeying laws.

49. *humbler than preserving the stars, etc.*; I call thee now to help *me*; a poor insignificant mortal.

50. *myself* is *objective* governed by *commend*.

53. *made, etc.*=now humbled by the knowledge of my weakness, and so led to the wisdom of seeking thy aid: *lowly wise*; an *antithesis*; cp. *unwisely bold* in l. 22.

56. *in the, etc.*=with my intellect illuminated by Truth let me live thy *slave*; but not an *unwilling slave*; see l. 32.

2. LAODAMIA.

1. *with, etc.*, the ancient Greeks, like the ancient Hindus, believed that the performance of sacrifices and severe penances gave the *power* of demanding gifts from the Gods: so here, Laodamia by the *virtue* of her sacrifices demands from the gods that she might have the boon of seeing her husband again: *morn*, put for *sun*; sacrifices to the *Infernal* deities were offered between midnight and sunrise.

2. *slaughtered*; see l. 48: *lord*, husband: *required*=demanded (from the gods); 'asked back', literally; a *Latinism*.

3. *in, etc*; these phrases qualify *him* in the next line; 'now wandering in Hades, a place of darkness, and filled with mournful ghosts: *amid*=surrounded by: *shades*=the *souls* of the dead, which are mere shadowy spirits, not having a corporeal body: *forlorn*; literally, *deserted*, *lost*; here, *sad*; *Ot. E. for*, intensive prefix and *loren*, pp. of *leosan*, to lose.

4. *of*=from: *infernal, etc.* Pluto and his wife Proserpina: in the division of the world after Saturn was deposed, Jupiter took the upper regions and the earth, Neptune the sea, and Pluto the infernal regions.

5. *celestial, etc.*; having propitiated the 'infernal Gods', Laodamia now turns to the supreme deity of the upper sky.

6. *Jove*=Jupiter; this is, of course not quite accurate; Jove was a *Roman* God, and could not be invoked by a *Greek*; the proper name is *Zeus*.

7. *by, etc.*=her intense love for her husband filling her with strong faith; see *Galatians* (New Testament), V, 6.

8. *suppliant*=Laodamia; Latin *sub* and *plicare*, to bend; hence *submissive*, humbly entreating: *lifts, etc.*; among all nations. The *lifting* up of the hands is a gesture of *supplication*.

9. *like, etc.*, a fine simile: describing the disappearance of her *grief* by the working of her strong faith—she *made sure* that her request would be granted.

10. *her, etc.*, this outward change and *dilatation* is from Vergil.

12. *issue*=result, of her prayers.

13. *Oh, etc.*; this description of the change from *terror* (at the first sight of a *spirit*) to *joy* (when she *recognises* whose spirit it is) is very fine.

15. *hero*=Protesilaus: *slain, etc.*; see ll. 43 and following.

16. *his, etc.*=is it really her hero, in living, moving, corporeal, presence: *mould*=shape, body.

17. *if, etc.*=if it is not a mere optical illusion.

18. *winged*; Mercury wore sandals (*Talaria*) and a cap (*Petagus*) furnished with *wings*: *Mercury*, also is not accurate—he was a Roman God; the corresponding *Greek* deity was *Hermes*: it was one of the duties of this God to conduct the human soul from this world to Hades; and now that the gods have granted Laodamia's prayer, he does the *converse*, he conducts the 'shade' of Protesilaus from Hades back to earth.

19. *mild*; a kind of 'permanent epithet' to *Hermes*: *wand*; Mercury, as the *herald* of the gods carried a staff, called the *Oaduceus*; the effect of a touch of that wand is described in the text.

20. *grace*=favour (of Jove): *crowned*=completed.

21. *Laodamia*; the student should notice the proper pronunciation of this word—it is accented on the *second* and *fourth* syllables—the proper *Greek* spelling, is *Laodameia*: that is correlative after *such*.

22. *walks, etc.*=treads the surface of the earth; *i.e.*, is restored to the earth.

23. *space* is used with words denoting *duration of time*.

25. *impassioned*=excited by love: after *clasp* the fact that she failed is to be supplied—it is implied in *again*: *consummation*=perfect bliss—*viz*, clasping her husband in her arms: *essayed*=attempted, this is the original meaning of *essay*, both noun and verb.

27. *but* her husband's form being only a 'shade,' she could not *grasp* him.

29. *parts*=separates, splits: *but* the parts reunite again.

30. *re-assume* is *infinitive*, co-ordinate with *re-unite*.

31. *thy, etc.*=we are now quite alone.

32. *confirm, etc.*=let me be sure that it is really you by hearing you speak.

34. *speak* is the idiomatic *imperative* followed by *and*; if you speak, even the very floor you are standing on will be happy—(how much more I).

35. *appal*=terrify; literally to make *pale*. O. Fr. *palle*, *pale*.

36. *boon*=good gift, favour: *blest*=so made happy: *abode*=home.

38. *spectre*=ghost, apparition; literally something *seen*.

39. *scare*=frighten.

40. *fidelity* as a wife.

41. *and, etc.*; and Jove has granted this favour partly also as a reward of my own merits.

42. *for, etc.*; a 'house hold word'—one who acts virtuously 'in the scorn of consequence' is greatly rewarded.

43. *Delphic oracle*; the most celebrated of the ancient oracles was that of Apollo, at Delphi.

44. *the first, etc.*; the student is, of course, familiar with the *story* of the Trojan War—how the Greeks went against Troy to recover Helen, the wife of Menelaus, whom Paris, son of Priam, king of Troy, had taken away: *touched*=leapt down upon from the ships: *strand*=shore, beach.

45. *me, etc.*; see *Ode to Duty*, l. 37: *withhold*=hold back, restrain.

46. *generous cause*; the Greek chiefs went against Troy from feelings of *friendship* to Menelaus.

48. *self-devoted*=offered as a victim by one's own act, as in the case of *Curtius* in Roman legend: *Hector*, son of Priam—the bravest of the Trojans—he was slain by Achilles, the most famous of the Greek heroes.

50. *bewail*=lament, regret, (as having bereft me of thee); *i.e.*, now that you have put your deed in its proper light I no longer regret your daring, as it has made you a hero.

51. *that*=thy courage: *tens, etc.*, Greeks.

53. *and, etc.*=I am not angry with thee for preferring the glory of self-sacrifice to being with me: *here, etc.*; and one fruit of thy heroism is that Jove has permitted thee to come back to me.

54. *noble, etc.*=the generous impulse of your own heroic heart: *my poor heart*; my selfish love which would have counselled you to remain with me.

57. *He*=Jove.

58. *thou, etc.*=defeat the cruelty of death, by coming back to me.

59. *redundant*=flowing; literally used, Latin *redundare, undare*, to rise in waves; from *unda*, a wave: *locks* of hair.

60. *when, etc.*, a conceit; *i.e.*, a far-fetched figure, when your breathing it made the air of Thessaly precious.

65. *Jove, etc.*=Jove was displeased to hear Laodamia talk like this—it was too *gross*, too *sensuous*; Jove granted her prayer as a reward of the *virtue* shown by both husband and wife—and not for the gratification of the senses: *conscious*=ever watchful: *Parcæ*=the fates; in Greek mythology, three goddesses who decided the lot of every man. Their names were *Clotho* (who

held the distaff), Lachesis (who spun the thread of life), and Atropos (who cut the thread when the allotted span was ended)—they were also called *Moirae*: *threw*=caused to appear.

66. *roseate*=of the colour of the rose, ruddy: *a, etc.*=a livid, black colour; *Stygian* is the adj. from *Styx*, one of the rivers of Hades, the river of *Hate*, from Greek, *stygeo*, to hate.

67. *this, etc.*=can you not see from my face that my fate is fixed, my earthly life is over.

68. *were*=would (not) be.

69. *of sense*=which we derive from the gratification of the senses; *i.e.*, merely sensuous pleasures.

71. *duly*—in due time; *i.e.*, on earth, the pleasures of the senses gradually grow less and less, as old age advances. *Erebus, etc.*=but in Hades these sensuous pleasures are impossible: *Erebus*=(darkness) in Greek mythology the gloomy cavern underground through which the shades had to walk in their passage to Hades; here put generally for Hades: he is represented as the son of Chaos and Darkness and the husband of Night.

72. *there*=in Hades: *majestic, etc.*=pains, and punishments, and sufferings heroically endured—as by *Tantalus, Ixion, and Sisyphus*.

73. *be taught*=learn, know.

75. *the, etc.*=the figure here is taken from the *ocean*; when a storm rages, it is the *surface* of the water that is raised into waves—so the stress of *passion* is regarded as a storm raging in the soul—*calm* pleasures are the result of the *depth* of the soul—as in the proverb 'Still waters run deep.'

76. *a, etc.*; this line merely *explains* the previous thought—there must be *depth, i.e.*, *intensity* in love (as in other feelings), but not to such an extent as to make it uncontrollable by the reason.

77. *transports*=ecstasy.

78. *brief*; see l. 23: *sojourn* is here accented on the *second* syllable; since Wordsworth's time, the accent has shifted to the first; *temporary stay*, same root as *diurnal* and *journey*.

79. *wherefore* must thou return: *Hercules*, the Greek hero, and demi-god—the personification of strength—son of Jupiter and Alcmena: the allusion here is to his going down to Hades and bringing back Alcestis, the wife of Admetus: Alcestis was sister to Acastus (father of Laodamia); and so her story would have a *personal* interest to Laodamia.

80. *wrest*=pluck away by force: *the, etc.*=the grave, death: Hercules had to struggle with *death* before he could rescue Alcestis from Hades: by using the word 'monster' Wordsworth seems to be confusing *Death and Cerberus*.

81. *corse*; a poetical form of *corpse*.

82. *given, etc.*=permitted by the gods: *beauty's bloom*=in all the bloom of her beauty—another reading is 'vernal bloom.'

83. *Medea*; daughter of the king of Colchis—a great Sorceress—she fell in love with Jason when he visited Colchis to fetch the 'Golden Fleece'—and went away with him to Greece. There she renewed by her charms the youth of old Æson—Jason's father: the story of Medea also would have a *personal* interest to Laodamia, from the incident of her treacherously inducing the daughters of Pelias (Laodamia's aunts) to cut up and boil their aged father.

84. *peers*=equals.

85. *yet further*; i.e., allow you to stay with me much longer than three hours.

87. *strength, etc.*, refers to *Hercules*: *the sway, etc.*, refers to *Medea*.

88. *potent, powerful*: *over, etc.*; it was formerly believed that sorcerers had power over even the heavenly bodies.

89. *though, etc.*=though love is often subjected to pain which amounts to agony.

90. *his*=love's: *favourite, etc.*; love is most frequently seen to be strongest in weak woman: *breast*=heart: this line is one of the two *Alexandrines* in the Poem; the other is l. 157.

91. *but, etc.*; I cannot live here without you, if you go now, I shall die and my soul will follow yours close.

93. *ghastly, etc.*; see l. 66.

94. *mien*=face.

95. *Elysian*=heavenly: *Elysian* is the adj. from *Elysium*, the place in Greek mythology where the souls of the good were sent.

96. *pensive*=grave, without any unseemly mirth: *though* is used in deference to the vulgar notion that *happiness* cannot exist along with *pensiveness*.

97. *such, etc.*=the pure, hallowed love of souls, unalloyed by the gross *passions* of the body.

98. *worlds*=a region—i.e., Hades: *equable*=unvarying—not torn by extremes.

100. *unsighed for*=not sought to be recalled (as on earth): how often do we wish we could live the past over again.

101. *heroic, etc.*=the games, pastimes, and exercises of heroes: *in, etc.*; but these enjoyed with no bustle and conflict.

102. *finer than on earth*: for lines 101 and 102, the earlier editions have—

'Spake, as a witness, of a second birth.
For all that is most perfect upon earth.'

103. *all*=every thing that is beautiful on earth, not human beings only—he enumerates them—*viz.*, rivers, air, landscapes.

104. *pellucid*=transparent; Latin *per*, **lucidus*, capable of sending light through.

105. *ampler*=broader, wider, more extensive: *ether* put here for firmament, the 'blue *ethereal* sky': this *enlargement* in Hades of earthly nature is from Vergil.

106. *invested*; literally used, *covered*: *purpureal*; a fuller form of *purple*.

107. *climes*=regions; *who, etc.*=whose light is the brightest which can be had on earth: *is, etc.*; the Elysian fields are so *bright* that even the light of the sun would be dim in comparison.

109. *yet*=though it is such a bright and beautiful place.

110. *virtue*=being virtuous: *ill*=badly, not rightly.

112. *from, etc.*=in taking part in.

113. *draw*=derive, get: *when, etc.*=after I left you; i.e., on our voyage to Troy; when we were encamped at Aulis waiting for a favourable wind: *delight* is objective governed by *draw*.

114. *while, etc.*=while you were spending your days and nights in sorrow at my absence.

115. *youthful peers*; see l. 84.

116. *each, etc*; Protesilaus is thinking of the different dispositions of such men as Agamemnon, Ajax, Ulysses, Achilles: *bent*=inclination of the mind, or disposition.

117. *glorious, etc.*=the war with the Trojans.

120. *what time*; an old expression for 'at that time in which' (=when): *fleet*; the Greek fleet which was carrying the Greeks to Troy: *Aulis*, a district in Bœotia, on the Ægean sea, where the Greek fleet assembled, and where it was long detained, as the Gods would not grant a favourable wind, Agamemnon having offended Artemis—to appease the goddess Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia.

121. *given by the gods*: *revolved*=thought about, meditated on.

123. *worthier* chief than I.

125. *prow*; the forepart of a ship; Latin *prora*; here put for *ship*.

126. *tinged*=coloured, stained: *sand*=shore.

133. *suspense*=hesitation on our part; of course, every Greek knew the oracle: *permit*=give cause to: *the foe*=the Trojans: *cry*=exclaim (in contempt).

134. *tremble*=are afraid: *haughty, etc.*=though they have a very proud and warlike appearance.

136. *in soul*=in my inmost heart: *the, etc.*=the taunt; resolving that *I* would not let the enemy despise us.

137. *old, etc.*; then again the memories of our love and of my work came into my thoughts, weakening my resolve; *lofty, etc.*=the sublime resolution.

138. *in, etc.*=carried out in deed: *my, etc.*=brought to my release from this world and its 'frailties.'

139. *weak* in 'lofty thought', in noble aspirations.

141. *seek*=to bring about, accomplish (by acting so as to deserve it).

143. *invisible, etc.*; both the 'infernal' and the 'celestial' Gods: *sympathised*; by giving me back to thee even though it be for a brief space.

144. *be, etc.*=let their grace and sympathy purify your passions and raise your thoughts to noble ends.

145. *learn, etc.*=learn from this disappointment in a merely earthly love, that earthly ties are transient; and that the permanent joys are the joys of the other world.

147. *this end, viz.*, to teach us to place our affections, not on earthly objects and for the earth, but on 'higher objects,' and so to destroy in us that selfishness which mars all the good on the earth.

149. *annulled*=destroyed, annihilated: *her, etc.*=the slavish love of self turns out only the chains in which we are bound—and the pleasure which the gratification of our selfish passions gives us, after all is as transient as a dream—and it is the very opposite of true love, for in true love there is no selfishness.

151. *Hermes reappears* to conduct Protesilaus back to Hades.

153. *had, etc.*=even if the three hours had been three years.

154. *mortal effort* = effort that a mortal can make.

157. *and, etc.*; Laodamia dies of a broken heart; she fulfils what she promised; see l. 91.

158. *judge, etc.* = do not blame her too harshly (for being too sensual); it was her great love that moved her.

160. *in, etc.* = while in a transport of grief.

161. *galling* = harrassing.

162. *these, etc.* = the transient events of this world.

The reading given is what Wordsworth *originally* wrote.

In the later edition he substituted the following:—

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reprov'd,
 She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
 By the just gods whom no weak pity mov'd,
 Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
 Apart from happy ghosts, that gather flowers
 Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

His own criticism is:—"As at first written, the heroine was dismissed to happiness in Elysium. To what purpose then the mission of Protesilaus? He exhorts her to moderate her passion; the exhortation is fruitless, and no punishment follows. So it stood: at present she is placed among unhappy ghosts for disregard of the exhortation. Vergil also places her there." However, I venture to think, most people would prefer the original lines.

164. *yet, etc.*; though we should restrain our grief (for the departed) by reflecting that they are far happier than when here, yet it is only natural that we should be sorry at the sight of human suffering.

166. *and not, etc.*; there are other beings in the universe and in nature who sympathise also.

167. *fondly* = foolishly.

168. *Hellespont* (now called the Dardanelles), means 'the sea of Helle'; and was so called from Helle, the sister of Phryxos. She was fleeing with her brother through the air to

Colchis, on the golden ram to escape from Ino, her mother-in-law, but turning giddy, she fell into the sea and was drowned: *such, etc.*—that was the popular superstitious belief.

169. *knot*—clump; put here for *two*; the trees being the earthly life of Protesilaus and Laodamia; *spiry*—tall: Pliny in his *Natural History* gravely records this belief!

170. *for whom*—for the loss of whom.

171. *ever*—always: *stature*—height; we restrict the word *stature* to the height of *human beings*: *gained*—attained.

172. *Ilium's Walls*—the walls of Troy; *Ilium* or *Ilion* was another name for Troy; as in the name of Homer's poem the *Iliad*: *were, etc.*—could be seen from their top.

173. *withered, etc.*; because it was *Troy* that was the cause of Protesilaus' death!

174. *a, etc.*; then the trees began to grow again, and then withered again, and so on: *interchange*—alternation: *blight*—withering; literally, blasting by lightning.

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