

## Nature (the view of Thomson)

It may fairly be said, too that the power with which he represent nature - and there are few poems in which we can more distinctly hear the wind stirring the forest, and feel the sun striking upon the plain - makes him in some degree exceptional. He was an outsider of that brilliant society which delighted in the life of town as a new found pleasure which loosed upon fox hunting squires as the embodiment of rustic brutality, and could never sincerely prefer a hillside to a coffee-house. . . . . (p. 360)

= But if we ask what was Thomson's conception of nature we shall see that it was substantially that of his age. The old pastoral beauty poetry which filled the country with fawns and satyrs & semi-mythological rustics was extinct; its last breath was uttered in the faded sentimentalism of Phillips and Pope and the dead form was only available for such pleasuring as that of Gay and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. (p. 361)

Stephen's Eng. Thought in the  
18<sup>th</sup> Cent. vol II.

"Nature is not so much regarded as itself a living power, or animated by the forces projected from a poetic imagination as the series of judicious arrangements which enabled the theologians of the day to confront the sciences. This therefore, Thomson

though a most genuine lover of natural  
science, sees in it a comparatively  
lifeless series of phenomena. P. 362

## Romanticism &amp; Naturalism.

"To get out of the rut & cast off the obsolete shackles, two methods might be adopted. The intellectual horizon might be widened by including a greater number of ages and countries; or men might try to fall back upon the thoughts and emotions common to all times and races, and so cast off the superficial incrustation. The first method, that of the romanticists, aims at increasing our knowledge; the second, that of the naturalistic school, at basing our philosophy on deeper principles."

Eng. Thought in the 18<sup>th</sup> cent.

Vol II. P. 448.

Nature (the return to. What is the meaning of it?)

I. Social aspect. Briefly we may say that the social revolution was an attempt to cast off the ossified crust of effete social organs which had become incapable of discharging their functions. To return to nature was with Rousseau & his followers to get rid of kings, nobles, and priests, who could no longer rule or teach. "aims at the pure, simple, reasonable, or natural state of society." (b) The English analogue is rather to be sought in the utilitarianism of Bentham, which rejected the old metaphysical method as well as the old traditional doctrine. "They wanted to replant

the authorities with by a direct appeal to  
experience (and not to abstract reason).

II. Imagination (in aspect of) to do away with all  
rules & conventions of literary composition

"God & nature" of early writers seemed to involve  
a complete divorce between reality & philosophy.  
To remedy this divorce was the business of the  
nation.

to write p

Nature (The return to Cowper's)

"He escapes, in short, from a corrupt and cruel world by becoming a religious recluse; . . . —, but his ideal existence is one of quiet contemplation & unobtrusive benevolence outside the hurry and the jar of its great turmoil of life." "He escapes to quiet fields and brooks, from the torture of his own excited imagination and from the agonies inflicted upon a morbidly sensitive character by the conflict with his coarser fellows."

Eng. Th. in 18th C. P. 453