WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CITY

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PREFACE

Much has been said of Wordsworth's love of the country and his philosophy concerning nature and man. It is the purpose of this study to discover his attitude toward the city. Cambridge, London, Paris, Rome, and Calais are typical cities for this discussion.

The problem to be undertaken consists in finding why Wordsworth preferred the country to the city; his impressions of the city as found in his works; how much the city influenced him; to what extent his early life and his training influenced his attitude toward the city; if his attitude developed or altered during his life; and if his attitude was a product of his predecessors or his contemporaries.

To find the solution of this problem the following plan has been adopted. First, a background consisting of a brief review of Wordsworth's life and philosophy of man and nature, a survey of pre-Wordsworthian attitudes to the city, and an examination of the attitudes of some of his contemporaries toward the city are offered. Second, the thesis proper is divided into two sections: namely, "Attitude of the Younger Wordsworth," and "Attitude of the Later Wordsworth." Most of the material for these last two chapters is taken from Wordsworth's own works arranged chronologically.

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CHAPTER I -- INTRODUCTION

To understand Wordsworth's attitude toward the city one needs to know something about his attitude toward the country and his philosophy of natural man and of nature.

The starting point in Wordsworth's philosophy is his conviction of the innate goodness of man. This, however, is not an original philosophy. The late eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century was permeated with the doctrine of Rousseau, and Wordsworth shows that he had thoroughly absorbed that doctrine. Of Rousseau's philosophy of the innate goodness of man, Hoxie Neale Fairchild says,

> Rousseau taught that the human heart contains a seed of pure goodness, and if we live in the sight of nature that seed will bear fruit. It is in shutting ourselves off from the influence of nature that we go astray and fail to fulfill our destiny. [1]

Wordsworth and Rousseau both believe that man by nature is good and that training makes him bad. This influence of Rousseau does not manifest itself in any particular portion of Wordsworth's work or at any special period of his life but pervades his entire work.[2] Like Rousseau he believes in the child's innate moral excellence and in the dangers that attend the continual interference of man, but Rousseau distrusts the child and surrounds him with a

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1. Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Romantic Quest, New York: Columbia University Press, 1931, p. 98.

2. Emile Legouis, Early Life of William Wordsworth, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1932, p. 57.

network of precautions. He protects him from the evil influence of mankind and attempts to place him in a utopia.[1]

Wordsworth does not share these fears of Rousseau. To him the child's excellence is more real and sturdy. Wordsworth contends that if the child lives in an artificial paradise, there will be no room for natural development. He desires to see no better type of school boy than that to which he himself and his companions at Hawkshead belonged.

> A race of real children; not too wise,
> Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,
> And bandied up and down by love and hate;
> Not resentful where self-justified;
> Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;
> Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds;
> Though doing wrong and suffering, and full oft
> Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight
> Of pain, and doubt, and fear, yet yielding not [2]
> In happiness to the happiest upon earth.

No single belief of Wordsworth comes nearer being a lasting passion with him than this firm conviction of the innate excellence of childhood. In the 1804 text of "The Prelude," Book V, the author says,

> Our childhood sits
> Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne
> That hath more power than all the elements.
> I guess not what this tells of Being Past,
> Nor what it augurs of the life to come; [3]
> But so it is.

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1. Ibid., pp. 57, 58.

2. William Wordsworth, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1904. "The Prelude," Book V., lines 411-420.

3. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book V., lines 507-512.

The little child is glorious in all its "heaven born freedom,"[1] but this heavenly perfection is fleeting; for the years will bring the "inevitable yoke."[2] The delights of childhood vanish and the world seeks to claim the individual for its own until he is no longer aware of his glorious birth.

> Heaven lies about us in our infancy;
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing Boy,
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy:
> . . .
> At length the man perceives it die away [3]
> And fade into the light of common day.

Arrived at man's estate, he never entirely loses sight, however of

> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain--light of all our day,
> Are yet a master--light of all our seeing;
> Uphold us, cherish, and have the power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the Eternal Silence; truths that wake,
> To perish never; [4]

To Wordsworth the child not only was good but was an uplifting, ennobling influence on its own future life.

He again expressed his belief in the natural goodness of man by speaking of

> his noble nature, as it is
> The gift which God has placed within his power,

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1. Ibid., "Ode On Intimations of Immortality," line 123.
2. Ibid., line 125.
3. Ibid., lines 66-76.
4. Ibid., lines 150-157.

> His blind desires and steady faculties
> Capable of clear truth, the one to break
> Bondage, the other to build liberty
> On firm foundations, making social life,
> Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,
> As just in regulation, and as pure [1]
> As individual in the wise and good.

The development of this gift from God involves Wordsworth's other philosophy. Wordsworth believed that this divine element in the individual is kept alive through communion with nature. Although he believed that truth is within man as a natural power, yet he felt that it operates only when man is within touch of something which draws out that truth. To him nature was that something.

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man
> Of moral evil and of good [2]
> Than all the sages can.

The teaching of nature can go much deeper than instructions received from human beings; hence the poet tells of the herdsman on the lonely mountains who had easily learned

> To reverence the volume that displays
> The mystery, the life which cannot die;
> But in all the mountains did he feel his faith,
> All things, responsive to the writings, there
> Breathed immortality, revolving life, [3]
> And greatness still revolving;

Here where low thoughts had no place, the herdsman believed not;

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1. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book IX, lines 355-363.
2. Ibid., "The Tables Turned," lines 21-24.
3. Ibid., "The Excursion," Book I, lines 224-229.

he "saw." Thus the herdsman learned,

> Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
> And whence they flowed: And from them he
> acquired
> Wisdom, which works through Patience;
> thence he learned
> In oft-recurring hours of sober thought [1]
> To look on Nature with a humble heart.

The inspiration of love and religion may also be secured from nature. The Wanderer, through communion with nature, received a religion which seemed, "Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the wood."[2] Nature also taught him to feel so intensely that he received the deep lesson of love which nature teaches,

> And surely never did there live on earth
> A man of kindlier nature. The rough spots
> And teasing ways of children vexed him not;
> Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
> Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
> To his fraternal sympathy addressed, [3]
> Obtain reluctant hearing.

In "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth expresses the idea that nature may lead man to a love for and an understanding of humanity,

> For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth, but hearing often-times
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. [4]

Another theory on which Wordsworth's philosophy is based is that reverie is the starting point for all intellectual and moral

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1. Ibid., Book I, lines 237-241.
2. Ibid., Book I, lines 409,410.
3. Ibid., Book I, lines 414-420.
4. Ibid., "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," lines 87-92.

improvement. This is emphasized in "Expostulation and Reply" when Matthew reproaches the poet for his neglect of book learning, while he sits on "that old grey stone," and the poet replies,

> The eye—it cannot choose but see;
> We cannot bid the ear be still;
> Our bodies feel where'er they be,
> Against or with our will.
>
> Nor less I deem that there are Powers
> Which of themselves our minds impress;
> That we can feed this mind of ours
> In a wise passiveness.
>
> Think you 'mid all this mighty sum
> Of things forever speaking,
> That nothing of itself will come, [1]
> But we must still be seeking.

In "The Tables Turned" the idea of sensation as a basis of learning is again expressed, and nature is designated as the best source of sensational stimuli.

> Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife;
> Come, hear the woodland linnet,
> How sweet his music! on my life
> There's more of wisdom in it.
>
> And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
> He, too, is no mean preacher;
> Come forth into the light of things, [2]
> Let nature be your teacher.

Wordsworth really compounds a mind out of the senses, rather than informs the senses from the mind. He shows in "The Prelude" and in the nature poems of 1798 "how the beautiful and noble aspects of nature become associated in one's mind with aesthetic and moral ideas," [3]

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1. Ibid., "Expostulation and Reply," lines 17-28.
2. Ibid., "Tables Turned," lines 9-16.
3. J. W. Beach, The Concepts of Nature in the Nineteenth Century, New York: Columbia University Press, 1936, p. 128.

well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul 1
Of all my moral being.

Wordsworth further believes that a knowledge of nature is an essential part of the education of each individual and that this knowledge is gained through association with men in the humble walks.

In "The Prelude" Wordsworth places emphasis upon the fact that it was nature that first led him to

Love for the human creature's absolute self,
That noticeable kindliness of heart
Sprang out of fountains, there abounding most,
Where sovereign Nature dictated the tasks
And occupations which her beauty adorned, 2
And Shepherds were the men that pleased me first.

In the works of many romantic writers one finds a strong sympathy for all sorts of simple rural folk, and one will often justly infer that these lonely ones are lofty because they are close to that light of nature from which the learned and sophisticated have turned away.[3]

No doubt Wordsworth's attitude toward the peasantry is influenced by Rousseau's conception of natural man and by the "noble savage" tradition.

> The noble savage is interesting in that he does, at various times and in the hands of various writers provide a vehicle for many romantic ideas. He can illustrate what a blessing it is to be ignorant of bewildering books; to

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1. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," lines 107-111.

2. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book VIII, lines 123-128.

3. Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Noble Savage, New York: Columbia Press, 1928, p. 162.

> what a high level, since his native equipment is so promising, a man may develop; the natural goodness of man and the badness of civilization which, despite his natural goods, he somehow managed to create; the stupidity of building cities when the woods are so much better; the superiority of feeling to thinking; the possibility of finding God in Nature; the benefits and pleasures of unsophisticated love, and other things of the same general kind. [1]

> Whether the Lake Country shepherd admired by Wordsworth can be spoken of as noble even in a figurative sense is doubtful. One may at least say that the noble savage and the noble peasant are similarly motivated. Both reflect a revulsion of what man has made of man. Both preach the gospel of nature worship, innocent simplicity and anti-intellectualism. They are related also in that Wordsworth's conception of the shepherd is influenced by Rousseau's conception of natural man, which in turn owes something to the noble savage tradition. [2]

Wordsworth believes that the Lake County shepherds are on the whole the happiest and best of men. Although by no means perfect, they are the least corrupted people he knows. He tells us in the Preface to Lyrical Ballads that he chose to write of humble and rustic life,

> 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 plain 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. [3]

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1. Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Romantic Quest, p. 149.

2. Ibid., pp. 152,153.

3. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "Preface to Lyrical Ballads," p. 791.

He also tells us that he preferred "incidents and situations from common life"[1] as the subject matter of poetry.

Wordsworth's early life had much to do with his preference for nature and rustic life and was probably the greatest factor in the formation of his philosophy of man's innate goodness, and of nature as a teacher.

He was born April 7, 1770, at Cockermouth, a small market town situated on the northern border of the mountainous region known as the Lake District. The Wordsworth children were left much to themselves and roamed freely in a small world filled with natural pleasures. William tells us that the bright blue river was a tempting playmate, and says:

> Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,
> In a small mill-race severed from his stream,
> Made one long bathing of a summer's day,
> Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again
> Alternate, all a summer's day. [2]

His mother died in March, 1778, and William was sent to Hawkshead, where he attended a free grammar school. His schoolmates were drawn from a wide range of society; some of these were: sons of country clergymen, villagers, small farmers and the professional and business men of north-country towns. These boys lived thriftily and on a plane of equality, lodging and boarding with Hawkshead families, of whose home life they made a part.

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1. Ibid., p. 791.
2. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book I, lines 286-290.

Anne Tyson was the name of the kindly old woman with whom Wordsworth lived, and of whom he writes:

> The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew
> Upon thy grave, good creature! While my heart
> Can beat never will I forget thy name. [1]

After school hours the boys ranged "the open heights, where wood cocks run along the smooth green turf," [2] "snaring birds" after dark and hunting their eggs by day, "shouldering the naked crag." [3] Often they played late into the "soft starry nights," [4] near the stone where an old dame "watched her table with its huckster's wares." [5]

> From week to week, from month to month, we lived
> A round of tumult. Duly were our games
> Prolonged in summer till the daylight failed;
> No chair remained before the doors; the bench
> And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep
> The labourer, and the old man who had sate
> A late lingerer; yet the revelry
> Continued and the loud uproar; at last,
> When all the ground was dark, and twinkling stars
> Edged the black clouds, home and to bed we went, [6]
> Feverish with weary joints and beating minds.

"All the green summer," [7] they fished "by rocks and pools shut out from every star." [8] From hill-tops on sunny afternoons they flew paper kites "high among fleecy clouds." [9]

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1. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book IV, lines 30-32.
2. Ibid., Book I, lines 311-312.
3. Ibid., Book I, line 335.
4. Ibid., Book II, line 43.
5. Ibid., Book II, line 45.
6. Ibid., Book II, lines 8-18.
7. Ibid., Book I, line 489.
8. Ibid., Book I, line 488.
9. Ibid., Book I, line 494.

In the first book of "The Excursion" Wordsworth tells how a boy, supposedly the Wanderer but in reality Wordsworth himself, through communion with nature from his sixth year had the foundation of his mind laid. In the summer he tended the cattle upon the hills, and in the winter while returning in solitude from school upon the "mountain's dreary ledge" saw the darkness grow and the stars come out. Thus he had

> Perceived the presence and the power
> Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
> So vividly great objects that they lay
> Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
> Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
> A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
> With these impressions would he still compare
> All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
> And being still unsatisfied with aught
> Of dimmer character, he thence attained
> An active power to fasten images
> Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
> Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
> The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
> While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
> Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
> On all things which the moving seasons brought [1]
> To feel such appetite.

Looking back some fifteen years after he left Hawkshead School, he has told us how even his earliest boyhood was haunted by nature like a passion.

> The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite, a feeling and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, nor any interest [2]
> Unborrowed from the eye.

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1. Ibid., "The Excursion," Book I, lines 135-152.

2. Ibid., "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," lines 76-83.

At an early age he had learned to think of Nature as a source of love and as a guide, and believed that it exercised a moralizing influence over him.

> Ere I had told
> Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
> Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
> The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy
> With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
> To range the open heights where woodcocks run
> Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night
> Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
> That anxious visitation; -- moon and stars
> Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
> And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
> That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
> In these night-wanderings, that a strong desire
> O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
> Which was the captive of another's toil
> Became my prey; and when the deed was done
> I heard among the solitary hills
> Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
> Of indistinguishable motion, steps [1]
> Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Wordsworth's belief that nature exercised a moralizing influence is again expressed in the example of his act of stealth in taking the boat which was tied within "a rocky cove." He pushed from the shore and rowed with his view fixed

> Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
> The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
> Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.
> She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
> I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
> And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
> Went heaving through the water like a swan;
> When, from behind the craggy steep till then
> The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
> As if with voluntary power instinct,
> Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
> And growing still in stature the grim shape
> Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
> For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
> And measured motion like a living thing, [2]
> Strode after me.

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1. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book I, lines 306-325.
2. Ibid., Book I, lines 370-385.

With trembling oars he rowed the boat back to "the covert of the willow tree," and went home in "serious mood," but after that for many days his brain was disturbed by "huge and mighty forms" that were a trouble to his dreams.

At the close of his first year of school at Cambridge, Wordsworth returned to Hawkshead, unable to resist the attraction of the village in which he had spent the happiest days of his boyhood and there rejoiced to lodge again beneath the lowly roof of the kind old friendly dame with whom he had lived. It was during this vacation, after a night spent in dancing, gaiety, and mirth with his old school mates at a farmhouse among the hills, that he was baptized with the fire of poetry and realized that he was set apart for holy services.

Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld--in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn--
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields,
Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
Were then made for me, bond unknown to me
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked [1]
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.

Wordsworth again expresses the idea that nature had taught him to be a poet when he says,

Possessions have I that are solely mine,
Something within which yet is shared by none,

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1. Ibid., Book IV, lines 323-338.

> Not even the nearest to me and most dear,
> Something which power and effort may impart;
> I would impart it, I would spread it wide.[1]

According to Legouis, it was his mission to tell men the great truths of life and to help them see the beauties of the universe and of the human heart.[2]

To him the teachings of nature were truer than those of books. All might be taught by nature,

> Yea, in those wanderings deeply did I feel
> How we mislead each other; above all,
> How books mislead us, seeking their reward
> From judgments of the wealthy few, who see
> By artificial lights.[3]

In the last book of "The Prelude," when he is summing up the source of the poet's inspiration, he says,

> Of books how much! and even of the wealth
> That is collected among woods and fields,
> Far more;[4]

Wordsworth's whole attitude toward nature is well expressed in the closing words of his great Ode.

> Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
> Thanks to its tenderness; its joys and fears,
> To me the meanest flower that blows can give,
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.[5]

This survey of Wordsworth's nature philosophy gives one a view of the poet himself, but something of his environment must also be known to prepare fully for a study of his attitude toward the city. This calls for an investigation of the prevalent atti-

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1. Ibid., "The Recluse," lines 686-690.
2. Emile Legouis, Op. cit., p. 471.
3. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "The Prelude," Book VIII, lines 206-210.
4. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book XIII, lines 313-315.
5. Ibid., "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," lines 200-203.

tude before and during Wordsworth's lifetime. The reader will recall that there is a sharp contrast between the romanticists of whom Wordsworth was a member and the classicists who preceded his era. Following are the outstanding impressions of the city upon some of Wordsworth's predecessors.

Beginning with Addison who lived during the neo-classic period, one finds that he loved the city and gave expression in The Spectator to feelings of patriotic pride aroused in him by the sight of the city.

> There is no place in the Town which I so much love to frequent as the Royal Exchange. It gives me a secret Satisfaction, and, in some measure, gratifies my Vanity, as I am an Englishman, to see so rich an assembly of my Countrymen and Foreigners consulting together upon the private Business of Mankind, and making this Metropolis a kind of Emporium for the whole Earth. [1]

He says that "this grand Scene of Business" gives him an "infinite variety of solid and substantial Entertainments."[2]

Addison expresses his love for the multitude by saying:

> As I am a great Lover of Mankind, my Heart naturally overflows with pleasure at the sight of a prosperous and happy Multitude, insomuch that at many publick Solemnities I cannot forbear expressing my Joy with Tears that have stolen down my Cheeks. [3]

Addison enjoyed all phases of London life. He says,

> I have passed my latter years in this City, where I am frequently seen in most publick places. . . .There is no place of general Resort, wherein I do not often make my appearance. . . . In short, wherever I see a Cluster of People I always mix with them. [4]

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1. Gregory G. Smith, editor, Addison and Steele's The Spectator, Volumes I-IV. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1909, "The Spectator," No. 69.
2. Ibid., "The Spectator," No. 69.
3. Ibid., "The Spectator," No. 69.
4. Ibid., "The Spectator," No. 1, Thursday, March 1, 1711.

The "Opera,"[1] "Westminster Abbey,"[2] "theatres,"[3] "Clubs of London,"[4] and the "Art Gallery"[5] are a few of the phases of London life discussed by Addison.

Addison, after telling of a month spent in the country, tells why he prefers the city to the country.

> My greatest Difficulty in the Country is to find sport, and in Town to chuse it. . . . It is indeed high time for me to leave the Country, since I find the whole neighborhood begin to grow very inquisitive after my Name and Character: My Love of Solitude, Taciturnity, and particular way of Life, having raised a great Curiosity in all these Parts. . . . For these and other reasons I shall set out for London toMorrow, having found by Experience that the Country is not a place for a person of my Temper. . . . I shall therefore retire into the Town, if I can make use of that phrase, and get into the Crowd again as fast as I can, in order to be done.[6]

John Gay, an eighteenth century poet, in his poem "Trivia or The Art of Walking in the Streets of London," gives a picture of London outdoor life in the eighteenth centure. This was one of a series of invectives against London. In Book I he discusses proper instruments, such as shoes, coats, canes, and pattens for walking the streets of London, and also, discusses the signs of the weather. In Book II he tells of walking the streets by day. He tells to whom to refuse the wall, to whom to give the wall, and of whom to enquire the way. He discusses the narrow streets and happiness and unhappiness of walkers. In Book III he pictures

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1. Ibid., No. 5, Tuesday, March 6, 1711.
2. Ibid., No. 26, Friday, March 30, 1711.
3. Ibid., No. 31, Thursday, April 5, 1711.
4. Ibid., No. 9, Saturday, March 10, 1711.
5. Ibid., No. 83, Tuesday, June 5, 1711.
6. Ibid., No. 131, Tuesday, July 31, 1711.

the dangers and unpleasantness of walking the streets by night.

> Here dives the skulking thief, with practiced sleight,
> And unfelt fingers make thy pocket light
> Where's now thy watch, with all its trinkets, flown?
> And thy late snuff-box is no more thy own. [1]

However, at the close of Book III, he discusses the happiness of the people of London and says,

> Here tyranny ne'er lifts her purple hand,
> But liberty and justice guard the land. [2]

In another of his poems, "Rural Sports," Gay shows a dislike for cities and mentions some unpleasant things of city life. He says,

> You, who the sweets of rural life have known,
> Despise th' ungrateful hurry of the town;
> In Windsor groves your easy hour employ
> And, undisturbed, yourself and Muse enjoy.
> . . .
> But I, who ne'er was blessed by Fortune's hand,
> Nor brightened plough-shares in paternal land,
> Long in the noisy town have been immured,
> Respired its smoke, and all its cares endured,
> Where news and politics divide mankind,
> And schemes of state involve the uneasy mind. [3]

Gay pictures some of the more unpleasant aspects of the city, yet he points out the happiness, liberty, and justice enjoyed by London's citizens. Gay very definitely disliked the city because of its turmoil, cares, and noise and chose the peace of the country.

Samuel Johnson spent almost the whole of his life in London. Boswell, his biographer says, "he would have thought of himself as an exile in any other place, particularly if residing in the

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1. John Gay, Poetical Works of John Gay, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902. "Trivia," Book III, lines 59-62.

2. Ibid., Book III, lines 149-150.

3. Ibid., "Rural Sports," lines 1-14.

country."[1] Johnson's love of London life was very great, and he is represented by Boswell as constantly singing the praises of it. Once in talking to Boswell of London life, he said,

> The happiness of London is not to be conceived but by those who have been in it. I will venture to say, there is more learning andscience within the circumference of ten miles from where we now sit, than in all the rest of the kingdom.[2]

In 1770 Boswell writes,

> Johnson was much attached to London: he observed, that a man stored his mind better there, than anywhere else. No place (he said) cured a man's vanity or arrogance so well as London; for as no man was either great or good per se, but as compared with others not so good or great, he was sure to find in the metropolis many his equals, and some his superiors. He observed, that a man in London was in less danger of falling in love indiscreetely, than anywhere else; for there the difficulty of deciding between the conflicting pretensions of a vast variety of objects, kept him safe. He told me, that he had frequently been offered country preferment, if he would consent to take orders; but he could not leave the improved society of the capital.[3]

Once when Boswell expressed a desire to reside in London, yet wondered if he might grow tired of it, Johnson replied, "Why, Sir, you find no man, at all intellectual who is willing to leave London. No, sir, when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there in in London all that life can afford."[4]

Johnson's love of the city continually appears. In a letter to Dr. Brocklesby written October 25,1784, he says,

> I am not afraid either of a journey to London, or a residence in it. In the smoky atmosphere I was delivered

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1. Charles G. Osgood, editor, Boswell's Life of Johnson, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, 1756: Aetat. 47, p. 78.
2. Ibid., 1769: Aetat. 60, p. 160.
3. Ibid., 1770: Aetat. 61, p. 178.
4. Ibid., 1777: Aetat. 68, p. 341.

> from the dropsy, which I consider as the original and radical disease. The town is my element; there are my friends, there are my books, to which I have not yet bid farewell, and there are my amusements. [1]

Until the very end of Johnson's life, he preferred to live in the city. Boswell says,

> And such was his love of London, so high a relish had he of its magnificent extent, and variety of intellectual entertainment, that he languished when absent from it, his mind having become quite luxurious from the long habit of enjoying the metropolis; [2]

Johnson recognized the immensity of London and perceived also what constituted the true majesty of it. In talking to Boswell he said:

> Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the unnumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists. [3]

Johnson defended the hospitality of London. Once when someone remarked that there was little hospitality in London, he replied, "Nay, Sir, any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing, will be very generally invited to London." [4]

Johnson found much in London life to please him. In 1776 he remarked to Boswell:

> It is wonderful, Sir, what is to be found in London. The most literary conversation that I ever enjoyed, was at

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1. Ibid., 1784: Aetat. 75, p. 544.
2. Ibid., 1789: Aetat. 67, p. 547.
3. Ibid., 1760: Aetat. 51, p. 85.
4. Ibid., 1773: Aetat. 64, p. 204.

> the table of Jack Ellis, a money-scrivener behind the Royal Exchange, with whom I at one period used to dine generally once a week.[1]

In 1778 Johnson said, "A great city is, to be sure, a school for studying life."[2]

As a poet, the only thing Johnson wrote concerning the town he loved was "Satire on London," and this was composed soon after he came to live there. Legouis says,

> Johnson is the most pronounced type of the eighteenth century poets, who were for the most part inveterate townspeople, and would not have exchanged the shape of Fleet Street for all the delights of Arcadia. Faithful, nevertheless, to classical tradition, they held themselves bound to celebrate the charms of the country and to heap execrations upon city life. . . . Poetic tradition had required that he should attack what was dear to him, and to extol that for which he cared nothing.[3]

Boswell's love of London was almost as great as Johnson's. Boswell, in telling of a conversation he and Johnson once had while walking in Greenwich Park, says,

> He asked me, I suppose by way of trying my disposition, "Is not this very fine?" Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of nature, and being more delighted with "the busy hum of men ," I answered, "Yes, Sir; but not equal to Fleet Street."[4]

In another conversation with Johnson, Boswell mentions his love of London. He says,

> I complained to him that my love of London and of his company was such, that I shrunk almost from the thought

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1. Ibid., 1776: Aetat. 67, p. 293.
2. Ibid., 1778: Aetat. 69, p. 366.
3. Legouis, Op. cit., pp. 168, 169.
4. Osgood, Op. cit., p. 126.

of going away, even to travel, which is generally so much desired by young men. [1]

Boswell again mentions his love of London by saying,

> I enjoyed the luxury of our approach to London, that metropolis which we both love so much, for the high and varied intellectual pleasure which it furnishes. [2]

At another time Boswell says,

> I had long complained to him that I felt myself discontented in Scotland, as too narrow a sphere, and that I wished to make my chief residence in London, the great scene of ambition, instruction and amusement: a scene, which was to me, comparatively speaking, a heaven upon earth. [3]

London was inspiring and helpful to Boswell, who says,

> I own, Sir, the spirits which I have in London made me do everything with more readiness and vigor. I can talk twice as much in London as anywhere else. [4]

Smollett, in his novel Humphrey Clinker, makes the various members of the Bramble family describe in turn the feelings aroused in them by visits to Bath and London. Matthew Bramble is incensed at finding London changed into "an overgrown monster, which like a dropsical head, will in time leave the body and extremities without nourishment and support." [5] He sneers at the absurd extreme to which luxury is carried, and of the amusements of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, popular resorts of the fashionable world.

> One half of the company are following at the other's tails, in an eternal circle; like so many blind asses in

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1. Ibid., p. 126.
2. Ibid., 1776: Aetat. 67, p. 287.
3. Ibid., 1777: Aetat. 68, p. 341.
4. Ibid., 1778: Aetat. 69, p. 365.
5. Tobias Smollett, The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker, New York: The Century Company, 1904, letter of May 29, p. 103.

> an olive-mill, where they can neither discourse, distinguish, nor be distinguished; while the other half are drinking hot water, under the denomination of tea, till nine or ten o'clock at night to keep them awake for the rest of the evening. [1]

He is unhappy and bewildered by the perpetual hubbub of London and in describing his life there says,

> I am pent up in frowzy lodgings, where there is not room enough to swing a cat. . . . I go to bed after midnight, jaded and restless from the dissipations of the day--I start every hour from my sleep, at the horrid noise of watchmen bawling the hour through every street. . . . If I would drink water I must quaff the maukish contents of an open aqueduct, exposed to all manner of defilement; or swallow that which comes from the river Thames, impregnated with all the filth of London and Westminster. . . . My letter would swell into a treatise were I to particularize every cause of offence that fills up the measure of my aversion to this, and every other crowded city. [2]

Matthew's niece, Lydia Melford, finds Bath to be "an earthly paradise." [3] She is dazzled by the splendors of London and intoxicated by the crowds of people that swarm in the streets. She exclaims in her enthusiasm that all one reads

> wealth and grandeur in the Arabian Nights Entertainment, and the Persian Tales, concerning Bagdad, Diarbekir, Damascus, Ispahan, and Samarkand, is here realized. [4]

However, she says, "I can safely declare, I could gladly give up these tumultous pleasures, for country solitude." [5]

One of the servants, Winifred Jenkins exclaims,

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1. Ibid., p. 105.
2. Ibid., letter of June 8.
3. Ibid., letter of April 26.
4. Ibid., letter of May 31, p. 109.
5. Ibid., letter of May 31, p. 112.

> Such a noise, and haliballo! So many strange sites to be seen! O gracious! my poor Welsh brain has been spinning like a top ever since I came hither. 1

From the words of these characters have been given both good and bad points of the city, but even the young lady who enjoyed it preferred the country.

Oliver Goldsmith in his papers called The Citizen of the World, which consisted of observations upon English life written from the point of view of a Chinaman, makes many observations upon life in the city of London. These discussions are often directed against the faults andabsurdities of the people. The Chinaman in describing his first entrance into London says,

> Judge, then, my disappointment on entering London, to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad: Wherever I turn, I am presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets, and the inhabitants; none of that beautiful gilding which makes a principal ornament in Chinese Architecture. 2

In speaking of the streets of London, he says,

> In the midst of their pavements a great lazy puddle moves muddily along; heavy-laden machines, with wheels of unwieldy thickness, crowd up every passage; so that a stranger, instead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces. 3

After having observed the architecture of the various buildings in London, he says,

> From these circumstances in their buildings, and from the dismal looks of the inhabitants, I am induced to conclude that the nation is actually poor. 4

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1. Ibid., letter of June 3, p. 129.
2. Peter Cunningham, editor, The Works of Oliver Goldsmith, Volumes I-X, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1908, Vol. 1, p. 15.
3. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Ibid., p. 16.

The Chinaman visited Westminster Abbey, the burial place of kings, queens, poets, and other great people of England and was disgusted with the flattery of the epitaphs. As he stood in the midst of the temple, he exclaimed, "Alas! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave!"[1] However, he was more pleased with St. Paul's Cathedral. Of it he said,

> In this, which is the most considerable of the empire, there are no pompous inscriptions, no flattery paid the dead, but all is elegant and awfully simple.[2]

But when he observed the behavior of the congregation in St. Paul's at prayers, he was disappointed and said,

> Turn me where I will then, I can perceive no single symptoms of devotion among the worshippers, except from that old woman in the corner.[3]

The Chinaman criticizes the people of London, from the highest to the lowest class, for being so interested in strange sights and monsters. He says,

> I am sent for, not to be treated as a friend, but to satisfy curiosity; not to be entertained, so much as wondered at; the same earnestness which excites them to see a Chinese would have made them equally proud of a visit from a rhinoceros.[4]

Mr. Hardcastle, a character in Goldsmith's play, She Stoops to Conquer, dislikes cities. His wife, however, would enjoy

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1. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 67.
2. Ibid., p. 236.
3. Ibid., p. 239.
4. Ibid., p. 260.

visiting in the city and reminds him of some of their neighbors, who go to town "to take a month's polishing every winter."[1] Hardcastle replies,

> Ay, and bring back vanity and affection to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.[2]

Another eighteenth century poet, William Cowper, in his work reflected something of the grandeur of London, though he felt that it was a place of vice and corruption. He says, "God made the country and man made the town."[3] He believed that civilized life was friendly to virtue, but that great cities were not, especially London. He says,

> But, though true worth and virtue in the mild
> And genial soil of cultivated life
> Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,
> Yet not in cities oft; in proud and gay
> And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,
> As to a common and most noisome sew'r,
> The dregs and feculence of ev'ry land.
> In cities foul example on most minds
> Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds
> In gross and pampered cities sloth and lust,
> And wantonness and gluttonous excess.
> In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
> Or seen with least reproach; and virtue, taught
> By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
> Beyond the achievement of successful flight.[4]

Cowper gives London due praise and admits it to be the seat of arts, of philosophy, of knowledge, of eloquence, and of com-

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1. Ibid., "She Stoops to Conquer," Act 1, line 6.
2. Ibid., Act 1, lines 8-16.
3. Ibid., "The Task," Book I, line 692.
4. Ibid., Book 1, lines 561-592.

merce, yet he censures it by saying:

> Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed
> The fairest capitol of all the world,
> By riot and incontinence the worst.
>
> . . .
>
> Now mark a spot or two,
> That so much beauty would do well to purge;
> And show this queen of cities that so fair 1
> May yet be foul; so witty, yet not so wise.

Of the above representatives of the pre-Wordsworthian era Addison, Johnson, and Boswell loved the city and were eager to say so. The others, though not so ready to commit themselves on their personal choice between city and country, took great pains to point out the many weaknesses of the various phases of city life.

Whether or not each of these writers gave exactly his own opinion and preference concerning advantages and disadvantages of city life, it is true that their writings reflected the likes and requirements of the reading public at the time the works were published; therefore, even the characters quoted above most probably reflect attitudes before Wordsworth's time.

Advantages of the city pointed out by these writers are: its culture, inspiration, and luxury; its entertainments, the prosperity and happiness of many of its people; the pleasure obtained from clubs, theaters, Westminster Abbey, and art galleries. Disadvantages pictured are its noisiness, perpetual hubbubs, crowded conditions, trivialities, extravagances, debaucheries, and dissipations; the vanity of its people and their lack of devotion in churches; its many thieves and criminals.

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1. Ibid., Book 1, lines 561-592.

It seems that the dislikes outweigh the likes and are voiced by a greater number of people.

Passing from the attitude of the pre-Wordsworthian group toward the city, we note opinions of some of Wordsworth's contemporaries. Lord Byron's attitude as shown below is not typical of his earlier life, but during the period of his exile from London society. He tells of how unhappy Childe Harold was in society, and how he loathed "the human cities' torture."

> But in man's dwellings he became a thing
> Restless and worn and stern and wearisome,
> Drooped as a wild born falcon with clipped wing,
> To whom the boundless air alone were home. 1
>
> . . .
>
> Is it not better, then, to be alone,
> And love earth only for its earthly sake?
> By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
> Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake.
>
> . . .
>
> Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
> Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to inflict or bear?
>
> I live not in myself, but I become
> Portion of that around me: and to me
> High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
> Of human cities torture: I can see
> Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
> A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
> Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
> And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain 2
> Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

Byron expressed the idea that things of nature are better than man - made things. He says,

> Not vainly did the early Persian make
> His altar the high places, and the peak

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1. George Gordon, Lord Byron, Complete Poems, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," Canto III, stanza 15.
2. Ibid., Canto III, stanzas 71,72.

> Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
> A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek
> The Spirit, in whose honor shrines are weak,
> Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare
> Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
> With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air, 1
> Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy pray'r!

Again Byron expresses his dislike of society and crowds by saying,

> I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
> I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
> To its idolatries a patient knee,
> Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
> In worship of an echo; in the crowd
> They could not deem me one of such; I stood 2
> Among them, but not of them.

Byron found pleasures not in the cities and in the society of man, but he says,

> There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society where none intrudes, 3
> By the deep Sea, and music in its roar;

In "Beppo" Byron mentions an unpleasant phase of city life. He speaks of

> That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
> Where reeking London's smoky Caldron simmers. 4

Shelley in his poem "To Jane: The Invitation," expresses the same preference of country to city as did Byron.

> Away, away from men and towns
> To the wild wood and the downs—
> To the silent wilderness
> Where the soul need not repress

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1. Ibid., Canto III, stanza 91.
2. Ibid., Canto III, stanza 113.
3. Ibid., Canto IV, stanza 178.
4. Ibid., "Beppo," stanza 43, lines 7,8.

> Its music, lest it should not find
> An echo in another's mind;
> While the touch of Nature's art
> Harmonizes heart to heart. [1]

He liked the city better when it was like rural solitude.

> Like many a voice of one delight,
> The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
> The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's. [2]

Shelley did admire Naples and in an "Ode to Naples" he became enthusiastic over the spell produced by that "Elysian City."

> Naples! thou heart of men which ever pantest
> Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven!
> Elysian City, which to calm enchanted
> The mutinous air and sea! they round these, even
> As sleep round love are driven!
> . . .
> Thou which wert once, and then did cease to be,
> Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,
> If hope, and truth and justice can avail,--
> Hail, hail, all hail! [3]

A third romantic poet, who sought relief from city life was Keats.

> To one who has been long in city pent,
> 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
> And open face of heaven, -- to breathe a prayer
> Full in the smile of the blue firmament. [4]

From the comparison of the two following quotations, one might infer that Keats greatly preferred the small country town to the larger industrial centers.

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1. Percy Bysshe Shelley, The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London: Oxford University Press, 1927, "To Jane: The Invitation," lines 21, 22.
2. Ibid., "Stanzas, Written in Dejection Near Naples," lines 7-9.
3. Ibid., "Ode to Naples," strophe 1.
4. Horace E. Scudder, editor, The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats, New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, "Sonnet (Written in the Fields)", lines 1-4.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
And for them many a weary hand did swelt 1
In torched mines and noisy factories.

What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore 2
Will silent be:

Lamia, a character in the poem "Lamia" was able to muse and dream and send her spirit where she willed. In speaking of her Keats says,

And sometimes into cities she would send 3
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend.

In giving a description of the City of Corinth, Keats says,

And
All her populous streets and temples lewd,
Muttered, like tempest in the distance brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her towers.
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement white,
Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festivals,
And threw their moving shadows on the walls,
Or found them clustered in the corniced shade 4
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky colonnade.

Another suggestion of Keats' dislike for the crowded city is found in the "Cap and Bells."

The city all his unhived swarms had cast,
To watch our grand approach, and hail us as
we pass'd. 5

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1. Ibid., "Isabella, or The Pot of Basil," stanza 14, lines 1-4.
2. Ibid., "Ode on a Grecian Urn," stanza IV, lines 5-9.
3. Ibid., "Lamia," Part 1, lines 213,214.
4. Ibid., Part I, lines 351-361.
5. Ibid., "Cap and Bells," stanza LXXX, lines 8-9.

In a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds written at Oxford, September 21, 1817, Keats writes,

> You are I know very much teased in that precious London, and want all the rest possible; so I shall be contented with as brief a scrawl--a word or two, till there comes a pat hour. [1]

In a letter written to Thomas Keats, July 3, 1818, Keats says, "In Cities man is shut off from his fellows if he is poor." [2]

In another letter to his brother Thomas, written July 14, 1818, Keats speaks of the city of Glasgow as follows:

> The City of Glasgow I take to be a very fine one--I was astonished to hear it was twice the size of Edinburgh. It was built of stone and has a much more solid appearance than London. [3]

June 9, 1819, Keats in a letter to his sister Fanny says,

> I have taken a great dislike to town--I never go there--someone is always calling on me and as we have spare beds they often stop a couple of days. [4]

From Shanklin, a particularly beautiful spot on the Isle of Wight, on July 15, 1819, Keats in a letter to Fanny Brawne expresses a dislike for the bustle of the city. He says,

> I should not like to be so near you as London without being continually with you: After having once more kissed you Sweet I would rather be here alone at my task than in the bustle and hateful literary chitchat. [5]

Keats seemed to enjoy living in the town of Winchester. In a letter to his sister Fanny, written August 28, 1819, he

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1. Ibid., p. 269.
2. Ibid., p. 311.
3. Ibid., p. 314.
4. Ibid., p. 378.
5. Ibid., p. 384.

writes of Winchester as follows:

> We like it very much: it is the pleasantest town I ever was in, and has the most recommendations of any. There is a fine Cathedral which to me is always a source of amusement. . . . The whole town is beautifully wooded.[1]

In a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, dated February 14, 1819, Keats says,

> Sometime since I began a poem called "The Eve of St. Mark," quite in the spirit of town quietude. I think I will give you the sensation of walking about an old country town in a coolish evening.[2]

By September, 1819, Keats had found the city of Winchester lacking in some things London could provide and planned to move back to London. In a letter to Charles Wentworth Dilke, dated September 22, 1819, he says,

> I think you will see the reasonableness of my plan. To forward it I propose living in cheap Lodging in Town, that I may be in the reach of books and information, of which there is here a plentiful lack.[3]

Toward the end of Keats' life he seems to have acquired more of a dislike for the noise and bustle of the city. Ill health may have accounted for some of this.

In a letter to his sister, Fanny, written from Wentworth place, April 1, 1820, he says,

> I shall be able to come over to you in the course of a few weeks. I should take the advantage of your being in Town but I cannot bear the City though I have already ventured as far as the west end for the purpose of seeing Mr. Haydon's picture, which is just finished and has made its appearance.[4]

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1. Ibid., p. 384.
2. Ibid., p. 400.
3. Ibid., p. 410.
4. Ibid., p. 434.

In another letter to his sister Fanny dated May 4, 1820, he writes,

> I went for the first time into the City the day before yesterday, for before I was very disinclined to encounter the scuffle, more from nervousness than real illness. 1

It is very evident that Keats disliked the city except for its intellectual store.

In contradistinction to the aversion of Keats and Byron toward the city, the devotion of Southey and Lamb is evident. Southey in "The Poet's Pilgrimage," extols Bruges for its stability and historic pomp.

> Time hath not wronged her, nor hath ruin sought
> Rudely her splendid structures to destroy,
> Save in those recent days, with evil fraught,
> When mutability, in drunken joy
> Triumphant, and from all restraint released,
> Let loose her fierce and many headed beast.
>
> But for the scars in that unhappy rage
> Inflicted, firm she stands and undecayed;
> Like our first sires, a beautiful old age
> Is hers in venerable years arrayed:
> When I may read of tilts in days of old,
> And tourneys graced by Chieftains of renown,
> Fair dames, grave citizens, and warriors bold,
> If fancy would portray some stately town,
> Which for such pomp fit theatre should be,
> Fair Bruges, I shall remember thee. 2

Charles Lamb loved crowds and enjoyed the city best during its busiest hours. He found Sundays in the city somewhat gloomy because of the quietness and lack of people. He says, speaking

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1. Ibid., p. 435.

2. James Stephens, Edwin L. Beck, and Royall H. Snow, English Romantic Poets, Cincinnati: American Book Co., 1933, "The Poet's Pilgrimage,"

Sundays,

> I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad singers--the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful--are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over--no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by--the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. 1

Lamb said in one of his essays:

> The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops where Fancy Miscalled Folly is supplied with perpetual gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesman--things which live by bowing, and things which exist but for homage--do not affect me with disgust; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meanness; I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honor at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the detection of a pickpocket. The salutory astonishment with which an execution is surveyed, convinces me more forcibly than a hundred volumes of abstract polity, that the universal instinct of man in all ages has leaned to order and good government. 2

The following letter, written by Lamb, November 28, 1800, to Thomas Manning gives more proof of his love for the city:

> I must confess that I am not romance-bit about Nature. The earth, the sea, and sky (when all is said) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation, if they can talk sensibly and feel properly, I have no need

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1. Robert Shafer, From Beowulf to Thomas Hardy, Volumes I and II, New York, Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924, "The Superannuated Man," p. 168.

2. C. A. Ward, Everybody's Lamb, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1909, p. 394.

> to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse strings in the purchase), nor his five-shilling print over the mantle-piece of old Nabbs the carrier (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world-eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the street with spectacles, George Dyers, (you may know them by theirgait), lamps lit at night, pastry-cooks' and silver-smiths' shops, mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of Fire and Stop thief; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butterflies; old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall. These are thy pleasures, O London with-the-many-sins. 1

Walt Whitman, an American romantic poet, also loved life in the city. His love is shown in the following poem.

> Keep your splendid silent sun,
> Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet
> places by the woods,
> Keep your fields of clover and timothy and
> your corn-fields and orchards,
> Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where
> the Ninth-month bees hum;
> Give me faces and streets--give me these
> phantoms incessant and endless
> along the trottoirs!
> Give me interminable eyes--give me women--give
> me comrades and lovers by the thousands!
> Let me see new ones every day--let me hold
> new ones by the hand every day!
> . . .
> People, endless, streaming, with strong voices,
> passions, pageants,
> Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs,
> with beating drums as now,
> The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank
> of muskets (even the sight of the sounded),
> Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical
> chorus!
> Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me. 2

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1. Ibid., p. 410.

2. Harry Hayden Clark, Major American Poets, Cincinnati: American Book Co., 1936, "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," lines 30-40.

Whitman again shows his love for the city in his poem, "Mannahatta" in which he describes New York. The poem ends as follows:

> The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd, beautiful-faced looking you straight in the eyes,
> Trottoirs throng'd, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the shops and shows,
> A million people--manners free and superb--open voices--hospitality--the most courageous and friendly young men,
> City of hurried and sparkling waters! City of spires and masts!
> City nested in bays! My city! [1]

Thus we find some of Wordsworth's contemporaries loving the city; others hating it. The same had been true among his predecessors. There had, however, come with the romantic movement far more interest in scenes of nature than in the preceding era. These scenes, of course, were not to be found in the city. Byron, Keats, and Shelley disliked crowds. Lamb and Whitman loved the city because of its crowds. From these examples and those of the pre-Wordsworthian period one would infer that liking the city was a matter depending upon the individual. There were many evils admitted by all, but many found assets to outweigh these evils.

Wordsworth's being brought up in the country and small town, his interest in nature and common man, and the general interest of the romantic writers in rural scenes of nature would indicate that he was probably little interested in the city. This hypothesis may be put to a test by the following study of Wordsworth's references to the city.

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1. Ibid., "Mannahatta," lines 16-20.

CHAPTER II

THE ATTITUDE OF THE YOUNGER WORDSWORTH

In "Descriptive Sketches" Wordsworth says that he finds a "secret power" reigning in the pastoral heights "where no trace of man the spot profanes."[1]

Six years later, 1797, in the "Reverie of Poor Susan" he shows the survival of a love for the country in those who have been born there, but who have been long an exile in the city. Perhaps some recollection of his own homesickness, while in the city, entered into the poem. Poor Susan, a servant maid, passes along Wood Street each morning and is reminded of her country home by the singing of a caged bird, hanging in the street.

> 'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her?
> She sees a mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
> Bright volumes of vapor through Lothbury glide,
> And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.
>
> Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
> Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
> And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's
> The only dwelling on earth that she loves.
>
> She looks, and her heart is in heaven; but they fade,
> The mist and the river, the hill and the shades;
> The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
> And the colours have all passed away from her eyes; [2]

To Wordsworth the city at times was a noisy, yet a lonely place, and he turned to nature for help during his sojourn in the

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1. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "Descriptive Sketches," line 347.

2. Ibid., "The Reverie of Poor Susan," lines 4-16.

towns and cities. While revisiting the banks of the Wye in 1798 he described the scenes of childhood pleasures as follows:

> These beauteous forms,
> Through a long absence, have not been to me
> As is a landscape to a blind man's eye;
> But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
> Of town and cities, I have owed to them
> In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
> And passing even into my purer mind,
> With tranquil restoration: feelings too
> Of unremembered pleasures: such perhaps,
> As have no slight or trivial influence
> On that best portion of a good man's life,
> His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
> Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
> To them I may have owned another gift,
> Of aspects more sublime; that blessed mood,
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened: --that serene and blessed mood,
> In which the affections gently lead us on,--
> Until the breath of this corporeal frame
> Almost suspended, we are laid a sleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see unto the life of things. [1]

Wordsworth speaks of the city as a cruel place. In describing the character of the wicked Peter Bell, he says,

> To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
> Which solitary nature feeds
> 'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
> Mad Peter joined whatever vice
> The cruel city breeds. [2]

Wordsworth was discontented in the city. In the spring of 1799 the Wordsworths, after spending a cold dreary winter at Goslar, Germany, returned to England; as they left the city and felt

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1. Ibid., "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," lines 22-49.

2. Ibid., "Peter Bell," lines 106-110.

the breeze fan their cheeks Wordsworth thought,

> Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze,
> A visitant that while it fans my cheek
> Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings
> From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.
> Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come
> To none more grateful than to me; escaped
> From the vast city, where I long had pined
> A discontented sojourner: now free,
> Free as a bird to settle where I will. [1]

In "The Prelude" the poem from which these lines are taken, Wordsworth goes back and reviews his childhood experiences as well as the rest of his life to that time. Throughout these reminiscences can be seen Wordsworth's loneliness in the city and his hunger for his beloved rural scenes.

In Book III of "The Prelude," 1804, Wordsworth told of his life at St. John's College, Cambridge. This was really his first experience with the city. Cambridge had certainly an entirely different atmosphere from that of Hawkshead. Wordsworth, a schoolboy with all the shyness of his mountain childhood still upon him and ignorant of any pleasures but those which an open air life could yield, did not enjoy his studies, which seemed to him lacking in poetry and loftiness. He refused to surrender his will to his masters because he felt that they had neither greatness of mind nor nobility of soul. Although he was attracted by the unaccustomed pleasures, he felt from the very first that he was and would remain a stranger at Cambridge. He says,

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1. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book I, lines 5-9.

> I was disturbed at times by prudent thoughts,
> Wishing to hope without a hope, some fears
> About my future worldly maintenance,
> And, more than all, a strangeness in the mind,
> A feeling that I was not for that hour,
> Nor for that place. [1]

He would often quit his companions and leaving the town behind would wander alone about the surrounding country, thus enjoying nature at Cambridge as at Hawkshead. Here, too, he attributes the enjoyable things of life to Nature.

> To every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower,
> Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
> I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
> Or linked to them some feeling: the great mass
> Lay imbedded in a quickening soul, and all
> That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
> And that whate'er of terror or of Love,
> Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
> From transitory passion, unto this
> I was as sensitive as waters are
> To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
> Of passion; was obedient as a lute
> That waits upon the touches of the wind.
> Unknown, unthought of, yet, I was most rich
> I had a world about me, 'twas my own:
> I made it, for it only lived to me,
> And to God who sees into the heart. [2]

Undoubtedly Wordsworth enjoyed solitude, yet he had a sociable disposition which would not allow him to shun his fellow-students. He says, "how could I behold unmoved"

> So many happy youths, so wide and fair
> A congregation in its budding-time
> Of health and hope, and beauty, all at once
> So many divers samples from the growth
> Of life's sweet season--could have seen unmoved

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1. Ibid., "The Prelude," Book III, lines 77-82.

2. Ibid., Book III, lines 127-143.

Good anthology

That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers
Decking the matron temples of a place
So famous through the world? To me, at least,
It was a goodly prospect: for, in sooth,
Though I had learnt betimes to stand unpropped,
And independent musings pleased me so
That spells seemed on me when I was alone
Yet could I only cleave to solitude
In lonely places; if a throng was near
That way I learned by Nature; for my heart
Was social, and loved idleness and joy.

. . .

Companionships,
Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.
We sauntered, played, or rioted; we talked
Unprofitable talk at morning hours;
Drifted about along the streets and walks,
Read lazily in trivial books, went forth
To gallop through the country in blind zeal
Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars
Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought. [1]

Such was the tenor of Wordsworth's new life, yet he tells us that his "nature's outward coat" changed slowly and insensibly.[2] Here Wordsworth's throughts were directed, first quite unconsciously —as they had been previously with Nature—to the historic past as shown in his surroundings. Of this he says,

Imagination slept,
And yet not utterly. I could not print
Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps
Of generations of illustrious men,
Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass
Through the same gateways, sleep where they had slept,
Wake where they waked, range that enclosure old,
That garden of great intellects, undisturbed. [3]

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1. Ibid., Book III, lines 218-255.

2. Ibid., Book III, line 205.

3. Ibid., Book III, lines 257-264.

However, Wordsworth did not like the rigorous discipline of the University and paid little attention to the course of study prescribed. He explains these attitudes by saying,

> For I, bred up 'mid Nature's luxuries,
> Was a spoiled child, and, rambling like the wind,
> As I had done in daily intercourse
> With those crystalline rivers, solemn heights,
> And mountains, ranging like a fowl of the air,
> I was ill-tutored for captivity. [1]

That this was the ideal training for a boy is shown throughout Wordsworth's poems. In "The Prelude," Book VI, 1804, the Lake Poet pitied his friend Coleridge for having been brought up in the city.

> Of rivers, fields,
> And groves I speak to thee, my Friend! to thee,
> Who, yet a liveried schoolboy, in the depths
> Of the huge City, on the leaded roof
> Of that wide edifice, thy school and home,
> Wert used to lie and gaze upon the clouds
> Moving in heaven; or, of that pleasure tired,
> To shut thine eyes, and by internal light
> See trees, and meadows, and thy native stream,
> For distance, thus beheld from year to year
> Of a long exile. [2]

During his third vacation, that of 1790, Wordsworth and one of his fellow students, who were on their way to the Alps, chanced to land at Calais on the very eve of the day when Louis XVI took the oath of fidelity to the New Constitution, and there they saw

> In a mean city, and among a few,
> How bright a face is worn when joy of one
> Is joy for tens of millions. [3]

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1. Ibid., Book III, lines 351-356.
2. Ibid., Book VI, lines 264-274.
3. Ibid., Book VI, lines 347-349.

In Book VII of "The Prelude," 1804, Wordsworth continued to call back memories of childhood. Aided by his childish imagination, he had believed London to be a marvelous place.

> There was a time when whatsoe'er is feigned
> Of airy palaces, and gardens built
> By Genii of romance; or hath in grave
> Authentic history been set forth of Rome,
> Alcario, Babylon, or Persepolis;
> Or given upon report by pilgrim friars
> Of golden cities ten months' journey deep
> Among Tartarian wilds--fell short, far short,
> Of what my fond simplicity believed
> And thought of London--held me by a chain
> Less strong of wonder and obscure delight.
> Whether the bolt of childhood's Fancy shot
> For me beyond its ordinary mark,
> 'Twere vain to ask; but in our flock of boys
> Was One, a cripple from his birth, whom chance
> Summoned from school to London; fortunate
> And envied traveller! When the Boy returned
> After short absence, curiously I scanned
> His mien and person, nor was free, in sooth,
> From disappointment, not to find some change,
> In look or air, from that new region brought,
> As if from Fairyland. Much I questioned him;
> And every word he uttered, on my ears
> Fell flatter than a caged parrot's note,
> That answers unexpectedly awry, [1]
> And mocks the prompter's listening.

Wordsworth had pictured the city as a place where

> Mitered Prelates, Lords in ermine clad
> The King, and the King's Palace, and, not last,
> Nor least, Heaven bless him! the renowned
> Lord Mayor [2]

lived in splendor and magnificence. One thing especially baffled him, accustomed as he was to the narrow limits of a small town:

> how men lived
> Even next-door neighbors, as we say, yet still
> Strangers, not knowing each the other's name. [3]

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1. Ibid., Book VII, lines 77-102.
2. Ibid., Book VII, lines 108-110.
3. Ibid., Book VII, lines 116-118.

While at Cambridge, Wordsworth found an opportunity to visit London for the first time. There is no doubt but that he compared the real London with the London of his childish imagination and was disappointed. He says in speaking of his entrance into the city for the first time,

> On the roof
> Of an itinerant vehicle I sate,
> With vulgar men about me, trivial forms
> Of houses, pavements, streets, of men and things,—
> Mean shapes on every side: but, at the instant,
> When to my self it fairly might be said,
> The threshold now is over past, (how strange
> That aught external to the living mind
> Should have such a mighty sway; yet so it was),
> A weight of ages did at once descend
> Upon my heart. [1]

His stay in London at this time was of short duration and only convinced him that it would take a prolonged residence to understand the mysteries of the city. These mysteries he set forth to unravel in 1791, after having taken his B. A. degree from Cambridge. The graduate not yet twenty-one years old anticipated many interests in that great city.

> Soon I bade
> Farewell for ever to the sheltered seats
> Of gowned students, quitted hall and bower,
> And every comfort of that privileged ground,
> Well pleased to pitch a vagrant tent among
> The unfenced regions of society.
> Yet, undetermined to what course of life
> I should adhere, and seeming to possess
> A little space of intermediate time
> At full command, to London first I turned,
> In no disturbance of excessive hope,
> By personal ambition unenslaved,

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1. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 542-552.

> Frugal as there was need, and though self-willed,
> From dangerous passions free. Three years had
> flown
> Since I had felt in heart and soul the shock
> Of the huge town's first presence, and had paced
> Her endless streets, a transient visitant:
> Now fixed amid that concourse of mankind
> Where Pleasure whirls about incessantly,
> And life and labour seem but one, I filled
> An idler's place; an idler well content
> To have a house (what matter for a home?)
> That owned him; living cheerfully abroad
> With unchecked fancy ever on the stir,
> And all my young affections out of doors. [1]

He entered the city with that enthusiasm and freedom of spirit which had developed during his childhood, but only a few months' experience was needed to make him forsake the "crowded solitude" to which he afterwards referred.

> Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,
> I ranged at large, through London's wide domain,
> Month after month. Obscurely did I live,
> Not seeking frequent intercourse with men,
> By literature, or elegance, or rank,
> Distinguished. Scarcely was a year-thus spent
> Ere I forsook the crowded solitude,
> With less regret for its luxurious pomp,
> And all the nicely-guarded shows of art,
> Than for the humble book-stalls in the streets,
> Exposed to eye and hand where'er I turned! [2]

These reflections from the seventh and eighth books of his great autobiographical poem, Harper thinks, show two things: namely, (1) the growth of a poet's mind, and (2) the supremacy of the poet's love of nature, meaning country scenes and sounds.[3] According to Legouis these memories probably have a connection

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1. Ibid., Book VII, lines 52-76.

2. Ibid., Book IX, lines 23-33.

3. George McLean Harper, William Wordsworth: His Life, Works and Influence, London: John Murray, 1929, p. 67.

with the conversations and correspondence of Wordsworth and Charles Lamb in which the two often discussed the comparative merits of town and country. Lamb upheld the wonders of his favorite city, London, while Wordsworth praised the glories of Nature. What the streets, people, and sounds of the city were to Lamb, the streams, dales, mountains, and shepherds were to Wordsworth.[1] The following letter to Wordsworth, written January 30, 1801, is an example of these controversies. Wordsworth had invited Lamb to visit him at Grasmere, in Westmoreland, and the latter replied:

> I ought before this to have replied to your very kind invitation into Cumberland. With you and your sister I could gang anywhere; but I am afraid whether I shall ever be able to afford so desperate a journey. Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't care now if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of your mountaineers can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen, and customers, coaches, waggons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness around Covent Garden; the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles;--life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the printshops, the old book-stalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes--London itself a pantomime and a masquerade--all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impells me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fullness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me. . . . Have I not enough without your mountains? I do not envy you. I should pity you did I not know that the mind will make friends of anything. . . . So fading upon me, from disuse, have been

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1. Legouis, Op. cit., p. 172.

> the beauties of Nature, as they have been confidently called; so ever fresh, and green, and warm are all the inventions of men, and assemblies of men in this great city. [1]

Wordsworth "looked upon the same living scene" [2] of London and he was

> Oftentimes,
> In spite of strongest disappointment, pleased
> Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
> Paid to the object by prescriptive right. [3]

In London, the "monstrous ant-hill on the plain of a too busy world," [4] Wordsworth observed

> . . . endless stream of men and moving things!
> . . .quick dance
> Of colours, lights, and forms; the deafening din;
> The comers and the goers face to face,
> Face after face; the string of dazzling wares,
> Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names,
> And all the tradesmen's honours overhead;
> Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page,
> With letters high inscribed from top to toe,
> Stationed above the door, like guardian saints;
> There, allegoric shapes, female or male,
> Or physiognomies of real men,
> Land-warriors, Kings, or Admirals of the Sea,
> Boyle, Shakespeare, Newton, or the attractive head
> Of some quack-doctor, famous in his day. [5]

The roar and noise of the city was not pleasing to Wordsworth. He escaped from it "as from an enemy" and looked until he found "some sequestered nook, still as a sheltered place when winds blew loud!" [6]

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1. Ward, Op. cit., p. 409.
2. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "The Prelude," Book VII, line 144.
3. Ibid., Book VII, lines 145-148.
4. Ibid., Book VII, lines 149-150.
5. Ibid., Book VII, lines 151-157.
6. Ibid., Book VII, lines 170-171.

Wordsworth was interested in all phases of life in London. He watched such scenes as,

> A company of dancing dogs
> Or dromedary, with an antic pair
> Of monkeys on his back; a minstrel band
> Of Savoyards; or, single and alone,
> An English ballad-singer. [1]

He explores

> . . .private courts,
> Gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes
> Thrilled by some female vendor's scream, belike
> The very shrillest of all London cries. [2]

In giving a summary of various street scenes, he observed in London, he says,

> . . . the mighty concourse I surveyed
> With no unthinking mind, well pleased to note
> Among the crowd all specimens of man,
> Through all the colours which the sun bestows
> And every character of form and face. [3]

Remembering Wordsworth's acute interest in man, one does not marvel at his grasping the opportunity to study in the city all specimens of mankind.

While in London, Wordsworth attended various theaters but to him the

> . . . casual incidents of real life,
> Observed where pastime only had been sought,
> Outweighed, or put to flight, the set events
> And measured passions of the stage, albeit
> By Siddons trod in the fullness of her power. [4]

He visited the law-courts and Parliament, and at first he

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1. Ibid., Book VII, lines 176-180.
2. Ibid., Book VII, lines 180-183.
3. Ibid., Book VII, lines 219-223.
4. Ibid., Book VII, lines 402-406.

was charmed by the orators and astonished at their speeches.

> Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense:
> What memory and what logic! till the strain
> Transcendent, superhuman as it seemed,
> Grows tedious even in a young man's ear. [1]

Wordsworth was touched by some of the "Pulpit's oratory." [2] Much of it he thought "sadly out of place." He directed keen shafts of satire against the more fashionable preachers of the day.

> There have I seen a comely bachelor,
> Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend
> His rostrum, with seraphic glance look up,
> And in a tone elaborately low
> Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze
> A minuet course; and winding up his mouth,
> From time to time, into an orifice
> And only not invisible, again
> Open it out, diffusing thence a smile
> Of rapt irradiation, exquisite. [3]

In "The Prelude," Book VII, 1804, Wordsworth discusses at length London's evils, vices, and brutalities which he had already mentioned in "Peter Bell."

> Folly, vice
> Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,
> And all the strife of singularity,
> Lies to the ear, and lies to the sense. [4]

Wordsworth preferred the city at night to the city by day. He enjoyed

> . . . the peace
> That comes with night; the deep solemnity
> Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,

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1. Ibid., Book VII, lines 508-511.
2. Ibid., Book VII, line 550.
3. Ibid., Book VII, lines 551-561.
4. Ibid., Book VII, lines 578-581.

> When the great tide of human life stands still;
> The business of the day to come, unborn,
> Of that gone by, locked up, as in the grave;
> The blended calmness of the heavens and earth,
> Moonlight and stars, and empty streets, and sounds
> Unfrequent as in deserts. [1]

but contended thus:

> But these I fear,
> Are falsely catalogued; things that are, are not,
> As the mind answers to them, or the heart
> To prompt or slow to feel. What say you then,
> To times when half the city shall break out
> Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear.
> To executions, to a street on fire, [2]
> Mobs, riots, or rejoicings?

Undoubtedly the excitement of the city distracted Wordsworth from his true self. His poetry, in which he describes scenes of London is not so powerful as the poetry describing his own native regions. This is shown by contrasting the description of St. Bartholomew's Fair in London with that of a rustic fair or festival in one of his native villages below the mountain Helvellyn. He sees not beauty and innocent pleasures in the fair of St. Bartholomew but coarseness and brutality. At the fair one might escape "the press and danger of the crowd" by climbing a "Showman's Platform." From the platform one could see shocking scenes. Every nook and every space was "alive with heads," many children were whirling about in the crowd, stretching their necks and straining their eyes. It was a mass of "grimacing, writhing, screaming" people. Here one found

> All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts
> Of man, his dulness, madness and their feats

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1. Ibid., Book VII, lines 654-662.

2. Ibid., Book VII, lines 668-675.

All jumbled up together, to compose
A Parliament of Monsters. 1

The rustic fair is eagerly welcomed by all who dwell in the glen. By noon one can hear the low of the heifer and the bleat of the flocks. Among the crowd one may see a blind man who makes music, "a sweet lass of the valley" who has brought fruits from her father's orchard to sell, or "some Ancient Wedded Pair" sitting together in the shade.

Thus gaiety and cheerfulness prevail,
Spreading from young to old, from old to young,
And no one seems to want his share,-- 2

In this description Wordsworth shows his affection for the country life and rustic peoples, and his dislike for the crowded and confused masses of struggling humanity in the city.

Although Wordsworth found many evils in the city, he also observed many individual sights of courage, integrity, truth, and tenderness on the city streets. One of which he tells us was a father

sitting in an open square
Upon a corner-stone of that low wall,
Wherein were fixed the iron poles that fenced
A spacious grass-plot; there, in silence, sate
This one Man, with sickly babe outstretched
Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought
For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air.
Of those who passed, and me who looked at him,
He took no heed; but in his brawny arms
(The Artificier was to the elbow bare,
And from his work this moment had been stolen)

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1. Ibid., Book VII, lines 715-718.

2. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 53-55.

> He held the child, and, bending over it,
> As if he were afraid both of the sun
> And of the air, which he had come to seek,
> Eyed the poor babe with love unutterable. [1]

Wordsworth glorified the city as a mysterious being, having a great power over him. As a storm upon a mountain sets off a sunbeam far below, so does the great mass of humanity in the city serve as a background to single forms, thus at times, inducing in Wordsworth a state of reverie. Often the face of every passer-by was a mystery. One day "amid the morning pageant," seeing a blind beggar,

> Who, with upright face,
> Stood, propped against a wall, upon his chest
> Wearing a written paper, to explain
> His story, whence he came, and who he was, [2]

Wordsworth says,

> And, on the shape of that unmoving man,
> His steadfast face and sightless eyes, I gazed
> As if admonished from another world. [3]

In the infinite multitude of objects, which Wordsworth observed in London, he did not lose sight of the greatness of the whole, for his was the mind that has

> Among least things
> An under sense of greatness; sees the parts
> As parts, but with a feeling of the whole. [4]

In the rush and roar of London, Wordsworth seems to have been drifting aimlessly, yet, while he was in the city, he felt

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1. Ibid., Book VII, lines 604-618.
2. Ibid., Book VII, lines 639-642.
3. Ibid., Book VII, lines 647-649.
4. Ibid., Book VII, lines 734-736.

himself drawn nearer to the life of man. Until this time, nature was first and man second; here in the center of the great city the transition was made. However, Wordsworth could not forget that his love of nature had led to his love of man.

> With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel
> In that enormous City's turbulent world
> Of men and things, what benefit I owed
> To thee, and those domains of rural peace,
> Where to the sense of beauty first my heart
> Was opened. [1]

Wordsworth tells us that he was most thankful, that during his childhood he

> Was guarded from too early intercourse
> With the deformities of crowded life. [2]

Previously in Book VI, Wordsworth refers to Coleridge's city training and comparing his early life with the early life of his friend says,

> I did not pine like one in cities bred,
> As was thy melancholy lot, dear Friend. [3]

To Wordsworth London was a "grave teacher, a stern preceptress," [4] and at times she could "put on an aspect most severe;" [5] however, Wordsworth was never insensible to the mighty forces revealed in the cruel but awe-inspiring scenes of the

> . . . vast metropolis,
> Fount of my country's destiny and the world's;
> That great emporium, chronicle at once
> And burial-place of passions, and their home
> Imperial, their chief living residence. [6]

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1. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 70-75.
2. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 331,332.
3. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 433,434.
4. Ibid., Book VIII, line 530.
5. Ibid., Book VIII, line 531.
6. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 592-596.

Wordsworth had not been very interested in the history and traditions of his country until the influence of the city caused him to think more about them and more about humanity. He says,

> . . . but a sense
> Of what in the Great City had been done
> And suffered, and was doing, suffering, still,
> Weighted with me, could support the test of thought;
> And, in despite of all that had gone by,
> Or was departing never to return,
> There I conversed with majesty and power
> Like independent natures. 1

Wordsworth says,

> . . . among the multitudes
> Of that huge city, oftentimes was seen
> Affectingly set forth, more than else-where
> Is possible, the unity of man,
> One spirit over ignorance and vice
> Predominant, in good and evil hearts;
> One sense for moral judgments, as one eye
> For the sun's light. 2

It seems that Wordsworth became more interested in all cities after having lived in London for a few months, for we find upon his second visit to France, in November, 1791, although he had fixed on Orleans as his place of residence, he could not resist the temptation of making a halt in Paris on his way.

> Through Paris lay my readiest course, and there
> Sojourning a few days, I visited
> In haste, each spot of old or recent fame,
> The latter chiefly; from the field of Mars
> Down to the suburbs of St. Anthony,
> And from Mont Martre southward to the Dome
> Of Genevieve. 3

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1. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 625-632.
2. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 665-672.
3. Ibid., Book IX, lines 42-48.

During Wordsworth's first weeks at Orleans he was more interested in the customs and characteristics of the people, and the difficulties of the language. Later he left Orlenas and went to Blois, where he became interested in the Revolution. He describes these periods of his life by saying,

> . . . night by night
> Did I frequent the formal haunts of men,
> Whom in the city privilege of birth
> Sequestered from the rest, societies
> Polished in arts, and punctilio versed;
> Whence and from deeper causes, all discourse
> Of good and evil of the time was shunned
> With scrupulous care; but these restrictions soon
> Proved tedious, and I gradually withdrew
> Into a noisier world, and thus ere long
> Became a patriot. [1]

While in France Wordsworth admits that he abhorred certain phases of life in the capital city. He and his friends spent much of their time in picturing to themselves the miseries

> Of royal courts, and that voluptuous life
> Unfeeling, where the man who is of soul
> The meanest thrives the most; where dignity,
> True personal dignity, abideth not. [2]

After Wordsworth became deeply interested in the Revolution, he returned to the "fierce Metropolis" [3] Such was the fascination of the terrible city, and such was his sympathy in the revolutionary movement, that had he not been forced to return to England because of lack of money, he doubtless would have perished with his friends. He returned to England in December 1792, and remained in London during the winter, with his brother Richard.

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1. Ibid., Book IX, lines 113-123.
2. Ibid., Book IX, lines 345-348.
3. Ibid., Book X, line 11.

Of this he says,

> It pleased me more
> To abide in the great City, where I found
> The general air still busy with the stir
> Of that first memorable onset made
> By a strong levy of humanity
> Upon the traffickers in Negro blood. [1]

These of Wordsworth also infer a kindlier feeling toward London after having been in cities abroad. This is probably due to the greater cruelties and brutalities in Paris during the Revolution.

Wordsworth was determined to find out the truths of human life. Some of these truths were found in the city, yet there much was wanting. He says,

> . . . but still I craved
> An intermingling of distinct regards
> And truths of individual sympathy
> Nearer ourselves. Such ofteh might be gleaned
> From the great City, else it must have proved
> To me a heart-depressing wilderness;
> But much was wanting: therefore did I turn
> To you, ye pathways, and ye lonely roads;
> Sought you enriched with every thing I prized;
> With human kindness and the simple joys. [2]

In these lines is further proof that Wordsworth found something in the City which he considered worthwhile, but one element which he did not find in the city was love. In speaking of love, Wordsworth said,

> . . . It does not thrive with ease
> Among the close and overcrowded haunts
> Of cities, where the human heart is sick,
> And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed. [3]

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1. Ibid., Book X, lines 244-249.
2. Ibid., Book XIII, lines 110-119.
3. Ibid., Book XIII, lines 202-205.

To ascertain fully, however, the younger Wordsworth's attitude toward the city, one must examine still other works written before 1810.

Undoubtedly Wordsworth was lonely in the city. He tells in "The Recluse," 1800, that solitude is not found in the country, but says,

> He truly is alone,
> He of the multitude whose eyes are doomed
> To hold a vacant commerce day by day
> With Objects wanting life--repelling love;
> He by the vast metropolis immured,
> Where pity shrinks from unremitting calls,
> Where numbers overwhelm humanity,
> And neighborhood serves rather to divide
> Than to unite--what sights more deep than his,
> Whose nobler will hath long been sacrificed;
> Who must inhabit under a black sky
> A city, where, if indifference to disgust
> Yield not to scorn or sorrow, living men
> Are ofttimes to their fellow-men no more
> Than to the forest Hermit are the leaves
> That hang aloft in myriads; nay, far less,
> For they protect his walk from sun and shower,
> Swell his devotion with their voice in storms,
> And whisper while the stars twinkle among them [1]
> His lullaby.

Byron in "Childe Harold,"[2] expresses the same idea. However, Byron is no disciple of Wordsworth in the nature philosophy. Byron prizes nature for her glorious inhumanity. To him nature stands apart in majestic scorn of the human herd, while to Wordsworth nature is given a voice which speaks to all humanity.[3]

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1. Ibid., "The Recluse," lines 593-612.
2. See page 28.
3. Fairchild, The Romantic Quest, p. 136.

The loneliness of Wordsworth when in the city is then perhaps due to the absence there of nature's voice calling to him among the rest of humanity.

Wordsworth hoped that he might always spend his days among his beloved lakes and mountains but pleaded,

> . . . if I oft
> Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
> And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
> Of maddening passions mutually inflamed;
> Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
> Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
> Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
> Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
> Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
> Have their authentic comment; that even these
> Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn! —
> Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'st
> The human Soul of universal earth,
> . . .
> Upon me bestow [1]
> The gift of genuine insight.

The poem "Michael" gives another illustration of the city's evil influence mentioned in "Peter Bell" and in "The Prelude." Rather than let the ancestral homestead pass from the family, Michael, an old shepherd, is willing that his only son Luke go to the city and secure work in order to free the land from debt. Before Luke goes away, he lays, in Michael's presence, the first stone of the sheepfold which they have planned to build together. Michael knows that Luke will have many temptations in the city and advises him thus:

> . . . Luke
> When thou art gone away, should evil men

---

1. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "The Recluse," lines 825-841.

> Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
> And of this moment; thither turn thy thoughts,
> And God will strengthen thee. [1]

At first Luke did well in the city, but

> 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. [2]

In the poem "To Joanna," written also in 1800, Wordsworth in speaking of the city as the early home of Joanna mentions one unpleasant part of the city, the smoke. He says,

> Amid the smoke of cities did you pass
> The time of early youth; and there you learned,
> From years of quiet industry, to love
> The living Beings by your own fireside,
> With such a strong devotion, that your heart
> Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
> Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
> And make dear friendships with the streams
> and groves. [3]

There are times when Wordsworth does feel the greatness of the city. He speaks of the great city in a poem upon an outhouse, written in 1800. This outhouse is a rude edifice, but he says,

> Alas! the poor
> Vitruvius of our village, had no help
> From the Great City; never, upon leaves
> Of red Morocco folio, saw displayed,
> In long succession, pre-existing ghosts
> Of Beauties yet unborn. [4]

---

1. Ibid., "Michael," lines 404-408.
2. Ibid., lines 443-447.
3. Ibid., "To Joanna," lines 1-8.
4. Ibid., "Written with a Pencil upon a Stone in the Wall of the House (an Outhouse) on the Island at Grasmere," lines 5-10.

This is not the first time he has referred to "the great city." in "The Prelude" London was often called the great city.

Great though the city might be, however, Wordsworth still preferred the country. In "The Sun Has Long Been Set," he describes a June night in the country and then asks,

> Who would "go Parading"
> In London, "and masquerading,"
> On such a night of June
> With that beautiful soft half moon,
> And all these innocent blisses? [1]

It is easy to see that Wordsworth preferred to spend this kind of a night not in the city but in the country.

In 1802, as Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy were on their way to Calais to see Annette Vallon,[2] he saw London clothed with a beauty equal to that of nature. Dorothy says, "we mounted the Dover Coach at Charing Cross. It was a beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river, and the multitude of little boats, made a most beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge. The houses were not overhung with their cloud of smoke, and they were spread out endlessly, yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a fierce light, that there was even something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles."[3] Wordsworth describes this scene in one of his most famous sonnets.

> Earth has not anything to show more fair;
> Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
> A sight so touching in its majesty;

---

1. Ibid., "The Sun Has Long Been Set," lines 10-14.
2. Annette Vallon was a French girl whom Wordsworth had met and loved during his visit to France in 1791-92 and who had given birth to his daughter in December, 1792, to whom Wordsworth gave the name of Caroline Wordsworth.
3. William Knight, editor, Journal of Dorothy Wordsworth, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905, Vol. 1, p. 144.

> This City now doth, like a garment, wear
> The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,
> Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
> Open unto the fields, and to the sky:
> All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
> Never did the sun more beautifully steep
> In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
> Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
> The river glideth at his own sweet will:
> Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
> And all that mighty heart is lying still! [1]

While in France in 1802, Wordsworth wrote several sonnets on Calais in which he tells of the change which has come over this city. Once it was a city of "songs, garlands, mirth, banners, and happy faces, far and high," [2] but in 1802 he says, "Heaven grant that other cities may be gay! Calais is not." [3]

In a note on the sonnet "In London," September, 1802, Wordsworth says,

> This was written immediately after my return from France to London, when I could not but be struck, as here described, with the vanity and parade of our own country, especially in great towns and cities, as contrasted with the quiet, and I may say desolation, that the revolution has produced in France.

In "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale," Wordsworth again expresses as in "The Reverie of Poor Susan," the survival of a love for the country in those who have been born there, but who are now living in the city. The old farmer of Tilsbury Vale has lost his money and property, and having cheated his neighbors has been forced to hide himself in the city, but

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1. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "Sonnet Composed upon Westminster Bridge,"
2. Ibid., "Composed Near Calais, on the Road Leading to Ardres, August 7, 1802, line 8.
3. Ibid., "Calais," August 15, 1802, lines 6-7.

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
Like one whose own country's far over the sea;
And Nature, while through the great city he hides
Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

. . .

This gives him the fancy of one that is young.
More of soul in his face than of words on his tongue:
Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
Andtears of fifteen will come into his eyes.

What's a tempest to him, or the dry parching heats?
Yet he watches the coulds that pass over the streets;
With a look of such earnestness often will stand,
You might think he'd twelve reapers at work in the Strand.

. . .

Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his way,
Thrusts his hands in a wagon, and smells of the hay;
He thinks of the field he so often hath mown,
And is happy as if the rich freight were his own.

But chiefly by Smithfield he loves to repair,--
If you pass by at morning, you'll meet with him there.
The breath of the cows you may see him inhale, [1]
And his heart all the while is in Tilsbury Vale.

In Wordsworth's walks about London, he made many observations of its more humble inhabitants and wrote of them. Once while walking with Charles Lamb along the bank of the Thames River, he saw a floating-mill, on the platform of which, the miller with two maidens found room enough to dance. Musing on the fact that pleasures are scattered throughout the earth to be freely claimed by whoever shall find them, he wrote:

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold you prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames!
The platform is small, but gives room for all;
And they're dancing merrily.

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1. Ibid., "The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale, lines 61-68.

. . .
They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth. [1]

At another time, in Oxford Street, he watches a crowd powerfully swayed by a blind fiddler, and describes the various passers-by, who stop and listen to his music:

What a eager assembly! What an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer opprest.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the night,
So He, where he stands in a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there of dusky browed Jack,
And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

. . .
Mark that Cripple who leans on his crutch; like a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour!--
That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the Babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs--they care not for you,
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue! [2]

In Leicester Square, observing a showman, in the midst of a crowd, exhibiting a telescope, he noticed that each one in turn who gazed through the tube seemed to go away as if dissatisfied. As he wonders why, he gives us a good analysis of human nature.

Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands ready with the fee;
And envies him that's looking;--what an insight it must be!

---

1. Ibid., "Stray Pleasures," lines 1-30.

2. Ibid., "The Power of Music," lines 1-45.

> Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy implement
> have blame,
> A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to
> shame?
> Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
> Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent
> vault?
>
> . . .
>
> Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and
> pore
> Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
> One after One they take their turn, nor have I one espied
> That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied. 1

Might this not be another instance of the lack of preparation for nature's beauties for which Wordsworth pitied Coleridge?

Wordsworth protests against sordid money greed, selfishness, and other degrading influences of worldliness, saying:

> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
> Little we see in Nature that is ours;
> We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
> The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
> the winds that will be howling at all hours,
> And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
> For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
> It moves us not.--Great God! I'd rather be
> A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea; 2
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

Thus, one finds Wordsworth in other poems holding fast to the ideas set forth in "The Prelude." In his earlier years his dislikes for the city were many. He ever hungered for the freedom, the purity, the beauty, the friendliness, the solace, and the teaching and uplifting powers of his own native open spaces and rural life in general.

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1. Ibid., "Star Gazers," lines 7-32.
2. Ibid., "The World is Too Much With Us; Late and Soon."

CHAPTER III

THE ATTITUDE OF THE LATER WORDSWORTH

In 1810 Wordsworth speaks of the city as a thronged place and an unworthy place for a meditative person. He says,

> Poor men turn aside
> In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
> As being all unworthy to detain
> A Soul by contemplation sanctified. [1]

In "The Excursion," 1812, as in "The Prelude" Wordsworth mentions the noise of cities. He says, "strongest minds are often those of whom the noisy world hears least." [2]

In describing Paris just before the Revolution, the Wanderer, a character in "The Excursion," says,

> . . . the great city, an emporium then
> Of golden expectations, and receiving
> Freights everyday from a new world of
> Hope. [3]

Earlier poems of Wordsworth referred to the city as a great city. The Wanderer invites Contemplation to leave the turbulence of the city and to come into the country.

> Hail Contemplation! from the stately towers,
> Reared by the industrious hand of human art
> To lift thee high above the misty air
> And turbulence of murmuring cities vast;
> From academic groves, that have for thee
> Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
> To which those mayst resort for holier peace. [4]

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1. Ibid., "O'erweening Statesmen Have Full Long Relied," lines 6-8.
2. Ibid., "The Excursion," Book I, lines 90,91.
3. Ibid., Book II, lines 216-218.
4. Ibid., Book III, lines 101-107.

In "The Excursion," the Solitary describes an American city, possibly New York, by saying, "behold a city, fresh, youthful, and aspiring."[1]

In the following quotation one sees a dislike for the growth of cities.

> From the germ
> Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
> Here a huge town, continuous and compact
> Hiding the face of earth for leagues--and there
> Where not a habitation stood before,
> Abodes of men irregularly massed
> Like trees in forests--spread through spacious tracts,
> O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
> Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
> Of vapour glittering in the morning sun. [2]

In the sixth book of "The Excursion" Wordsworth mentions an unpleasant phase of the city. He praises the "swelling hills," the "spacious plains," but says "the dense air, which town or city breeds, intercepts the sun's glad beams."[3]

Evil influences of the city were mentioned in "Peter Bell," "Michael," and other poems of the younger Wordsworth. The Wanderer in "The Excursion" in telling of an irresolute and weak young man who has fallen into evil paths says,

> 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;
> Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
> Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
> Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay. [4]

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1. Ibid., Book III, line 884.
2. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 118-127.
3. Ibid., Book VI, lines 22,23.
4. Ibid., Book VI, lines 351-358.

In "The Excursion" Wordsworth expresses his displeasure at the misery of town-workers and agricultural workers alike. The Wanderer describes the unceasing toil of factories and its influence upon the workers.

> Disgorged are now the ministers of day;
> And, as they issue from the illumined pile,
> A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door--
> And in the courts--and where the rumbling stream,
> That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
> Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed,
> Among the rocks below, Men, Maidens, youths,
> Mother and little children, boys and girls,
> Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
> Within this temple, where is offered up
> To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
> Perpetual sacrifice. [1]
>
> . . .
>
> The boy where'er he turns,
> Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
> Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient woods;
> Or when the sun is shining in the east,
> Quiet and calm. Behold him in the school
> Of his attainments? No; but with the air
> Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
> His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
> Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
> Creeping his gait and cowering, his lips pale,
> His respiration quick and audible;
> And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
> Could break from out those languid eyes, or blush
> Mantle upon his cheek. [2]

The Solitary agrees with the Wanderer but reminds him of the many vagrants and beggars, who were found in the country districts before the age of industrialism. "Another sample of what the rural districts have produced," he says, "is the staring ploughboy to whom Nature has not been kind."

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1. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 174-185.

2. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 302-315.

> Stiff are his joints;
> Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
> Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
> Fellows to those that lustily upheld
> The wooden stools for everlasting use,
> Whereon our fathers sate. And mark his brow
> Under whose shaggy canopy are set
> Two eyes--not dim, but of a healthy stare--
> Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange--
> Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
> A look or motion of intelligence
> From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-row,
> Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
> Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.
> What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand,
> What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
> Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
> Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
> This torpor is no pitiable work
> Of modern ingenuity; no town
> Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught
> Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
> To which (and who can tell where or how soon?)
> He may be roused. 1

The Wanderer answers,

> Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
> The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught;
> The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
> And miserable hunger. 2

But he argues that the ploughboy's wrongs are recognized by everyone, while the evils of industrialism are more dangerous because they are hidden under the guise of civilization.

> No one takes delight
> In this oppression; none are proud of it;
> It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
> Of standing grievance, an indigenous vice
> Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
> Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
> A bondage lurking under shape of good,--
> Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,

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1. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 402-425.

2. Ibid., Book IX, lines 161-164.

> But all too fondly followed and too far; --
> To victims, which the merciful can see
> Nor think that they are victims--turned to wrongs,
> By women, who have children of their own,
> Beheld without compassion, yea, with praise!
> I spake of mischief by the wise diffused
> With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
> The healthier, the securer, we become;
> Delusion which a moment may destroy! [1]

The Wanderer then given an account of the changes in the country, which have been brought about by industrialism, and its harmful effects upon the home.

> Domestic bliss
> (Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
> How are thou blighted for the poor man's heart!
> Lo! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
> The habitations empty! or perchance.
> The Mother left alone, -- no helping hand
> To rock the cradle of her peevish babe;
> No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
> Or in dispatch of each day's little growth
> Of household occupation; no nice arts
> Of needle-work; no bustle at the fire,
> Where once the dinner was prepared with pride;
> Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind;
> Nothing to praise, to teach or to command!
> The Father, if perchance he still retain
> His old employments, goes to field or wood,
> No longer led or followed by the Sons;
> Idlers perchance they were, -- but in his sight;
> Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth:
> 'Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
> Ne'er to return! That birthright now is lost. [2]

Wordsworth believes through the influence of the world, man becomes a slave to money, ambition, power, or praise and instead of being a complete whole in himself he becomes

> The senseless member of a vast machine,
> Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel. [3]

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1. Ibid., Book IX, lines 182-198.
2. Ibid., Book VIII, lines 262-282.
3. Ibid., Book IX, lines 159-160.

Wordsworth again as in earlier poems speaks of the city as a crowded place. The Wanderer in "The Excursion" says,

> Shall that blest day arrive
> When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
> In crowded cities, without fear shall live
> Studious of mutual benefit; and he,
> Whom morn awakens, among dews and flowers
> Of every clime, to till the lonely field,
> Be happy in himself? [1]

During a tour in Scotland in 1814 Wordsworth visited a beautiful ruin upon one of the islands of Loch Lomond, known as The Brownies Cell. To him it was a place where "world wearied men withdrew of yore."[2]

In an Ode, 1816, Wordsworth speaks of London as follows:

> O genuine glory, pure renown!
> And well might it beseem that mighty Town
> Into whose bosom earth's best treasures flow
> To whom all persecuted men retreat. [3]

Thus again as in other poems already quoted, he speaks of the power and greatness of the city. In a sonnet, 1816, he speaks of Vienna as "The Imperial City."[4]

Wordsworth, who in his youth had longed to travel extensively, in his later years became a great traveler, his tours taking him to Switzerland, Italy, France, and other continental countries, to Scotland several times, to Ireland, and to many localities in his own country. In 1820 Wordsworth, with his wife and sister, made a tour of the Continent. While there, he pays

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1. Ibid., Book IX, lines 666-672.
2. Ibid., "The Brownies Cell," line 5.
3. Ibid., "Ode," lines 45-48.
4. Ibid., "Siege of Vienna Raised by John Sobieski," line 6.

poetical tribute in two sonnets to the beautiful city of Bruges by saying:

> Bruges I saw attired with golden light
> (Streamed from the west) as with a robe of power: [1]
>
> . . .
>
> The Spirit of Antiquity--enshrined
> In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,
> In picture, speaking with heroic tongue,
> And with devout solemnities entwined--
> Mounts to the seat of grace within the mind:
> Hence Forms that glide with swan-like ease along,
> Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,
> To an harmonious decency confined;
> As if the streets were consecrated ground,
> The city one vast temple dedicate
> To mutual respect in thought and deed;
> To leisure, to forbearance sedate;
> To social cares from jarring passions freed;
> A deeper peace than in deserts found! [2]

In a note concerning these sonnets Wordsworth writes,

> In Bruges old images are still paramount, and an air of monastic life among the quiet goings-on of a thinly-peopled city is inexpressibly soothing; a pensive grace seems to be cast over all, even the very children.

Thus it seems that it is the similarity of this city to the peacefulness of the country which pleased him most. Southey in "The Poet's Pilgrimage," quoted in Chapter I, had also described the beauties of Bruges.

During this tour, 1820, through Switzerland and Italy, however, most of his time was spent in the country and not in cities. Of the Memorials of this tour, the sonnet, "Engelberg, the Hill of Angels," in which he compares the clouds, about the mountains to hovering angels, is one of the best.

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1. Ibid., "Bruges, Sonnet 1," lines 1-2.
2. Ibid., "Bruges, Sonnet 2,"

As Wordsworth returned to England from the tour of 1820, he wrote of the city of Dover as follows:

> From the Pier's head, musing, and with increase
> Of Wonder, I have watched this sea-side town,
> Under the white cliff's battlemented crown,
> Hushed to a depth of more than Sabbath peace;
> The streets and quays are thronged, (by) why disown
> Their natural utterance: whence this strange release
> From social noise--silence elsewhere unknown?--
> A spirit whispered, "Let all wonder cease;
> Ocean's o'erpowering murmurs have set free
> Thy sense from pressure of life's common din;
> As the dread Voice that speaks from out the sea
> Of God's eternal Word, the Voice of Time
> Doth deaden, shocks of tumult, shrieks of crime,
> The shouts of folly, and the groans of sin." [1]

The "Ocean's o'erpowering murmurs" made him forget the noise, turmoil, folly, and evils of Dover.

Undoubtedly the city of Rome impressed Wordsworth, perhaps because of its history. In 1821 he speaks of it as "the immortal City."[2]

In the following quotations from "Acquittal of the Bishops, 1821, the bustle, hurry, and noise of the city are again mentioned.

> Up, down, the busy Thames--rapid as fire
> Coursing a train of gunpowder--it went
> And transports find in every street a vent,
> Till the whole city rings like one vast quire,
> The Fathers urged the people to be still,
> With outstretched hands and earnest speech--
> in vain! [3]

In a poem written in 1823 a dislike is again shown for

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1. Ibid., "At Dover."

2. Ibid., "Casual Incitement," line 4.

3. Ibid., "Acquittal of the Bishops," lines 5-10.

"trivial pomp and city noise."

> Lives there a man where sole delights
> Are trivial pomp and city noise,
> Hardening a heart that loathes or slights
> What every natural heart enjoys? [1]

Wordsworth in 1826, again speaks of the city as a crowded place and as a place where peace does not dwell. In a poem designed as a farewell to Charles and Mary Lamb, who had retired from the throngs of London to the village of Enfield, he wishes that they might have the peace they deserve and says,

> Most soothing was it for a welcome Friend,
> Fresh from the crowded city, to behold
> That lonely union, privacy so deep,
> Such calm employments, such entire content. [2]

The city mentioned below has been delivered of one unpleasant phase, the smoke, by the "brisk airs of the month of May.

> Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
> Behold a smokeless sky,
> Their puniest flower-pot-nursling dares
> To open a bright eye. [3]

Wordsworth in 1828 again speaks of the quietness and peacefulness of Bruges.

> In Bruges town is many a street
> Whence busy life hath fled;
> Where, without hurry, noiseless
> The grass-grown pavement tread. [4]

In "The Highland Broach" as in Book VIII of "The Excursion" Wordsworth seems to resent the growth of "busy towns."

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1. Ibid., "To the Lady Fleming," lines 51-54.
2. Ibid., "Farewell Lines," lines 9-12.
3. Ibid., "Ode Composed on May Morning," lines 37-40.
4. Ibid., "Incident at Bruges," lines 1-4.

> Lo! busy towns spring up, on coasts
> Thronged yesterday by airy ghosts;
> Soon, like the lingering star forlorn
> Among the novelties of morn,
> While young delights on old encroach
> Will vanish the last Highland Broach. [1]

In "Devotional Incitements," 1832, Wordsworth mentions people "hurrying along the busy streets." [2]

In a comparison of the medieval town and the castles of that period the towns are praised as "peaceful abodes."

> Yet more; around these Churches, gathered Towns
> Safe from the feudal Castle's haughty frowns;
> Peaceful abodes, where Justice might uphold
> Her scales with even hands, and culture mould
> The heart to pity, train the mind in care
> For rules of life, sound as the time could bear. [3]

The City of Greenock described in 1833 seems not to have the usual characteristics of a city. Of it Wordsworth says,

> We have not passed into a doleful City
> . . .
> Where be the wretched ones, the sights for pity?
> These crowded streets resound no plaintive ditty: --
> As from the hive where bees in summer dwell,
> Sorrow seems here excluded; and that knell,
> It neither damps the gay nor checks the witty. [4]

In 1835 Wordsworth speaks of London, the birthplace of Charles Lamb, as a great city. Other references to the "great city" have been quoted in this study.

> To a good man of most dear memory
> This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
> From the great city where he first drew breath,
> Was reared and taught. [5]

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1. Ibid., "The Highland Broach," lines 73-78.
2. Ibid., "Devotional Incitements," line 45.
3. Ibid., "Stanzas Suggested in a Steamboat off Saint Bees' Head, on the Coast of Cumberland," lines 127-132.
4. Ibid., "Greenock," lines 1-8.
5. Ibid., "Written After the Death of Charles Lamb," lines 1-4.

In 1837 Wordsworth made a long tour in Italy with Crabb Robinson. But the poems which result from this tour indicate a mind scarcely any longer susceptible to any vivid stimulus except from accustomed objects and ideas. He himself says,

> But where'er my steps
> Shall wander, chiefly let me cull with care
> Those images of genial beauty, oft
> Too lovely to be pensive in themselves
> But by reflection made so, which do best
> And fitliest serve to crown with fragrant wreaths [1]
> Life's cup when almost filled with years, like mine.

These latter tours show that Wordsworth was not blindly infatuated with his own lake scenery; that his admiration could face comparisons, and keep the same vividness when he looked upon foreign scenery. However, these tours are most noticeable in that they show "his love for natural beauties, rather than the towns; for fresh life—in bird, or flower, or little child--rather than for relics of the things of old."[2]

He concluded one poem by saying,

> Let us now
> Rise, and tomorrow greet magnificent Rome. [3]

At Rome, he wrote a sonnet on a pine tree, in which he says that the sight of the tree

> Supplanted the whole majesty of Rome
> (Then first apparent from the Pincian Height)
> Crowned with St. Peter's everlasting Dome. [4]

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1. Ibid., "Musings Near Aquapendente," lines 198-204.
2. A. J. Symington, William Wordsworth, Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1881, p. 206.
3. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "Musings Near Aquapendente," lines 371-372.
4. Ibid., "The Pine of Monte Mario at Rome," lines 12-14.

Wordsworth seemed to be interested in Florence because of its cultural background. In speaking of his visit there he says,

> Under the shadow of a stately pile,
> The dome of Florence, pensive and alone,
> Nor giving heed to aught that passed the while
> I stood, and gazed upon the marble stone, [1]
> The laurelled Dante's favorite seat.

While in Florence he visited the Art galleries and wrote poems[2] about some of the pictures.

The following extracts from Crabb Robinson's "Diary" will give ample proof that Wordsworth enjoyed the beauties of nature and the country more than the cities:

> April 6th, 1837 (At Nismes) I took Wordsworth to see the exterior of both the Maison Carree and the Arena. He acknowledged their beauty, but expected no great pleasure from such things. He says: "I am unable, from ignorance, to enjoy these sights. I receive an impression, but that is all. I have no science, and can refer nothing to principle." He was, on the other hand, delighted by two beautiful little girls playing with flowers near the Arena; and I overheard him say to himself, "O you darlings! I wish I could put you in my pocket, and carry you to Rydal Mount." [3]

> April 18th. At the grand little lake, the Königsee,—near Berchtesgaden, I left Wordsworth alone, he being engaged in composition. The neighborhood of Berchtesgarden and Salzburg greatly delighted him. He was enchanted by a drive near the latter place, combining the most pleasing features of English scenery with grand masses and forms. At Salzburg, he wandered about on the heights, greatly enjoying the views,

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1. Ibid., "At Florence," lines 1-5.

2. "Before the Picture of the Baptist by Raphael, in the Gallery at Florence," and "At Florence—from Michael Angelo."

3. Thomas Sadler, editor, Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of H. C. Robinson, Boston: Fields, Osgood and Co., 1870, 241.

while I was attending to accounts, and reading a packet of Allgemeine Zeitung. The fashionable watering-place of Ischl was not at all to his taste, and I soon found him bent on leaving it. [1]

June 7th (Bologna) I spent the day more pleasantly than Wordsworth. He has been uncomfortable owing to the length of the streets. He is never thoroughly happy but in the country. [2]

May 10th. We rose early, and had a delightful walk before breakfast. We ascended the Coliseum. The building is seen to much greater advantage from above. Wordsworth seemed fully impressed by its grandeur, though he seemed still more to enjoy the fine view of the country beyond. [3]

Wordsworth seems to resent the coming of the railroad and "the busy world" into the peaceful country. In 1844 he writes,

> Is there no nook of English ground secure from
> rash assault?
> Schemes of retirement sown
> In youth, and 'mid the busy world kept pure
> As when their earliest flowers of hope were blown,
> Must perish--how can they this blight endure? [4]

The following note written as an introduction to "The Bleeding Heart," 1845, perhaps summarizes Wordsworth's attitude as shown in the foregoing quotations. Longing for justice, power, and dignity among the simpler walks of life, he resents the temptations, the weaknesses, and the confinement of so-called civilization in the crowded and industrially-minded city.

> It has been said that the English, though their country has produced so many great poets, is now the most unpoetical nation in Europe. It is probably true; for they have more

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1. Ibid., p. 253.
2. Ibid., p. 249.
3. Ibid., p. 244.
4. Wordsworth, Op. cit., "On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway," lines 1-5.

> temptations to become so than any other European people. Trade, commerce and manufactures, physical science, and mechanic arts, out of which so much wealth has arisen, have made our countrymen infinitely less sensible to movements of imagination and fancy than were our forefathers in their simple state of society. Touching and beautiful were, in most instances, the names they gave to our indigenous flowers, or any other they were familiarly acquainted with! Every month for many years we have been importing plants and flowers from all quarters of the globe. . . . Will their botanical names ever be displaced by plain English appellations, which will bring them home to our hearts by connection with our joys and sorrows? It can never be unless society treads back her steps toward these simplicities which have been banished by the undue influence of towns spreading and spreading in all direction, so that city-life with every generation takes more and more the lead of rural. Among the ancients, villages were reckoned the seats of barbarism. Refinement, for the most part false, increases the desire to accumulate wealth. . . . Inhumanity pervades all our dealings in buying and selling. . . . Oh for the reign of justice, and then the humblest man among us would have more power and dignity in and about him than the highest have now! 1

One finds that the attitude of the "later Wordsworth" was very similar to that of the "younger Wordsworth." In his later poems he expressed many of the same dislikes for the city which are found in the earlier poems, and he continued to praise the beauties of nature and the country as long as he lived.

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1. Ibid., Note to "Love Lies Bleeding."

CONCLUSION

From this study one may conclude that Wordsworth disliked the city because of the following elements: his unfitness for the city; its loneliness, vastness, severity, noisiness, trivialities and dullness; the vices, extravagances, ignorance, vulgarity, follies, brutalities, falsehoods, vehemence, and indifference of its people; the deformities of crowded life; the tedious restrictions of city society; the tediousness and vanity of courts, orators, and preachers; the tumult of mobs, riots, and executions; the struggle of city humanity; and the difficulty with which love thrives in the overcrowded city. He did, however, find many phases of the city which he liked: its materials for the study of human nature; the casual incidents of real life; the serving of the city's mass of humanity as a background for single forms; the courage, truth, integrity, and tenderness found in individuals on city streets; the intellectuality of the universities; the mysteries of the city; its majesty and power; and the peace and quiet of city nights.

His poetry indicates that his attitude toward the city changed very little throughout his long life. He definitely preferred the country to the city. This is shown by his innate love of nature; his belief in the natural goodness of man; his conception of the inborn excellence of childhood; and his conviction that this divine element is kept alive through communion

with nature. A careful study of the attitudes of some of his predecessors and some of his contemporaries has shown that he was little influenced by them. His impression of the city shows a mind open and independent of the classical age and of his own environment.

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