

reading a book." Wordsworth proceeds to engage the old man in a conversation, they exchange common courtesies about the weather, and on further investigation finds out that the old man is a leech gatherer. Although far from the literal plane of nobility the old man speaks like a man of ~~the old man speaks like a man of~~ quality. He may be old and feeble but from his mouth come, "Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach/ Of ordinary men; a stately speech." The old man is sanctified by the type of natural life he leads; and here is another Wordsworthian comment of the goodness of a simple natural life. In XV Wordsworth describes the type of nomadic life the old man lives, but does not look on it with distaste or condescension, comparing him with a visage from a dream making him more noble than the average person. Lines 111-112 shows Wordsworth is highly affected by this meeting, thinking that the old man is oracular due to the strength he has given hi<sup>is</sup> in the belief <sup>of</sup> the enduring qualities of mankind. Stanzas XVII to the end are for the most part a ~~redundant~~ repetition of the conversation he has so far had with the old man and his own problem, its only purpose seems to be to show that Wordsworth was unwilling to let the old man, a prime example of mankind, leave but wanted <sup>him</sup> to stay around for <sup>Maybe</sup> awhile. Besides admiring the old man for the purity and honesty of his life, he is taken by the sharpness of his mind. The last two lines of the poem frame the man as a symbol of human continuancy; with the memory of this old pure natural man, and the help of God, Wordsworth will be secure.

This old man happened along into Wordsworth life at exactly the right time, when he was experiencing doubts in the way he had chosen for himself as a nature poet. This poem has two reversals in Wordsworth's emotional state, in stanzas IV the cheerfulness of nature escapes him, and in the transition from stanzas XVI to XVII where the messenger bringing faith in human continuancy gets lost in Wordsworth's reoccurring dark mood of poetic consciousness. This poem is a statement on the moods