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Reminiscence of Wordsworth Day.

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Edited by Canon Rawnsley,



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A REMINISCENCE
OF
WORDSWORTH DAY,

COCKERMOUTH, APRIL 7th, 1896.

EDITED BY

THE REV. H. D. RAWNSLEY, M.A.,
HON. CANON OF CARLISLE,

WITH

PREFATORY NOTES ON COCKERMOUTH,

BY THE REV. H. J. PALMER, M.A.,
VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH, COCKERMOUTH,

AND

AN ESSAY ON WORDSWORTH,

BY THE REV. J. LLEWELYN DAVIES, D.D.

**Illustrated by Views of the Memorial Fountain,
The Birth Place and Terrace Walk of the Poet,
And the Grave of the Poet's Father.**

COCKERMOUTH:

Brash Bros, "West Cumberland Times" Printing Works.

1896.

NOTE.

THE Title, "A Reminiscence of Wordsworth Day," has been chosen because it is hoped that as each year brings daffodil time round again, the Birthday of the Poet may be celebrated in Coker-mouth by a children's holiday.

Any profit arising from the sale of this little book will be devoted to a "Prize Fund," for awarding prizes for Recitations of Wordsworth's Poetry, open to the Scholars in the Coker-mouth Day Schools.

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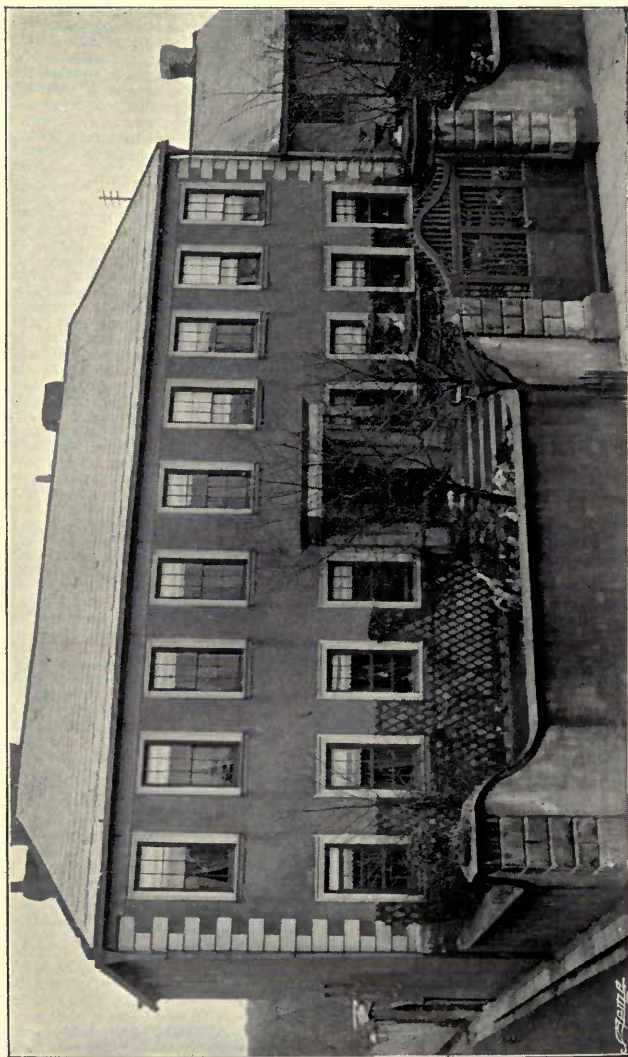
THE SONNET PREFATORY.

AT THE UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN IN
THE PUBLIC PARK, TO THE MEMORY OF
WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH, APRIL 7, 1896.

WELL met in glad commemorative throng.
Of this cool fountain-water as we drink
We bind our gratitude by crystal link
To thee, the fountain head of Cumbrian song ;
To thee, whose music still shall flow, as long
As men on man and human life may think,
Or hopes and fears into our bosom sink
From nature's overflowing, pure and strong.

But, Wordsworth, here, on this thy natal day,
Uplifted high o'er Derwent's double stream,
Our hearts remember that diviner flood,
The light that flowed through all thy childhood's
dream,
The inspiration of thy later way,
The untailing spring of tender sisterhood.

H. D. RAWNSLEY.



WORDSWORTH HOUSE.

Alpine

CONCERNING THE TOWN IN WHICH
THE POET WAS BORN.

THE saying that "Poets are born not made" is universally recognised as true. The *place* of a Poet's birth may therefore rightly claim attention. If "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," then the environment of the infant mind may be taken into account as likely to make impressions of the highest value and to influence greatly the developing genius.

It was natural for the greatest Poet of Nature to be born amidst the most beautiful of natural surroundings. Wordsworth says "I was much favoured in my birth-place," and the murmuring sound of the Derwent which flows at the bottom of the garden of his father's home, did

Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness.

The house in which Wordsworth was born on the 7th April, 1770, is pleasantly situated in the wide old-fashioned Main Street of the ancient town of Cockermouth. From the terrace at the bottom of the garden, along which flows the clear and rapid Derwent, "fairest of all rivers," may be obtained many refreshing and inspiring views. Looking down the river to the west is an interesting old bridge, over which, in old days, the coaches rolled on their way to Carlisle and the North; and raised up from the river, below the bridge, is the Roman village of Papcastle; nearly opposite, further off than the mill-race, where he often "made one long bathing of a summer day," are the famous Mickle Brows, in climbing which, peeps are obtained of the Derwent valley, and of the many many-shaped hills which stand round about; and looking up the river is the "Hay" with its winding path, which

Was like an invitation into space
Boundless, or guide into eternity.

and, closer by, the grand old Norman Castle, rising at the confluence of the rivers, where the Cocker flows into the Derwent and gives the name of Cockermouth to the town. The spirit of this "shattered monument of feudal sway" haunted him years after he had left the margin of the river, whose "smooth breast" received the shadow of its towers, and he did not easily forget the darkness of its dungeons which first made him "acquainted with the grave."

Wordsworth was not allowed to live long on the banks of the Derwent, for on the death of his mother in 1778 his relatives at Penrith took charge of him; but his father lived in Cockermouth till 1783, and was buried on

December 30th of that year in All Saints' churchyard, where a simple stone slab, giving the dates of his birth and death, perpetuates his memory. Wordsworth received his first education at the old Grammar School in the churchyard, before he was sent to school at Hawkshead ; but Cockermouth, by its natural beauty, must lay claim rather to have done something to stimulate his mind as a Poet during these early years, than to have had much to do with his scholastic accomplishments. Dr. Shairp says, in his "Poetic Interpretation of Nature," that "for the growing boy Nature is the homely nurse that, long before school and schoolmaster intermeddle with him, feeds his mind with materials, pouring into him alike the outward framework of his thought and the colours that flush over the chambers of his imagery. . . . Nature is moving his spirit in manifold and mysterious ways to elevate him with her vastness and sublimity, to gladden him with her beauty, to depress him with her bleakness, and restore him with her calm."

Wordsworth never forgot the home of his childhood, and often visited it in his later years. He is glad to find, on one of these visits, that the privet hedge of the terrace walk is still as full of roses as it had been thirty years before.

In 1833 he wrote two sonnets referring to the place of his birth : one, "In sight of the town of Cockermouth, where the Author was born, and his fathers' remains are laid," beginning—

A point of life between my parents' dust,
And yours, my buried little ones, am I.

And the other, entitled "An Address from the Spirit of Cockermouth Castle."

In 1834 his eldest son, John Wordsworth, was appointed vicar of Brigham, the ecclesiastical mother parish of Cockermouth, and situated only about two miles from the house of his birth, which naturally brought the poet frequently into the neighbourhood of Cockermouth. At Brigham is the "Nun's Well," a spot, which with its scenery and associations, he minutely and graphically describes in a sonnet entitled "The Nun's Well at Brigham"—

The cattle crowding round this beverage clear
 To slake their thirst, with reckless hoofs have trod
 The encircling turf into a barren clod :
 Through which the waters creep, then disappear,
 Born to be lost in Derwent flowing near ;
 Yet, o'er the brink, and round the limestone cell
 Of the pure spring (they call it the "Nun's Well,"
 Name that first struck by chance my startled ear),
 A tender spirit broods—the pensive shade
 Of ritual honours to this fountain paid
 By hooded votaresses with saintly cheer ;
 Albeit oft the virgin-mother mild
 Looked down with pity upon eyes beguiled
 Into the shedding of "too soft a tear."

The natural beauty surrounding the birth-place of Wordsworth, as he viewed it and loved it, remains, and is likely to remain as he left it—

By him was seen
 The self-same Vision which we now behold.

Skiddaw, his appearance varied by snow and cloud,
 is always majestic, awful, beautiful.

He shrouds
 His double front among Atlantic clouds,
 And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

The Derwent and the Cocker rushing from the North and the South—from Bassenthwaite and Crummock—meet at

the base of the old Castle-mound and run off together as one fair stream to the West. To the South, Grassmoor and Whiteside, at the end of the lovely Vale of Lorton, appear at times as one immense mass of earth and seem to rival Skiddaw in strength and durability. Whinfall in one direction and the Hay in the other help to break the abruptness of the greater heights beyond. The Solway is only eight miles off, and across it may often be seen the outline of the Scotch coast and the rising of the Scotch hills along it. Indeed, as Dean Church says, "The power of hills was on him; the music of water was in his ears; light and darkness wove their spells for him" —even from the dawn of his earliest consciousness.

Harriet Martineau has described Cockermouth as being one of the most pleasantly situated towns in England. All around there are beautiful views to be obtained, and in every direction delightful excursions can be made. It is about twelve miles to Keswick along the margin of Bassenthwaite Lake, and rather farther over the steep and interesting Whinlatter Pass: eight miles to Crummock through the Lorton Vale, and ten on to Buttermere, and it is also about eight miles to Loweswater Lake over the Mosser Fells.

In the town itself there are several places of interest. The Castle takes us back to the beginning of its known history. In the year 1069, when the County of Cumberland formed part of Scotland, Malcolm King of Scotland fought with the Saxons in the struggle against William the Conqueror, who finally subdued both parties and added the town of Cockermouth to England. By William it was bestowed upon Randolph de Meschines, one of his retainers. It afterwards came into the possession of Waldeof, first Baron of Allerdale, who most probably

built the Castle which now overlooks the town. After the erection of the Castle the town would soon grow in importance, the inhabitants of the surrounding country being attracted by its protection, in the then insecure state of life and property.

It is interesting to note that the gateway tower is ornamented with the arms of the families of Umfreville, Multon, Percy, and Neville—names of renown—who were successively owners of the Castle. The Castle has been the scene of much fighting, and it has not escaped the vicissitudes of war. In the year 1315 King Robert Bruce invaded and laid waste the whole district from Cockermouth to St. Bees, and again in 1387 the Earl of Fife, with an army of thirty thousand Scots, devastated the whole neighbourhood for the space of three years, during which period the Castle held out against the invaders. In far different times—in 1648—it was garrisoned by Charles I., and was soon after laid siege to by the Parliamentary forces under Oliver Cromwell, who raised a fort against it about a quarter of a mile off above the Fitz, and eventually succeeded in making a breach in the south-west wall, and finally in effecting its complete capture.

It is also of interest that Mary Queen of Scots visited the town, and that the house in which she stayed and the room in which she slept, still exist. It is a quaint old Hall dating from the beginning of the 15th century. It appears that Mary crossed the Solway in a small ship, and landed at Workington on the 16th May, 1568. She stayed all night at Workington Hall, and the following day travelled to Cockermouth. The owner of the Castle was then the Duke of Northumberland, who happened to be absent,

and his representative at the Castle refused admission to the unfortunate lady. Thereupon one Henry Fletcher, invited her to his Hall, and gave her shelter and hospitality, and, seeing the state of her attire, he also presented her with crimson velvet to make a new robe.

Cockermouth, which so long ago as 1295, sent two members to Parliament, now gives its name to the Division of West Cumberland which returns Sir Wilfrid Lawson. Ecclesiastically it is divided into two parishes, All Saints' (pop. 2,125), and Christ Church (pop. 3661). All Saints' Church, a beautiful structure with spire rising to the height of 180 feet, is a great ornament to the town, and was re-built, on the site of the old church which Wordsworth attended as a boy, in 1854. The east window was erected in memory of the Poet, a liberal subscription being contributed by the late Prince Consort. Christ Church, a plain stone building, with a heavy tower, was erected in 1865, chiefly through the exertions of the Rev H. B. L. Puxley, and is situated opposite the house in which the Poet was born.

The Independents are an old body in the town, and date from the year 1651, when several of the inhabitants, under the guidance of the Rev. Thomas Larkham, who had been vicar of Tavistock, signed a declaration of faith and formed an Independent church. George Larkham, son of Rev. Thomas Larkham, attended the famous Savoy Conference, and afterwards on returning to Cockermouth was ordained in All Saints' Church by the Presbyters. He officiated regularly afterwards in the church until 1681, when at the Restoration he was ejected from the living. The following entry of Cromwell's death occurs in Mr Larkham's writings, and illustrates his religious sentiments. "On this day died that eminent servant of

God, and nursing father of the churches, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of Great Britain and Ireland.”

It is also recorded that, while Mr Larkham was at one time willing to suffer imprisonment in York Castle for his Puritan principles, yet, when he was the regular pastor of the church he fell foul of those members of his flock who were affected by the teaching of George Fox, and he actually excommunicated two women for their obstinacy in this direction. Notwithstanding the opposition of Mr Larkham and other Divines, George Fox continued to preach and to draw crowds of followers wherever he went. Pardshaw Cragg, just outside the town, was the scene of much successful preaching. Cocker-mouth is still, relatively speaking, a stronghold of Quakerism, and the substantial Meeting House attended by many of its most respected inhabitants bears witness to the fact that whatever may be happening in the villages around and in towns elsewhere, the teaching of Fox is still respected in the place where many of his first successes were attained.

The town of Cocker-mouth has undergone many changes—political, social, and commercial—during its long history, and since the day of the Poet it has not been stationary. Many improvements have been carried out, and it is now known as one of the healthiest towns in England. Its natural beauty has not been spoiled by the workings of coal and iron, as is the case in many of the places round about it. If it has not greatly increased in size and commercial importance, yet it has not been spoilt by smoke and unsightly chimneys. Perhaps its future prosperity will depend upon its continuing a health resort, and a pleasant centre for visitors wishing to see the westernmost part of the Lake Country.

The inhabitants of Cocker-mouth are public-spirited and progressive. At the time of the Jubilee a new road and bridge, over the Cocker, were made into the town, and the streets were planted with trees, and in 1895 a beautiful park was opened, the site having been generously given for the purpose by a lady inhabitant. It is now tastefully laid out with trees and walks, and commands extensive views of mountainous country in all directions. As a resort for the weak and sickly it is an inestimable benefit, and it is also a great advantage to the poor who live without gardens in lower parts of the town. In the Park, the Memorial Fountain to Wordsworth is erected, in view of the house where he was born. The inhabitants on the occasion of the unveiling showed much enthusiasm, and it was evident that the Poet is held in high honour by the people who now live in the town which gave him birth.

Like Stratford-on-Avon, Cocker-mouth is destined to be known throughout all time all the world over because it gave birth to one of immortal fame. "Wordsworth is destined, if any poet is, to be immortal," is the opinion of one who is not likely to have made a mistake in his judgment. And the little town, called after the mouth of the stream which swells the rapid Derwent, is destined to share the renown of him who was born on its banks. The music of his sweet song and the ripple of its bright water will flow on together for ever. He has cast a halo of glory over the surroundings of his native home which will never depart from it. The more we study Wordsworth the more we shall love the country which inspired his verse. "What he has loved, others will love, and he will teach them how."

H. J. PALMER.

THE DAY OF THE FOUNTAIN.

IT was the seventh of April, 1896, and 3 o'clock of a dull and showery afternoon, that we stepped out of the train at Cockermonth and saw on the brow of the Public Park that slopes down toward the station, a large gathering of spectators gazing on what seemed a muffled figure that seemed to stand above a fountain basin of granite. That muffled figure was to be unveiled presently, and Cockermonth was to possess itself of a simple fountain whose chief design was the bronze figure of a young child which should pour forth its flashing cup of crystal clear for the service of man and beast alike, into the stone basin beneath.

All who might to-day stand beside the fountain and look over the grey town, would know that on April 7th, 1896, the little bronze figure of the water-giver had been unveiled to the honour of the two children who had most added fame to Cockermonth, William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy.

To-day is the birthday of the Poet. To-day the opening ceremony of the Fountain is to take place; and down into the town we go to the Town Hall; we find the street thronged with people and a long procession of children, each bearing a posy of golden daffodils, waiting, with the band at their head, to escort the Member of their Division, the Urban District Councillors, and those who have been instrumental in erecting the Memorial Fountain, away to the Harris Park for the opening ceremony.

Now the band strikes up, and away we march to the unveiling. All is simplicity itself; just the kind of

thing the Poet would have felt was fitting, for it is a children's gala, we older people are here on sufferance. But the children will be old one day, and to the last year of their life they will remember this occasion.

The Park is reached ; the Councillors, the Member of Parliament, the Speakers cluster round the Fountain platform ; and if the mountain mist change to a drizzle, and the drizzle become fine rain, no one thinks about it ; for the little veiled figure above the granite basin has excited the curiosity of the umbrella-dark crowd. Then speeches are made, kindly and friendly and full of honour for the name and life of the bard ; certain strings are pulled : a key turns on the water, and to the memory of William Wordsworth, born 126 years ago in yonder manor house below in the ancient town at the mouth of the Cocker, the water is quaffed by the bystanders. It was not a little interesting to note that amongst those who poured libation or drank a health to his memory were grandchildren and great grandchildren of the Poet, who had come to the opening ceremony.

But there were other children of the Poet present, —the daffodils he made immortal, and the scholars, at a given signal, came close up, and filled the granite basin with their glory of innocent flower life, so that the last thing we saw of the Fountain was the dark figure of the little water-giver bending above a golden flower-bed of Cumbrian daffies.

Thence, down into the town to the Town Hall, where many speeches were made and letters of congratulation and sympathy with the object of the gathering were read. It was whispered that one of the great London dailies had

sent their own reporter to be present, and this added to the dignity of the occasion ; and a man of the crowd, as he left the gathering, was heard to say, " Eh what, but I nivver kenned fwok aw the world over set sic store by oor Wadsworth noo ; but what ! Cockermuth mud be a girt plaace hooiver to hev sic a girt man to be proud on."

And the crowd dispersed to wander back into the streets of the old castled town beside the Derwent, feeling that Cockermouth had something to boast of beyond its Auction Mart and its Marble Statue and its Clock and its Castle Brewery ; and that somehow or other the spell of " the mighty minds of old " was upon them ; and Wordsworth's greatness had made them greater too.

The day was not ended yet. By kind invitation of the residents in the Manor House, where Wordsworth was born, many guests passed up the steps and into the substantial house with its comfortable air outside, and its cosy look of panelled rooms and old-fashioned fire-grates within ; and from the window on the northern side gazed into the quaint old walled garden, with its raised terrace, where still the privet grows and the roses bloom, as in the time when Dorothy and her brother peered into the little nest, or gazed across the river to the grassy holmes or up toward the Castle hold, or watched the fishes rise or the sea-gulls flashing by, and felt the Derwent " flow along their dreams." Then back across the old-fashioned garden lawn, gay and fragrant with its hyacinths, the guests strolled into the house and away with farewells into the street bright with the golden sunset glow, and up towards the Station and the field of the Fountain they went, and many realised that a fountain of great memories had been opened that day ; that the fadeless

afterglow of the Poet's mind was upon their native town ;
They felt something of

"The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream " ;

and that for the sake of William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, this their birth-place was more dear.

SPEECHES AT UNVEILING OF THE FOUNTAIN.

Mr Joseph Straughton (the chairman of the Cocker-mouth Urban District Council) said : Ladies and gentlemen,—We are met together on more than an ordinary occasion, to take part in the performance of more than an ordinary ceremony. One hundred and twenty-six years ago there was born in the ancient town of Cocker-mouth a child who as a man was destined to stamp his name on the pages of history, and, by his teaching and influence, greatly to affect for good all future generations, for I think it will be admitted by all that the teaching of his song and the spirit they breathe has done much to elevate, ennoble, and refine the life of the English people. And it is but a fitting tribute we render that to-day assembled we witness the unveiling of this Fountain as a memorial of one who has rendered such incalculable service to his fellows. But we would not forget that, whilst we gladly and cheerfully seek to perpetuate his memory by the erection of this granite Fountain that his name and his memory are treasured on more lasting and less perishable tablets, written on the hearts and memories of those whose lives have been

sweetened and blessed by his song. (Applause.) We must acknowledge that to the gentleman whom we have invited, and who has cheerfully acceded to our request to perform the ceremony of unveiling this Fountain, we are almost—nay, I think we may say altogether—indebted for this memorial of the Poet. (Applause.) I have now the greatest pleasure in calling upon the Rev. Canon Rawnsley to unveil this Fountain (Applause.)

Canon Rawnsley said : Mr Straughton and members of the Urban Council and the Harris Park Committee, ladies and gentlemen,—I am conscious of the great honour done me in asking me to unveil this little Fountain in memory of the childhood of William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. I only wish the task had fallen into worthier hands. Standing in this pleasant Park upon their native hillside, and within sight of the house where the children were born, we remember that to-day, April 7th, is the 126th anniversary of the Poet's birth. Household name as Wordsworth's is in all English-speaking lands to-day, I dare to prophesy that at the end of another 126 years the men of England, of Cumberland, and Cocker-mouth will think more of their great Poet than even they do now. But it is not only of William Wordsworth we think to day; we remember also that dear, dear sister Dorothy, to whom, under God, we chiefly owe it that Wordsworth devoted his life to the high calling of a Poet. The names of Dorothy and William Wordsworth are inseparable : if there had been no Dorothy Wordsworth, there would probably have been no William Wordsworth. They are, in our act of gratitude to-day, indissolubly one. This little Fountain, as it appears to me, fitly symbolises the perpetual stream of living thought for the healing of the nation that

Wordsworth poured forth. It typifies the purity of language, the clearness of truths, to which he gave utterance. It sets forth that refreshment for mind and spirit that all those who read Wordsworth with the understanding, will find in his poems. But, gentlemen, if we wish to be learners of him we must make him our study. We must not only erect Fountains to his memory, but we must read him, for

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or Fountain in a noontide grove,
And you must love him, ere to you
He shall seem worthy of your love.

I trust that the figure of the child proffering the cup of water, above the Fountain's basin, may be in itself a reminder of that ministering childhood and tender sisterhood that was Dorothy's towards her brother. You will see that round the base of the Fountain, above the trough which has been specially designed for the convenience of our four-footed friends, are inscribed the words

Who feels contempt for any living thing
Hath faculties that he hath never used.

May these words remind us at once of the duty we owe to the lower animals and of that loving reverence for all things that have life which breathes from every page of Wordsworth's writing—his writing that bade us "never to blend our pleasure or our pride, with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels." I could wish that this simple memorial Fountain might be more than this. You will have noticed in the list of subscribers the names of people of every varying creed and form of faith. The praise of Wordsworth is in all the churches. One of the last and most touching letters of sympathy received was

from the great teacher of spiritual things, to our two last generations, the Venerable Dr. James Martineau. Let this Fountain say that in appreciation of the truths that Wordsworth taught in nature and in human life, men may more and more become brethren one of another. Nor is this Fountain only a witness of friendship between men of various religious opinion, and of common intellectual regard. It is a monument of that abiding charity which a common appreciation of the Poet may work among the nations. The American Ambassador, than whom no American citizen is held in higher regard among thoughtful men on either sides of the Atlantic, and to whom both nations owe a debt of gratitude for his services in the past crisis, writing me last week, spontaneously, and in the kindest way joined in this act of homage to the memory of Wordsworth ; He tells me that Wordsworth's gentle influence is steadily increasing in America, and more and more becoming a recognised moral and social force over there. May we not see, then, in this act of international regard for the Poet we hold so dear, one of those many ties of delight in common language and common genius, that bind us here and over sea, in common brotherhood. The forces that Wordsworth set free to keep men's lives simple, thoughtful, unselfish, and pure, shall surely make for righteousness and peace and community among the nations who can claim him as their kinsman and the common Poet of their common tongue, even unto the end. Mr Straughton, it is with profound reverence for the lives of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, and with great pleasure, that now before this assemblage, honoured by the presence of two at least of the grandchildren of the Poet, with cordial thanks to Mr. Palmer, Mr. Prior, and the untiring Park Committee, I unveil this Fountain, and in the name



MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN.

of the subscribers beg you, as chairman of the committee, to accept this gift of homage to Cockermouth's greatest son, a "simple water drinking bard," for the use and pleasure of the people. (Applause.)

The Rev H. J. Palmer : I have great pleasure in moving that we offer our best thanks to Canon Rawnsley for all the trouble he has taken over this movement, which he has brought to a successful issue to-day. It is well that in this lovely lake country we have still amongst us one who can so well appreciate the genius of the great lake Poets. Canon Rawnsley has drunk deeply not only of the spirit of the Poets, but of the scenery in which they lived, and he has helped us not a little by his own prose and poetic works to take an interest in the neighbourhood in which we live and to admire the great men who have belonged to it. (Hear, hear.) We are reminded to-day that we are assembled in Wordsworth's birth-place—the greatest Poet of the lake country, and to be reckoned with Tennyson and Browning as making up the trio of the greatest Poets of the century. Indeed, Matthew Arnold, in his famous memorial verses on the Poet's grave in Grasmere Churchyard, laments—

The last poetic voice is dumb,
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

And Tennyson, taking the laureateship from Wordsworth, addressing the Queen, says :—

Victoria,—since your Royal Grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of Him who uttered nothing base.

As assembled in Wordsworth's birth-place it is well that we should not forget the glory that will always belong

to Cockermouth in consequence of this event. We stand in sight of the very house in which he was born, of the churchyard in which his father lies buried, and of the church in which there is a memorial window put up in former years and largely subscribed to by the late Prince Consort, and we are also in time to view the school house in which he received his earliest education, and which in consequence of decay is about to be removed. We are also surrounded by the hills he loved, which, thank God, can never be removed, but stand fast for ever and ever. We are reminded that the spot which receives his beautiful memorial has been generously given to us by a Cockermouth lady and that it will be preserved for the people for ever as a public Park. (Hear, hear.) It is said that "Poets are born, not made"; therefore we may conclude that a favourable birth-place has something to do with poetic genius. (Applause.)

Mr. Edwin Jackson: I have much pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks. We are quite aware that Canon Rawnsley does not wish to be the recipient of a too profuse expression of thanks especially if conveyed in speeches of inordinate length. His has been a labour of love, which is its own reward. But for all that the occasion is fitting for us briefly to thank him for moving in this matter, and for the happy suggestion that the acquisition of this beautiful Park by the people of Cockermouth—through the generosity and munificence of an honoured resident—should be marked by the erection of a public memorial to the greatest, the noblest, and the best that our ancient town has produced, William Wordsworth. And if we owe to Canon Rawnsley nothing more than the suggestion we should have been his debtors, but when we recollect that he promptly made his

views known far and wide, and asked for the wherewithal to carry out the work—in which, I am glad to say, he was singularly successful, the proof of it being before us in this chaste and beautiful Fountain—we must all agree that it is necessary that we should put on record our sense of appreciation in this way. Now, it has been alleged that Cumberland, and more especially Wordsworth's native town, have not yet fully realised the greatness of his genius, and if we are to judge by the outward and visible memorials that the county possesses, there may be some reason for the allegation. But the people of these northern parts are not quick at expressing their emotions. They certainly have not been so demonstrative as their neighbours of the midlands and the south, but there does exist, notwithstanding in their hearts a warm admiration for the great bard who tuned his lyre and sang as perhaps no other Poet ever sang of the true and beautiful in nature, animate and inanimate, ever assigning to man the foremost and noblest place, helping humanity to attain to a higher standard of excellence and endowing even the common objects of this delightful district with a new charm. The whole of his teaching was to elevate and ennoble, and yet his reputation was of slow growth, but it has lasted, and will last for all time. (Applause.) A long life was well nigh ended ere anything like national recognition was accorded him. He has now been nearly half a century dead, and the world's estimate of him is laid before us. His admirers have increased an hundred fold. In many a far-off station in the wilds of the Great North-West of Canada, in the solitary homestead of the Queensland squatter, when thoughts of the Old Home Country crowd upon the memory, Wordsworth's descriptions of smiling English valleys, venerable

churches and peaceful "God's acres" shaded by the "everlasting" yews "Produced too slowly ever to Decay" are read and re-read with an interest and appreciation that only those who are far removed can feel. To the yearly increasing number of his students in England and America it is unnecessary to allude. Wherever the mother tongue of the Anglo-Saxon race is spoken his name and writings are known, and to know them is to derive benefit—harm is impossible. (Applause.) That is the world's estimate to-day. It will be confirmed and emphasised half a century hence. It is the best memorial a great man can have. To it the painter, the sculptor, the poet can add nothing. And the best for us, who reside in this spot, to do is to make ourselves better acquainted with his works and simple upright conscientious life to become familiar with the scenes he loved, and under his guidance learn to understand the natural beauties of the neighbourhood. To it Wordsworth owes much. Born almost on the "bright blue river" Derwent in that interesting home which, by the kindness of Mr and Mrs Robinson Mitchell, is open to our inspection to-day—(applause)—his earliest recollections were of the "Grey old castle," the quaint old garden, and across the river, of the green holmes and hawthorn hedgerows of the ancient kingdom of Strathclyde. Fit scenes for the opening eyes of the future Poet. This, Cockermothians remember with pardonable pride and satisfaction, and whilst the honour of being his birth-place has immortalised the old town, he has himself acknowledged to the full the debt of inspiration he owes to her. (Applause.)

AT THE MEETING AFTERWARDS.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON said: Ladies and gentlemen,—I am very much obliged to the committee who have charge of the arrangements to-day for their kindness in asking me to preside on this interesting occasion. I suppose one reason for my being asked is to be found in the words which Canon Rawnsley used just now in the Park. He said that Wordsworth was a simple water-drinking bard—(laughter)—and I suppose he and the committee thought that to speak of a simple water-drinking bard was the province of a simple water-drinking member of Parliament. (Laughter and applause.) Well, I think Cockermouth has done well in inaugurating this Fountain, and I think Canon Rawnsley has done well in having stirred us all up to this work ; and I think that the people of Cumberland, as well as the people of Cockermouth, will take an interest in the proceedings of to-day, because I am inclined to believe that Wordsworth did a great deal to make the Lake District—to make it popular, to make it known to the English people and to induce them to come among the lakes. (Applause.) Wordsworth acted towards the Lake District of Cumberland and Westmorland much as Sir Walter Scott did towards Scotland. Scotland before Sir Walter Scott's time was looked upon as a barbarous region. I dare say the English people thought it was inhabited by cannibals who would eat them up if they went there —(laughter)—but Sir Walter Scott's beautiful poems introduced us all to Scotland and made it the most popular place in the world at the present day. I think Cockermouth has done well by what you have done to-day. You have appreciated the work of your great Poet by commemorating him in the work of art we have

just seen, and it will lead others, I think, when they see it to study his works, and to feel as those of us do who have read his works—to feel the writings of one whom we may call pre-eminently the great Poet of nature. (Applause.) I suppose we are all interested more or less in poetry. It seems to me to be one of the fine arts, if I may say so. Painting is very delightful. It gives us the lineaments of those whom we love and wish to remember, but a painting is fixed to one place; it cannot be carried about very much, and only a limited number of people can see it. But a Poet writes a beautiful line, and it is fixed in a man's head, and be he rich or poor, high or low, he can carry it about in his head to the very day of his death. As with painting so with sculpture. It is fine, and it is still more difficult for people to see, but they can remember and bear with them the fine sentiments which any Poet has expressed. In fact there is an old saying that a thing of beauty is a joy for ever, and I should say that a fine line of poetry such as many of those which Wordsworth wrote is a joy for ever for a man to carry about with him wherever he goes. (Applause.) Canon Rawnsley and I are great admirers of poetry, and it is rather a curious thing that when we write to one another we generally write in verse, but the curious part of it is that we neither of us can read the other one's writing. (Laughter.) When I get a letter from the Canon I feel sure that he has written something very fine, and when I write to him he also is sure that it is very fine, and we are both satisfied. (Laughter.) It is like the Scotchman's definition of metaphysics. He said it is when one man tries to explain to another man what he does not understand himself. (Laughter.) Well, I am sure, as I say, I think the Canon's writings to me are very good,

because I know when he gets into print his writings are very good, and I hope what he sends to me is equally good and does not contain any bad language or anything of that sort. What I write to him is another sort of thing altogether. I daresay I shall be able to explain my writings. There was a debate about a fortnight ago in the House of Commons on pure beer, and the House was very much excited. I have not seen them so excited for a long time. Pure beer excites everybody, members of Parliament as well as others. (Laughter.) A member on the opposite side of the House to which I sit made a speech, and said that when walking along the street he saw an advertisement, which ran as follows: "It looks like beer, smells like beer, and tastes like beer, but it is not beer." And then he held up a large placard in full view of the House with "Cockermouth mixture" written upon it. (Laughter.) Well, now, a similar description applies to my writings. It looks like poetry, it reads like poetry, and it sounds like poetry, but it is not poetry. (Much laughter.) It's like what margarine is to butter. (Renewed laughter.) The Canon and I hope that all those who are present to-day will imitate Wordsworth's poetry and set him up as their model. As has been said you could not have a better model for purity and for excellence than you can find in Wordsworth. I think there is a good deal of poetry in Cumberland. I have seen many good attempts—very good in their way, short and sweet. I remember a rather striking piece that somebody found when he got to the top of Skiddaw. It was—

Though Skiddaw's top is bad to come at
Polly and me has reached the summit.

(Laughter.) That was a very nice short attempt. You have the whole scene before you in two lines. (Laughter.)

Then somebody at Cockermouth, some rising Poet, wrote something even better, which I consider one of the finest epic poems I ever read considering its brevity and force. There was a football match between Cockermouth and Cleator, and the whole battle was given in two lines.

Cleator came to Cockermouth, cock sure to win ;
Cleator went from Cockermouth sadly taken in.

(Laughter.) The man who wrote that ought to rise to the highest in poetry. They could see Cleator coming to Cockermouth with drums beating, banners flying, determined to crush all opposition, and Cockermouth rising magnificently to repulse the enemy, and winning a glorious triumph. (Laughter and applause.) Well, this is very beautiful, but, as I say, we won't model ourselves exactly on those Poets. We will model ourselves on Wordsworth as much as we can. (Applause.) I am not going to expatiate much longer upon this matter, because there are Canon Rawnsley and others, and Canon Rawnsley is an expert and warm admirer of Wordsworth, acquainted with him in all his details, and will, I have no doubt, give you some of his very best bits. Always, whatever happens, associate Wordsworth with Cockermouth, where he was born in this beautiful valley, I daresay he would share in a sentiment which Moore wrote about another valley in Ireland.

There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the wild waters meet ;
Oh ! the last rays of feeling and life shall depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

Wordsworth was born near where the waters of the Cocker and Derwent meet in this beautiful vale which is so dear to every Cumberland man, and if this valley is

peopled by warm admirers of the Poet, by students of him, by sympathisers with him, it will be better than it is now, for the rising generation could not take a better model than one of the sweetest, simplest, and purest Poets that England ever produced. (Cheers.)

LETTERS READ AT THE MEETING FROM
DISTINGUISHED ADMIRERS OF THE POET.

THE ABBEY, CARLISLE,

APRIL 4TH, 1896.

MY DEAR RAWNSLEY,

My conscience is always smiting me for not being a better student of Wordsworth when I live a part of the year in a home within a stone throw of Dove Cottage. That which impresses me most is his quiet, calm thoughtfulness as a contrast to our modern temptation to hurry and fuss, which it is so very difficult to resist.

Yours very sincerely,

H. BARROW IN FURNESS.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES, LONDON.

MY DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,

It would be most interesting to be present when you dedicate the Memorial Fountain at Cockermouth, the home and birth-place of William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, on April 7th, his birthday. A gladsome spring of bright pure water from their native hillside seems peculiarly the natural cement of such associations as these two beings bring to mind. In America our debt to Wordsworth has long been acknowledged ; and happily

for us his gentle influence is steadily increasing and is more and more a recognised moral and social force. . . .”

Believe me sincerely yours,

T. F. BAYARD.

(The Ambassador begged to be allowed to join in the tribute to Wordsworth's memory and enclosed a cheque).

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

APRIL 28TH, 1896.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

Nothing can give more pleasure to those who admire Wordsworth and who feel more and more how much English poetry and English national life owe to him, than to hear of the graceful and appropriate memorial you are setting up at Cockermouth in honour of him and his sister.

We have been too neglectful in the past of the obvious and simple means of recalling to the inhabitants of a place, many of whom have yet been faintly touched by literary influences, the memory of the great ones who have made their town or countryside immortal, and have endeared the very names of spots, perhaps obscure, to distant men and new generations. One has often gone as a pilgrim to some place which the dwelling there of a great man has consecrated, and been disappointed to find nothing there to shew he was remembered. You are removing this reproach from one such place: and many will in future be glad to find something to speak to them of the Poet and his sister in the little town where they moved about as children and received their first impressions of Nature.

Yours sincerely,

J. BRYCE.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

Your kind letter reaches me here too late to allow of my answering it practically, but indeed in any case I should have more than doubted my capacity to say anything even tolerably worthy of the "Vates Sacer." Amongst the best written tributes to him I always think of Mat. Arnold's. "He took us, as we lay at birth," etc., etc., and of Keble's inscriptions, the one in beautiful Latin, the other in English, I.—In his Oxford Praelectiones. II.—The quasi translation of it in the church of Grasmere. I used often to show the passage in the Praelectiones to my pupils at Harrow. These few lines can hardly reach you till after your return from your pious work, with which I very heartily sympathise.

Believe me to be most truly yours,

H. MONTAGU BUTLER.

14, NORHAM GARDENS, OXFORD.

EASTER DAY, 1896.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Would I could be with you on Tuesday, to join in doing honour to the great Poet, whose memory hallows and endears everything in the Lake Country. There is nothing new to be said of Wordsworth. Only as time goes on we feel more and more the greatness of our debt to him. Every year England's increasing wealth tends to make her more luxurious and artificial. How much has he done both by writing and example to recall us to simplicity? Even if his poems fail to touch men, yet the sight of that Grasmere cottage to which he and his sister retired on £80 a year, doing all the housework and garden work themselves, while he wrote

most of his greatest poems—almost the greatest poems in the language, is an argument stronger than all words to recommend the noble freedom of simple ways of living, and to make men ask themselves if after all independence with high thoughts may not be better than great wealth without them.

There must be many who visit Dove Cottage every year from our great towns, to some at least of whom such a question will not be put in vain. And yet again, that love of country-life, inborn in Englishmen, how terrible is it being sapped by the evergrowing strength of ties that draw men to cities. And what a boon it is for these worn, heated, anxious, everhardening spirits to be drawn back again into Nature, there in its peace and beauty to find their better selves again. And it is not only by the power of depicting outward beauty that Wordsworth draws us. He does not, as has been said, paint Nature. Rather he makes us feel a heart and soul in nature, calm, loving, elevated, inspiring, which finds a counterpart in our own higher nature, and of which he acts to us as the interpreter and go-between.

Long may we enjoy these higher influences of the Lake Country. It is a wide and varied region of heights and glens and winding solitudes, where we can still hear only the cataract, or the raven, or the purling stream, or the breeze rustling in the bracken. To this largeness of Nature Wordsworth would himself, I think, have welcomed all who come there to feel, to rest, to listen, to learn, and to enjoy.

But if the lakes and streams are ever valued only for their water supply and water-power; if trains and tramways carry noisy crowds to the top of Skiddaw and

Scawfell, then, while the gain to such sightseers is inappreciable (beyond the indulgence of a certain curiosity and boisterous merriment), the loss to all the higher thought and feeling of the country will be incalculable.

This is not

“The joy in widest commonalty spread”

of which Wordsworth wrote. Some say that it is selfish not to make everything, including “a thing of beauty,” accessible to all. They forget that one of the chief elements of the “thing of beauty” is the repose and restfulness of the landscape, with nothing foreign or out of tune to jar with it. Once let in noise and clamour and foolish speaking, and you had better be at home at your desk and ledger making up invoices or balancing accounts.

Yours ever sincerely,

A. G. BUTLER.

BALIOI COLLEGE, OXFORD.

MY DEAR RAWNSLEY,

I hope your Wordsworth celebration will be successful. What I shall claim for Wordsworth is not that he is in the front rank of Poets, but that he has distinctly added a new note to poetry. He has extended the range of what is felt as beautiful by showing new relations between nature and the spiritual life of man.

I am ever yours very truly,

E. CAIRD.

(The Master of Baliol was thinking of the world's greatest Poets, not of English poetry only, when he spoke of Wordsworth as not being in the front rank.)

THE QUEEN'S HOTEL, MANCHESTER.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I hope I shall not be too late for the daffodils, but it would have been impossible for me to have adopted your kind suggestion and come down to you earlier. There is always something to be seen on nature's stage—if not daffodils. This brings me naturally to Wordsworth. I think if he had written nothing but the two sonnets, one beginning

The world is too much with us late and soon
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers ;

and

Most sweet is it with our uplifted eyes,

Wordsworth would have delivered his message to all time. Most especially does our time need such teaching, when in our search for the means of life we are destroying all that makes life worth living. No! it is not the search for the means of life, it is the thirst for gold and gain ; ruthless, selfish, destructive, destroying trust between men, and sympathy with nature.

Wordsworth is the "still small voice" recalling us to our saner selves, leading us back from the turmoil of the world, from its "serious folly" to the elemental spirit of nature, from the human drama (the noise of which drowns all other voices) to the drama of the clouds of our mountains, the woods and the waters, the flowers and the grass.

There may be many who appreciated Wordsworth's message, but how few there are who are able to follow it in spirit and in truth. Condemned to live mostly in crowded towns or in narrow-minded villages ; condemned to see the green fields, the woods, the blue hills, if at all, mostly in crowds—never having a chance of wandering

“lonely as a cloud”—except perchance when full of anxiety, and in a state of mind which quite excludes the companionship of “Thought and love.” This is largely done in the perversity of our social system and of order, due no doubt to that aforesaid greed, and “getting and spending.” Would that we were as a people more united as to what constituted the true life. “The cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches” or of poverty—seems to weave a fine web over and around us which deaden our sensibilities and make us less alive to the harmonies of wild nature.

But “it is good for us to be here”—to turn from our artificial life to natural life—to natural scenes—to natural beauty—to simple souls; and to these we can have no more sympathetic and loving a guide than William Wordsworth. His poetry is like the fresh springs from the mountain sides of his well-loved Lake Country, and there is a poetic appropriateness in dedicating a Fountain to his memory.

With kind regards, very truly yours,

WALTER CRANE.

MORLEY'S HOTEL, LONDON,

MARCH 28TH, 1896.

MY DEAR RAWNSLEY,

I have now been in London for a fortnight, and am just leaving it for the continent in the pursuit of new material; and goodness knows when I sha'l get back to Penicuick! I wish I could have helped you with the Wordsworth Fountain.

Always yours,

S. R. CROCKETT.

KIRKBY LONSDALE,

APRIL 7TH, 1896.

MY DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

It was with much regret that I found myself unable to accept my friend Palmer's kind invitation to be present at the ceremony in which you have so rightful a place. To my old interest in Wordsworth a new interest in Cockermouth has of late years been added, and I rejoice in a movement which by increasing the pride of Cumberland in its great native Poet, may be the means of leading the young people to give more thought to Wordsworth, and to study with quickened reverence both his poems and his life. I can imagine no study that could inspire them more nobly, or prepare them better for high enjoyment and for the manly discharge of duty.

Believe me. sincerely yours,

J. LLEWELYN DAVIES.

BUONA VISTA, KILLINEY, CO. DUBLIN.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I rejoice to hear of the Memorial Fountain to be unveiled on Wordsworth's birthday, and in sight of his birthplace. I wish it were possible for me to be present, and by my presence to signify, silently, the debt I owe to Wordsworth. When I was a boy I happily became possessor of a copy of his poems, and I felt something of their radiant calm, together with something of the passion that lies hidden in that calm. During all the years since then they have been to me a source of strength and joy.

I am, dear Canon Rawnsley, very truly yours,

EDWARD DOWDEN.

HAWARDEN.

DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,

I rejoice in any and every manifestation of honour to Wordsworth. I visited his house when a boy, and when a young man had the honour of entertaining him more than once in the Albany (London). I revered his genius, and delighted in his kindness, and in the grave and stately but not austere dignity of his manners. Apart from all personal impressions and from all the prerogatives of genius as such, we owe him a debt of gratitude for having done so much for our literature in the capital points of purity and elevation.

Yours faithfully,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

DEAR RAWNSLEY,

Wordsworth's "message to our time" was, I think, many-sided and far reaching, but mainly a protest against worldliness and conventionality of life, a constantly expressed admiration for all that is simple and true, for "plain living and high thinking." It is a message that every day increases in importance as life becomes more complex, fuller of strain, of ambition, and luxury. The Poet who wrote the lines

There is
One great society alone
The noble living, and the noble dead.

was one whose chief joys and sorrows were connected with simple folk, and to whom nature brought ever-new sources of interest and delight.

Wordsworth's sympathy, his power of entering into the common things of nature, are the secret of his

influence, and as he showed the exquisite fitness of the external world to excite and satisfy the mind of man, he led man on to new possessions of beauty and thought.

Wordsworth's wholesome contempt for an existence of mere money-making, of "getting and spending," his contempt for much of the folly and frivolity of our modern days gave wings to the words of that fine sonnet—

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 give 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 upgathered 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,
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

The simple natural life of man, so intimately bound up with the earth upon which we live, and the air which we breathe, is being spoilt by a craving for false things, by the following of false gods, by brainless fashions, and artificial excitements, and by a literature pandering to all of these things. Such evils are leading us far from the strengthening and healing power that lies in Wordsworth's philosophy of life ; I am not sure that we are not less sensitive to its influence than we were forty

or fifty years ago, when Matthew Arnold wrote those lines by Rotha's stream :—

He found us when the age had bound
 Our souls in its benumbing round ;
 He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears ;
 He laid us as we lay at birth
 On the cool flowery lap of earth,
 Smiles broke from us and we had ease ;
 The hills were round us, and the breeze
 Went o'er the sunlit fields again ;
 Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
 Our youth return'd ; for there was shed
 On spirits that had long been dead,
 Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
 The freshness of the early world.

Who shall say that our needs are not greater to-day than they were when these lines were written ? I venture to think thus until we return to a greater purity and far greater simplicity of living—to a more vivid conception of Wordsworth's ideal of life—we shall not have put our feet on the first step of the ladder that would lead us to the diviner air and into the higher life.

Believe me, dear Rawnsley, yours faithfully,
 HARRY GOODWIN.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

27TH MARCH, 1896.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I regret that it will be impossible for me to be at Cockermouth on Easter Tuesday. I should have liked to avail myself of the opportunity of paying my homage to the great Poet whose works have stood so well the fatal test of time, and to whom personally I owe, in common with so many others, a hearty debt of gratitude.

Yours very truly,

W. C. GULLY.

38, WESTBOURNE TERRACE, W., LONDON,
18TH APRIL, 1896.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I was glad to see how well you and your friends performed the interesting ceremony in commemoration of the great Poet of Cumberland. I could not find any proper frame of mind to join, and my intrusion on your gathering would have been a work of supererogation.

Yours very truly,

FREDERICK HARRISON.

190, MARYLEBONE ROAD, N.W.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

Have no time to write except heartiest congratulations to Cockermouth on its Park and Memorial Fountain. Oh! that more people would give open spaces, with perennial sources of joy and good. Wordsworth has led us all to realise great teachings in nature and quiet—has he not?

Yours very truly,

OCTAVIA HILL.

35, GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.

I need not say how heartily I go with you in this act of homage to the memory of our great Poet; and I crave permission to join in it, though after date, by throwing in my mite, which may perhaps still get absorbed by some little interstice of unprovided cost. I never could write to order—I only make a mess of it—till it spontaneously comes, and I cannot help it. In this case, my love of Wordsworth is rather a cherished

memory than a present affection, for I am not in the brotherhood of Poets, but have too long lived in other regions of thought to have any right to bring an offering to their temple of honour.

Ever sincerely yours,
JAMES MARTINEAU.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LIVERPOOL.

DEAR RAWNSLEY,

I wish I were near enough to share your festival to-morrow, and the inauguration of the Wordsworth Memorial. It is well that Cockermouth should at last be furnished with a visible reminder of the great Poet, whose infancy and childhood will become her immemorial pride. With scantier and less authentic relics, Stratford-on-Avon is a place of resort for hundreds and thousands. Standing and looking on the Wordsworths' House, I have often marvelled that Cockermouth possessing such a birthplace should make no sign. I have walked the Norfolk avenue and garden, where in the Cambridge days William and Dorothy re-met, to exchange sweet intimacies of brotherhood and sisterhood. In Dove Cottage I have communed with the past and felt the consecrations of the creepered porch, the terraced lawn, the rustic seat, the tiny orchard plot, every inch of which is holy ground to those who know what England owes to the inspirations that found birth and utterance in that enchanted spot—how, for us all and for generations yet unborn, the simple affections that make homes beautiful were illumined with a radiance and a poetry they can never lose, how life's secret was found in admiration, hope, and love, how in the trumpet of the cataract and the sailing of the cloud, the

blitheness of the lark and the blooming of daffodils, new intimations of immortality were brought to light, how once for all the bonds of poetry and the thought of duty were ennobled and enlarged for all men of English speech. And knowing these things, I have wondered often how small store or value Cockermouth seemed to set upon the house—so comely in its domestic staid simplicity—in which the Poet and his sister both were born. Last Christmas I felt a glow of pleasure as I went over the new Park. The wide horizons reminded me in some sort of the Druid Circle at your own Keswick, encompassed by its hills; and I rejoiced to hear that Wordsworth was at last to have commemoration there looking upon his childhood's home; and that hereafter boys and girls of Cockermouth would not grow up, nor visitors come and go, unaware of the place and house that gave him birth, or forgetful that in that garden and its terrace by the brimming Derwent Bank, William and Dorothy played and grew and learned affection, and passed in happy mirth

Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

Had I been anywhere within reach, I must have joined your festa. Wishing you joy of it.

Yours most truly,

G. H. RENDALL.

THE FISH, BUTTERMERE,

6TH APRIL, 1896.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I much regret that I cannot be with you to-morrow when the Wordsworth Fountain will be opened. I must return to Birmingham and work. This pious memorial in the erection of which you have taken

so much interest will help to keep alive in some a feeling of regard for the great Poet of quietude, who, in the rush and stress of our modern life, has been so much of help for our nation. Wordsworth should indeed be "living at this hour" in the Lake Country, a love for which he was largely instrumental in creating, or we shall lose a very precious heritage for the refreshment and rest of weary England. What I saw last week was about to be done by your Keswick local authorities to their beautiful lake approach, and what I hear is proposed in the way of a coach road over the Styhead Pass, with its entire destruction of the one supreme solitude of the lakes, makes me feel that the spirit of Wordsworth ought to be preached up in all parts of the land if the English Lake District is at all to maintain its popularity as a health resort for busy city men. I heard yesterday that Wasdale Head and Borrowdale are full of people this Easter who have been driven away from Snowdonia by Sir Edward Watkin and his railway, and if the solitary wilderness of Wasdale is to be broken in upon by a road on which the brake and char-a-banc rattle, then its present visitors will in their turn go to Scotland and the Continent. Let the few oases of wild scenery that remain be left undisturbed or all the county will suffer. As Wordsworth has pointed out "The staple of the Lake Country is its beauty and its character of retirement." Let then the beauty be undisfigured and the retirement unviolated, if not, those who, Uzzah-like, touch the ark in the hope to help it may find, all too late, that they have not only not achieved their end, but have irretrievably injured themselves. Success to Wordsworth.

I am, dear Canon, yours sincerely,
SHOWELL ROGERS.

LANDSDOWNE, EDGEBASTON.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I commend Wordsworth not only to our time but to all time simply because he was one of the two or three great Poets who ever wrote in English speech. When I confine myself to the English tongue it is not that I admit any inferiority to or comparison with the Poets of other tongues, but because it narrows the matter down, and makes it simpler, and makes the assertion more modest ; there may be great Poets in unknown tongues with whom I am unacquainted. . . . I hold Wordsworth to be one of the greatest Poets that ever wrote, because he possessed every qualification of the greatest Poet. These qualifications are :—First, “Form,” as perhaps the most important gift to a Poet. There is in Wordsworth more, I think, than in all Poets, excepting perhaps Shakespeare, that surprise of subtle charm, like the sudden flash of sunshine under a dark cloud or the perfection of the tints of dawn. Read these lines out of the “Waggoner” :—

Along the smooth unpathwayed plain,
By sheep track or through cottage lane,
Where no disturbance comes to intrude
Upon the pensive solitude.

And so on. The first “Ode to Lycoris” is further evidence of “Form”—the most perfect reproduction in English words of a perfect strain on a violin. Secondly, Wordsworth gives us Human Interest, or Humour, for the terms are synonymous ; it is a great mistake to call Wordsworth the Poet of nature. He is not such ; he is the Poet of man. He only uses nature, as man does, as the stage on which man acts. . . . Page after page is full of it. . . . Thirdly, Wordsworth was a Poet, and nothing else. His whole

life was a poem, every hour and moment of his day was a poem. This is how, in all trivial things, in all common daily incidents, he found the poetic aspect and caught the poetic note. . . . Lastly, of Wordsworth as a teacher and a seer. To learn of such an one, men must listen to him. . . . I have never read a page of it ("The Excursion"), but I have felt something of a divine strength and purity. . . . A possible motto for Wordsworth might be taken from the first pages of "The Excursion"--

A skillful distribution of sweet sounds
Feeding the soul.

Yours sincerely,

J. H. SHORTHOUSE.

FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER, ISLE OF WIGHT.

DEAR RAWNSLEY,

My father would have felt that a Fountain is a most appropriate monument to Wordsworth; the purity and nobility of whose teaching he highly revered. Some of Wordsworth's shorter poems and some of the sonnets, and certain passages and lines, he would quote as among the finest in our language.

Yours very truly,

TENNYSON.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I am glad to hear of your ceremony on Tuesday, and that Cockermonth is honouring the great Poet and his sister. Rich as English literature is, and great as the Poets using the English language have been, it may be doubted if any have lifted the human heart on so strong a wing as Wordsworth. I am happy to join in honouring him.

Yours very truly,

G. F. WATTS.

The Bishop of Wakefield sent the following sonnet :—

TO WORDSWORTH.

O singer, who with heav'n-taught eye and ear
 And heart all-loving, could'st new beauty shed
 On all things beautiful, and singing, wed
 High thoughts with sun-crown'd hill and glimmering mere,
 Making the dear scene by thy spell more dear,
 And teaching dull hearts in the world outspread
 To trace new gleamings of the love o'erhead,
 And see all things transfigur'd far and near.
 Reconstructor of the God-blest land!
 Voicing each hill and dell and stream and wood
 With sweetest love for those who understand,
 We'll guard thy well-lov'd haunts from spoiler rude.
 And bless thee who has taught us to decry
 The spirit pulsing in all earth and sky.

W. W. W.

MARCH 30TH, 1896.

EATON,

APRIL 4TH, 1896.

DEAR CANON RAWNSLEY,

I am glad to hear that a memorial of the immortal Poet of the Lakes is being dedicated at the place of his birth—a proceeding which must command the sympathy of the whole English speaking and reading race. Would it not be possible to secure the home of his birth as a national monument ?

Believe me to be very truly yours,
 WESTMINSTER.

WORDSWORTH.

AN ADDRESS BY CANON RAWNSLEY.

WE are met together to-day upon the 126th anniversary of Wordsworth's birth, to try to wipe out some of the reproach which his son alluded to years ago, who when asked to subscribe towards a lecture room to be called the Wordsworth Institute, said he was glad to hear that they were doing anything in Cockermouth to perpetuate his father's name, for in his father's time, the Laureate could never learn that a single volume of his poems was either read or on sale in the town that gave him birth.

He would have been gratified to-day to see that, though 46 years have passed since the turf began to grow green by Rotha's wave upon his father's Grasmere tomb, the spirit of the greatest son that has been born to Cockermouth, the greatest name in Cumberland to-day, and one of the greatest of our English Poets, is so quick and alive and in the hearts of men, as the letters I have just read seem to testify.

These words seem large praise, but after all, who are the truly great, who are the men that we inevitably seek to honour and feel as we do it "a grandeur in the beating of the heart?" Surely they are those who give great and enduring thoughts to the world; who enkindle our imagination, call forth our tenderest emotions, give us eyes and ears, feed our spirits with pure hope and lofty resolve, enrich our nation not only with glorious language, but with new views of human life, reveal man

unto himself, and make his surroundings, his environment, so breathe of that—

“Wisdom and spirit of the universe,
That soul that is the eternity of thought,”

that fools though wayfaring men feel it and know it.

All this Wordsworth did. He not only unfolded a new philosophy, but he made men desire it. He not only gave us new wine from the heart of God, the inspirer, but he gave men a taste for the new thing, which they found real, precious, and an abiding possession. No one, except perhaps Keats, was ever so scoffed at when his first poems were given to the world. But none of our Poets have been privileged to see more clearly than Wordsworth saw, such a complete change of attitude towards his poetry as was affected in the first quarter of this century.

For this Wordsworth, not only put man and nature on talking terms, but filled this common earth of ours with angel presences to haunt and help mankind. It is because of Wordsworth that “the earth and common face of nature speak to us rememberable things.” It is because of Wordsworth that his disciples all the world over to-day—

“Are lovers of the meadows and the woods
And mountains, and of all that we behold
Of this green earth : of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create
And what perceive.”

It is because of Wordsworth that men to-day, as he in his day,

“Are well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The author of their purest thoughts,
The guide, the guardian of their heart, and soul
Of all their moral being.”

He made it possible for the poorest of the poor to be rich beyond words in power of communing with Nature.

To him the—

“Earth and sky and every common thing
Were apparelled in celestial delight.”

and he made others share this joy.

The Spirit of God in nature, “by day and starlight,” from the earliest dawn of childhood, intertwined for him—

“The passions that build up our human soul
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life—and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought.”

And it was Wordsworth’s mission to proclaim to men, that this same spirit in nature, if only they would reverently “look towards the Uncreated, with an eye of love” in all His manifestations, would infallibly purify their lives, and keep their feelings and their thoughts on noble heights of service and of love.

“Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music,”

And Wordsworth was the Orpheus who discovered the harmony that exists between man and all the background of his human life. He made the great reconciliation between man and the earth he walks on and the heaven to which his eyes are cast; and so though he heard oft-times “the still sad music of humanity,” at least he heard with it those great master chords of the sympathetic life of a common creation waiting for the adoption, that soothed and cheered, and set men marching bravelier to the tune.

Wordsworth, sensitive from a child, and practised as is a blind man’s touch to all the outward manifestations

of Nature, saw how and where and why they haunted the soul. "We live," said he, "by admiration, hope and love," and to these vital feelings of delight, earth, sky, the pomp of woods, the sound of waterfalls, dew, vapours, and the melody of birds, and all the beauty of a common dawn might minister. He found they did minister. We recall how he says in the Prelude—

" From Nature and her overflowing soul,
I had received so much, that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling ; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still ; "

And we remember also how in the same poem he says :—

" ye mountains and ye lakes
And sounding cataracts, ye mist and winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born ;
If in my youth, I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived
With God and Nature communing, removed
From little enmities and low desires,
The gift is yours ; "

And whatever of power to be pure, and of that bliss ineffable that comes of noble feeling, and clear perception, that man and nature have a common life, and silent sympathy and heart communion, Wordsworth experienced, he is teaching us to-day.

Wordsworth's genius lay in discovering that in Nature's ever varying forms and phases, there was a something that had a message to the hearts of men, and that in the commonest everyday life of man there was a something that would respond to the call ; and that something was absolute *truth*, absolute *reality*.

He saw that the great passions that upbuild the soul, the great primal impulses of human affection, the great master powers of the mind to suffer or be glad, need no grander field for the unfolding of the drama of life and character, than is found in the life of the working men, the simple shepherds of our hills.

He saw too that it is even possible to fill familiar circumstances and surroundings with the novelties of a great surprise, if only these familiar things were made, by the wand of the imagination, to minister to the deeps of our human nature and feeling, and if only character were seen to be the result.

He was the Poet of common life ; and he accepted it as his mission to open the eyes and widen the thoughts of his countrymen, and to teach them to discover in the humblest and most unexpected form, a presence that was kindred to what they had long recognised as the highest and the noblest "He insisted," as Dean Church puts it, "that the whole range of the beautiful, the pathetic, the tragic, the heroic, was to be found in common lowly life."

Wordsworth's chief characteristic is the noble intermingling of deep feeling with profound thought ; but his gift to his time was that he opened the fountain whence this thought and feeling flow ; he bade men realise that not a single ray of morning light upon a distant hill, or cloud that lies cradled in the setting sun, not a bird or creature that flashes past, not a sound of the "winds that will be wandering at all hours," but may so touch the heart and set man thinking "on man and nature and on human life," that

even the labourer going forth into the fields may find them filled with glad companionship, and have angels at his side to bring him home at eventide.

The immanence of the Divine spirit in Nature was revealed to him.

It was Wordsworth who felt—

“ The presence that disturbed him with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought
And rolls thro' all things.”

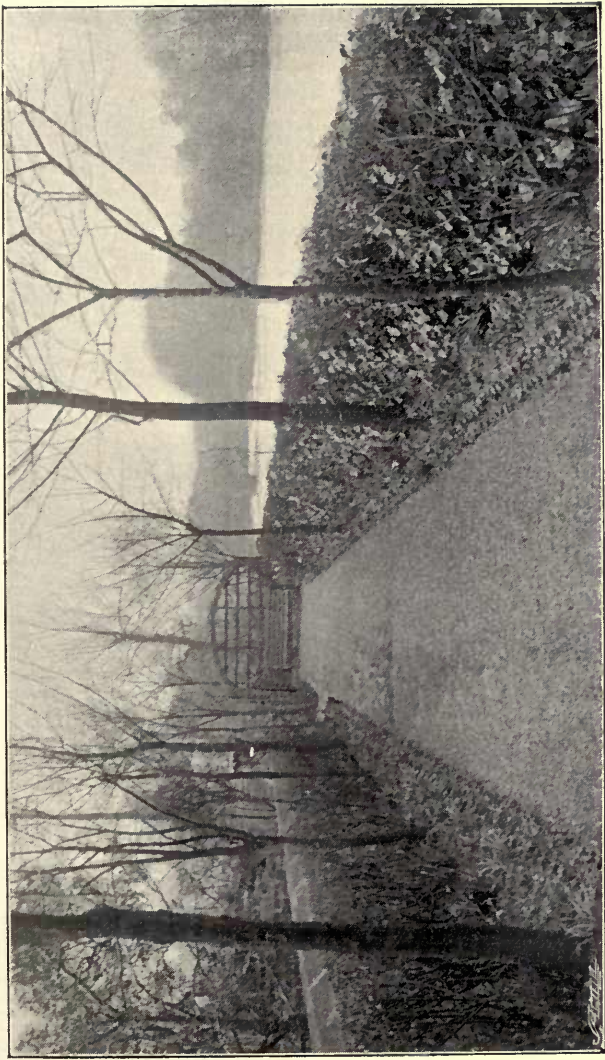
And it was Wordsworth who has made *us* feel this also.

It was Wordsworth who applied the phenomena of Nature to the problem of life ; and made the clouds and earth and winds and the sun and stars subservient to the moulding of us men.

This teaching of Wordsworth's was new to his century ; we, who follow after, have drunk of his spirit from many sources—we found it in Carlyle, in Ruskin, and again in Tennyson, in Browning, in Arnold, in Thackeray, in George Eliot, in Mrs Ward, in Emerson, in Lowell, in Longfellow, in Whittier, in Thoreau—and we are apt to forget that it is to Wordsworth we must turn as to a fountain head to find—

“ The first beginning of this song.”

Matthew Arnold, than whom none in our generation have deeper entered into, or more lovingly appreciated



TERRACE WALK.

S. F. H. 1911

the spirit of Wordsworth, wrote thus, in April of 1850, on hearing of the death of the Poet :—

“ He, too, upon a wintry clime
 Had fallen—on this iron time
 Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears
 He found us when the age had bound,
 Our souls in its benumbing round,
 He spoke, and loosed our hearts in tears.
 He laid us as we lay at birth
 On the cool flowery lap of earth,
 Smiles broke from us and we had ease,
 The hills were round us, and the breeze
 Went o'er the sunlit fields again,
 Our foreheads felt the wind and rain,
 Our youth returned—for there was shed
 On spirits that had long been dead,
 Spirits dried up and closely furled
 The freshness of the early world.”

And Matthew Arnold was right. The Poet who stands out pre-eminent as having worthily and by immutable laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, nobly applied ideas to life and expressed for our spiritual understanding noble truths “On man and nature and on human life,” did this for us, that he softened us with feeling, as he soothed and tamed us.

“ Others will teach us how to dare
 And against fear our heart to steel ;
 Others will strengthen us to bear,
 But who, ah ! who will make us feel ? ”

But he not only makes us feel ; he gives us of his own great calm at the same time, and makes us know that it is good to have been born.

“ Enough if something from our hands have power
 To live and move and serve the present hour,
 And as towards the silent tomb we go
 We feel that we are greater than we know.”

It is this dignity he has added to the life of the "poor inhabitant below," if the poor inhabitant does his duty well, for which we have to thank Wordsworth.

But what strikes one most about this Poet, is the serious earnestness which distinguishes him. He, as Matthew Arnold, in quite another way, always seems to have felt, that the burden of the prophet was upon him, "Woe is me if I speak not all the words that I have heard." He was as the poets and prophets of old, divinely sent, and he felt the greatness of the service God had entrusted him with. "Every great poet," he once said, "is a teacher. I wish to be considered as a teacher or nothing." At his most impassioned times, he never seems to lose sight of his mission. And what a mission it was ! this is his own account of the aims and object of his poetry :—

"To console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier ; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and to feel, and therefore to become more actively and seriously virtuous."

And that he fulfilled and is fulfilling that mission, no one can doubt who has found the joy and cheerfulness that comes of nice observation and a cultivated meditative mind. He had his limitations, who has not ? His field of work, like the valley fields he knew, shut in by mountain-walls and Heaven, was unworked before he touched it, and he worked it thoroughly, what it would yield he made it yield. All said and done Wordsworth's hero was a sturdy fell-side yeoman of strong feeling and quiet uncomplaining mind, fighting a good fight amid all the storms of life and "the business of the elements," building up noble character, as he wrestled with his fortune to the end, loving deeply his own fireside

and as deeply all things that have life about his path. It was this very ideal of English home-life in humble estate, which loved the hills and fields "with an affection strong as life itself," that makes Wordsworth rank high among the teachers of patriotism, all the world over.

The reason why some of us are such fighters to-day for the beauties of the hills and valleys that he loved, why we spend ourselves and are spent in endeavours to keep the natural features of our quiet country, unimproved, unvulgarized and unmarred, is because Wordsworth has taught us to find some of our springs for public action in that same unfailing fountain he has opened to rich and poor alike, love for "this Demi Eden other Paradise," wherein men still may walk and talk with God.

And as we gather here to-day we remember that the occasion is sacred to the memory not only of William Wordsworth who was born in 1770, but to that little Christmas child, his sister Dorothy, who was born in the following year. Without Dorothy we might have had in William, a social reformer, an ardent politician, an impassioned writer, but not a meditative philosopher, not the Poet of the life "we live by admiration, hope, and love." It was Dorothy, the "dear, dear sister," who weaned her brother William, as the late Bishop of Lincoln has told us, from contemporary politics, and won him to beauty and truth.

At a time when it seemed Wordsworth, sorely out of heart, depressed and bewildered by the French Revolution, was about to seek refuge from the storm in political economics or scientific research, that tender-hearted loyal sister became a very guiding star to his

nigh storm-wrecked ship ; and brought him to the haven where God would have him to be. Wordsworth himself has told us this in plainest verse. He wrote :—

“ Then it was,
Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good,
That this beloved sister
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self :
She in the midst of all preserved me still
A poet : made me seek beneath that name
And that alone, my office upon earth.”

Have we not then right to bind the memory of Dorothy with the honour we do unto her brother, the bard, in lasting bonds of gratitude and praise ?

For what a sister was this Dorothy ! A child of marvellous sensitiveness ; so that it is recorded that when she gazed upon the shining Solway sea from the heights above Whitehaven, she burst into tears. So tender of heart that when she and her brothers in the terrace-garden chased the butterfly—

“ She, God love her, feared to brush
The dust from off his wings.”

It was this Dorothy of whom her brother wrote :—

“ She gave me eyes, she gave me ears
And humble cares and delicate fears,
A heart the fountain of sweet tears
And love and thought and joy.”

She it was who grew up to be rather as one who is wooed by a suitor, while he was happy as a lover when in her sight. Most touching are the letters she writes, in which she describes to her friends the ideal of gentle knightly manhood that she finds in her brother ; and he

speaking of her, says, that to be with her again after some absence at Cambridge is

“ a joy above all joys, a morn
Risen upon mid-noon,”

and seemed

“ Now, after separation desolate
A gift then first bestowed.”

We cannot follow the lovers' life of devotion, that from first to last, seems to have been between these two. The constant companion of his wanderings, the sharer with him of his early poverty and all the later triumphs of his song, Dorothy appears to have been a ministering angel, always ready “ to soothe, to comfort, and command.”

With an eye and ear inevitably trained for all the delicate manifestations of nature, often prompting the motive of his subject, suggesting by some description, in her own note-book, of the scenes they passed through, food for his fancy and song, she was to all intents the Poet's second self, his first and last best critic, counsellor, and friend.

The picture of that unselfish woman with weather-tanned face, and dark flashing eye, of whom Coleridge wrote :—

“in every motion her most innocent soul outbeams so brightly, that who saw her must say ‘Guilt was a thing impossible to her.’” constantly rises to my mind, when I think of an ideal sister, and of the pictures of ideal womanhood, that by reason of her companionship, Wordsworth was able to pourtray. And one is thankful that—

“ This being breathing thoughtful breath,
This traveller between life and death ”

has won through her brother's verse immortality.

We to-day who remember the brother, must pay our homage to the little Cockermouth maiden, who in pleasant days of long ago ran in these meadows, wandered up the street, peered at the sparrow's nest in the privet and rose hedges of the manor house garden she ever kept in mind, and climbed with him about the Castle towers.

WORDSWORTH & COCKERMOUTH.

A SHORT SKETCH BY CANON RAWNSLEY.

IN this year of grace 1896, when we have been troubled here, in England, by differences on an American question, it is interesting to note that it was a difference that arose on the American question, between Sir James Lowther and his law agent and steward, a certain John Robinson, in the year 1766, that was the prime cause of the fact that Wordsworth, the poet, was born here. For John Robinson resigned his stewardship, and young John Wordsworth, then only 24 years of age, "a man of great force of character and real human capacity," was appointed in his place to be "law agent and steward of the manor of Ennerdale." To that post, which he occupied for the next 18 years, the young man came from the Penrith neighbourhood, bringing with him as his girl wife a certain Ann Cookson, a mercer's daughter, who could boast, through her descent on her mother's side from the Crackanthorpes, of Newbiggin Hall, an ancestry that flowed from as far back as the time of Edward III. She was thus well suited to marry the son of the land agent of Sockbridge, near Penistone, who traced his descent through a long

unbroken line of sturdy Yorkshire yeomen away in the Penistone neighbourhood, as far as to the time of the Norman Conqueror. They took up their abode in the substantial house now occupied by Mr. Robinson Mitchell, then lately builded by one Sheriff Luckcock. It bears date 1745-46, and is to-day unmarred and unmodernised, remaining much as it was when John Wordsworth became its tenant. We know little of this young John Wordsworth, but he must have been a man "tender and deep in his excess of love," for when, after twelve years of happy married life here in the old manor house beside the Derwent, his wife died from consumption, caught, as we are told, by being put into a damp bed in the "best room" when on a visit to friends in London, he never seemed to recover his spirits, and he himself died six years after her, in the year 1783, on the 30th December, and lies buried at the east end of the All Saints' Church. He lost his way on the fells when returning from some business engagement at Broughton-in-Furness, and was obliged to stay out all night; the chill from exposure, brought on inflammation of the lungs, and his strength, sapped by deep domestic sorrow, could not bear up against it. The orphans whom he left, Richard, William, Dorothy, John, and Christopher, four of whom were remarkable in after life, were then removed to the care of their uncle Cookson at Penrith, and Cockermouth knew them no more. We have been allowed, from William Wordsworth's autobiographical notes and his poems, to glean something of those early days. The poet tells us :—

Early died

My honoured mother, she who was the heart
 And hinge of all our learnings and our loves
 Nor would I praise her, but in perfect love !

We can in fancy see her in earnest converse with Mr. Ellbanks, the teacher of the school by the churchyard, talking about William's "moody and stiff temper"; we can hear her say "that the only one of the children about whom she has fears is William; and he will be remarkable for good or evil." We may note her pinning on the child's breast the Easter nosegay, for the young lad is to go up to the church, to say his catechism. Daffodils I expect the flowers were: years after, in the ecclesiastical sonnets Wordsworth, speaking of this act of his mother's, writes;—

Sweet flowers at whose inaudible command
Her countenance phantom-like doth reappear.

Or we can see the father, book in hand, hearing the lad recite the long passages of Shakespeare, and Milton, and Spencer which were insensibly to mould his ear to music, fire his imagination, and make a poet of him.

But when I think of Wordsworth in those childish days I do not go off to the ancient school by the church to hear him stumble through Latin verbs. He was not as happy there as he was at Mrs. Birkett's, the dame's school at Penrith; there was no Mary Hutchinson to keep him company; and he learned, he tells us, when he went to Hawkshead at the age of ten, more Latin in a fortnight than he had learned the two previous years at Cockermouth. No, rather when I want to see the little William Wordsworth at his happiest, I go with him into the old Manor House Terrace garden by the Derwent's side, and see him with his sister, that sister "Emmeline," as he called her, chasing the butterfly, or hand in hand peering through the rose and privet hedge at the sparrow's nest, "wishing yet fearing to be near it."

Or, follow him with his nurse, he a child of only five years of age, bathing and basking alternate, all the hot August day in the shallows of the mill pool, and leaping naked as an Indian through the tall garden ragwort on the sands, and clapping his hands to see the rainbow spring from middle air. Or I go with him by the river, "winding among its grassy holmes," whose voice flowed along his earliest dreams—that Derwent he never could forget—away to the Castle-hold of the barons of old time, Waldeof, Umfraville, Multon, Lucies, and Nevilles, and watch him peering with look of awe into the dark cellar and dungeons, watch him chase the butterfly through the grim courts or climb after the tufts of golden wallflower upon its broken battlements.

But happiest of all was he when with his story book he lay full stretched, as he describes in the "Prelude," upon the sun-warmed stones and sandy banks "beside the bright blue river," and there feasted his little heart on fairy tale and filled his soul with scenes from wonderland.

Wordsworth was never unmindful of the home of his birth. He left Cockermouth for schooldays at Hawkshead when he was a boy of nine, and though in the holidays, for the next five years, he paid an occasional visit to the place, his chief vacation associations were with Penrith. The Poet's connection with this town ceased at his father's death in 1784, when he was a lad of fourteen; but he never forgot it. From nature and her overflowing soul here in his childhood days he had received so much that all his thoughts were steeped in a feeling of grateful remembrance of it. He visited the home of his childhood occasionally to refresh his heart with a cup of remembrance, and we

find a note of a certain visit in Dorothy's letter to Mrs. Marshall. Writing in September, 1807, she says :—"W. and M. have just returned. They were at Cockermouth, our native place you know, and the Terrace Walk—that you have heard me speak of many a time—with the privet hedge, is still full of roses as it was thirty years ago. Yes, I remember it for more than thirty years."

In 1836 he interests himself in a scheme for building a new church. He writes to his friend Poole, of Nether Stowey, for assistance to this object. He tells him that Cockermouth is in a state of much spiritual destitution, near 6,000 souls and only 300 sittings for the poor. Wordsworth cared for the poor. "I have been the means," he says, "of setting on foot the project of erecting a new church there, and the inhabitants look to me for much more assistance than I can possibly afford them, through any influence that I possess."

As a Keswick man, I gather with pride further on in that letter, that it was the fact of the new church of St. John's having been built there that spurred him on ; and that he hopes Cockermouth will do as Keswick has done, and thus excite other towns to follow so good an example.

It is interesting to note that the Cockermouthians of that day were not of one mind in the matter, or the Poet had been misled as to native church feeling ; for the inhabitants having a windfall of £2,000 given them by the Lord of Egremont that year, to spend as they pleased, preferred a new market place to a new church, and the old Poet writes :—" This was wanted, so we cannot complain."

So far as I know this was the last public work he attempted to do for the place that gave him birth. But at least we cannot regret that his last effort was in a cause near to his heart, the cause of the religious interests and life of his fellow Cumbrians, the cause of reverence, worship, and godly fear, of "pure religion breathing household laws," the cause of the worship and praise of Almighty God, here in his native place.

The seed he sowed, though it lay dormant, did not fall on barren ground ; and in a real sense the present All Saints' Parish Church may stand as a monument to the immortal Poet, who then as ever, championed "in perilous times the cause of the poor and simple," and did what he might for church life and piety, in his day, here in Cockermouth.

NOTE.—Since writing the above short sketch, I have had access to a MS. letter of Wordsworth's, which shows that the Church-building project fell through, as far as he was concerned, by reason of what he considered the unfair treatment of an offer of help, made by the then Lord Lonsdale to the town, in connection with the church accommodation needed.

MR. T. P. WHITTAKER M.P., after the reading of the letters, said :—Ladies and gentlemen,—In my judgment Wordsworth is a curious and interesting illustration of the fact that a true Poet must be a friend of humanity and an exponent of the right qualities and possibilities of his fellowmen as human beings and citizens. (Applause.) A mere versemaker and framer of sonorous phrases may influence the passions and throw a glamour over base and selfish

deeds. But a true Poet must touch the heart and conscience, and beget the response of our deepest emotions by giving melodious expression to a far-reaching perception of that which is true, beautiful, ennobling, and sublime in nature and in man. (Applause.) True poetry must tend to elevate, purify, refine, and as it does so it must evoke sympathy with that which is highest, best and noblest in humanity. (Hear, hear.) It must voice those aspirations and efforts which make for freedom and progress—the uplifting and brotherhood of the human race. Wordsworth was a Poet of the real and the common place. He wrote but little of kings, courtiers, and warriors. (Hear, hear.) For his heroes he went but seldom to the mists of antiquity. He was not an exponent of impossible beings doing impossible deeds under impossible conditions. He set forth the incidents of every day life, with all the simple joys, and sorrows, and pathos. He expressed the feelings of our common nature in language pure and beautiful, which tends to bring home to us the important fact that beneath the great differences of social status, worldly position, and intellectual culture, and the fog of prejudice, ignorance, and envy, which rise from them, the great heart of humanity is sound and true, and can in the long run be most deeply and effectually moved by appeals to brotherhood, justice, and love; that beauty, dignity, purity, and honour are not confined to any section of society, but are continually, touchingly, exemplified in the ranks of the humblest and the lowliest. (Applause.) In a word he illustrated and indirectly enforced the teaching of Burns that

Rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gold for a' that and a' that.

(Applause.) Consequently, though Wordsworth was

frightened out of the opinions of his youth by the horrors of the French revolution, of which he saw so much with his own eyes, he was really a Poet of humanity. The lessons which he taught in his pathetic stories of the joys and sorrows, the struggles and the heroisms of the poor and lowly, disclosed his insight into, and his appreciation of that something in humanity which always responds to the touchstone of right and truth and justice. How much true insight there was in many of Wordsworth's poems is illustrated in that portion of his lines on "The old Cumberland beggar," in which he alludes to the kindness of the poor to the poor, and to the happiness and joy of doing some good to others, and tells us how the very poorest often yearn to exercise that power of generosity which some wealthier folk possess but do not adequately use. (Applause.) He tells us that

Man is dear to man ; the poorest poor
 Long for some moments in a weary life
 When they can know and feel that they have been,
 Themselves, the authors and givers out
 Of some small blessings ; have been kind to such
 As needed kindness ; for this single cause
 That we have, all of us, one human heart.

Yes, in pure English and beautiful verse Wordsworth aptly voiced some of the best phrases and deepest feelings of our common humanity. He taught us that the noblest traits and highest aspirations are not confined to any class. The lesson is one which needs continually to be taught. It is well therefore that you should cherish your Poet's memory. In cherishing his memory don't forget his teaching. In honouring him you honour yourselves, and you will honour him and yourselves most

by living and acting, being and doing the ennobling truths and principles which so many of his poems illustrated and inculcated. (Applause.)

MR. W. L. ALEXANDER, J.P., chairman of the Cockermonth School Board, said : Ladies and gentlemen,— My friend Canon Hoskins, who was to propose a vote of thanks to the speakers, has told me that he would be unable to attend, and therefore it has fallen to my lot to take his place. Before doing so I wish to say that I think we have had a most delightful afternoon, notwithstanding the drizzle of rain, which will not have hurt anybody. I think, the daffodil bearers made a very pleasant picture, especially when they decorated the Fountain with their flowers. Who knows but that there are some budding Poets amongst them. (Laughter and applause.) We must all feel deeply grateful for the interesting addresses with which our kind friends have favoured us. We shall all be better men and women for listening to the quotations of verse and sketches of character so vividly portrayed and placed before us. A lively interest has been awakened amongst us sure to lead to the circulation and perusal of the best works of our Poet, and thus a powerful influence for good is set up in our midst to the advantage not only of the inhabitants of his native place, the good old town of Cockermonth, but in more distant parts, from this happy celebration of the 126th anniversary of his birth. Wordsworth's pecuniary means in early life were of limited character, and money was never better disposed of than when his friend, Mr. Raisley Calvert, bequeathed him the legacy of £900 for the special purpose of affording him ample time and leisure for the development of his natural powers. Some of his first productions were poor, trivial, and

of small repute, consequently did not meet the general approval. He was on friendly terms with Coleridge, and the noted "Lyrical Ballads," published in 1798, the united work of the two Poets, was unsuccessful—a failure ; the volumes did not sell. Wordsworth had no expensive tastes, was straightforward, and a man of singleness of aim. He appreciated his own powers, did not allow his energies to flag, nor his spirit to be disheartened by the neglect of the public. His perseverance was ultimately rewarded by his attaining in 1843 the honourable position of Laureate. He was a good man, possessing philosophic meditation, simplicity of manner, highly susceptible to the beauties of scenery, the mountain, lake, and landscape. Hence that deep subtle communion with nature which pervades his poetry, constituting its true claim to originality—

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

His writings breathe the widest spirit of charity. The Poet of humanity, he spoke to the heart, sympathised with suffering, revered our universal nature, acknowledged the common brotherhood of man—

He lived serenely, and so fed
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is
 Could e'er prevail against him.

I have much pleasure in proposing that the best thanks of this meeting be given to the Rev. Canon Rawnsley and our other friends for their most instructive and pleasing addresses. (Applause.)

DR. MITCHELL, in seconding the vote of thanks, said he had long been a reader and lover of Wordsworth, and he had more hope of his influence to-day in his native place and the surrounding district than ever before.

WORDSWORTH: A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

(EXTRACTS FROM A LECTURE BY THE REV. J. LLEWELYN
DAVIES, D.D.)

IT is difficult to us to believe that a Poet of the very first rank should ever have been treated with critical disrespect, and that any one should have been stupid enough to speak of the twaddle of the Lake-poets and the watery effusions of Wordsworth. Such criticism is obsolete now, and Wordsworth is all but universally honoured. But he does not belong to the class of popular poets. He is a poet for those who attend and consider, and who like to find beauties in the second and third reading which did not strike them in the first. Those who read without much attention, and never care to read more than once, will find Longfellow, for example, more to their taste than Wordsworth. Some will understand the comparison at once by thinking of music. Wordsworth is not indeed a poet for the select and advanced only, there is nothing in him to surprise and repel the many,—he is not the Wagner of poetry: but neither is he the creator of melodies which achieve at once universal popularity; he is the Beethoven, perhaps, of the sister art. The more he is

known and read, the better it is for our world ; it is a gain for our taste, for our morality, for our religion, that more and more of us should enter into Wordsworth's thought and sentiment and should be taken by the beauty and the grandeur of his verse. Holding this conviction, I feel that I am well employed in commending this poet to your better knowledge and warmer admiration.

There is, properly speaking, but one Lake-poet ; and Wordsworth is he. Coleridge and Southey came from South-west England, and all their best poetry was written before they ever saw the Lake Country ; but Wordsworth was a genuine son of this region, born and bred in it ; from it he went forth into the world, and to it he soon returned ; here he lived for 50 years, and here he was buried ; he loved the scenery, and he loved the population, of the Lake District with an inner jealous devotion. He received his poetical inspiration from its waters and hills and skies ; it was one of his ambitions so to praise the land and the people that his readers might be constrained to share his admiration of both. He was by no means exclusive ; he was catholic enough in his sympathies and appreciations : but the Lake Country was *home* to him, and he gloried in it and desired to glorify it.

William Wordsworth sprang from this County of Cumberland. "I was born," he said, "at Cockermouth in Cumberland on April 7th, 1770, the second son of John Wordsworth, attorney-at-law—as lawyers of this class were then called—and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl of Lonsdale. My mother was Anne, only daughter of William Cookson, mercer, of Penrith, and of Dorothy, born Crackanthorp, of the ancient family of that name, who from the times of

Edward III. had lived in Newbiggin Hall, Westmorland. My grandfather was the first of the name of Wordsworth who came into Westmorland, where he purchased the small estate of Sockbridge. He was descended from a family who had been settled at Peniston, in Yorkshire, near the sources of the Don, probably before the Norman Conquest. . . . The time of my infancy and early boyhood was passed partly at Cockermouth and partly with my mother's parents at Penrith, where my mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold, in consequence of being put, at a friend's house in London, in what used to be called a 'best bedroom.' My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my 14th year, a schoolboy, just returned from Hawkshead, whither I had been sent with my elder brother Richard, in my 9th year." At Hawkshead Grammar School, between Windermere and Coniston, Wordsworth had a long and very happy school-time, and his faculty of versifying revealed itself there. A piece which he wrote when he was 14 or 15, which stands at the beginning of his Collected Works, was—as he says—"much admired." He went up to St. John's College, Cambridge, in October, 1787, in his 18th year, and took his B.A. degree, without Academical honours, in January, 1791.

We have an account, by Wordsworth himself, of the influences which in youth and early manhood helped to form his mind and character, in a poem, entitled "The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind." He thus explains the title:—"When the author retired to his native mountains with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live, it was

reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such an employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record in verse the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them." The great work which Wordsworth had in view was to be "a Philosophical Poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society, and to be entitled the 'Recluse' ; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement." The Recluse was to have been in three parts ; the second part, called the Excursion, was completed, and a small portion of the first part : the Prelude was the Introduction to the Recluse. It was addressed to Coleridge, and was commenced in 1799 and finished in 1805. Coleridge came up to Cambridge just as Wordsworth left it. The elder poet, who loved and admired Coleridge with a constant enthusiasm, reflects with a sigh what a companion he would have had in him if they had been at College together.

Not alone,

Ah ! surely not in singleness* of heart
 Should I have seen the light of evening fade
 From smooth Cam's silent waters : had we met
 Even at that early time, needs must I trust
 In the belief that my maturer age,
 My calmer habits, and more steady voice,
 Would with an influence benign have soothed,
 Or chased away, the airy wretchedness
 That battered on thy youth. But thou hast trod
 A march of glory, which doth put to shame
 These vain regrets : health suffers in thee, else
 Such grief for thee would be the weakest thought
 That ever harboured in the breast of man.

* By "singleness" he means solitariness.

During his Cambridge time Wordsworth did not devote himself to Academical studies with any ardour. He gives this account of his indifference to those studies :—

“ 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 ;
 To quit my pleasure, and, from mouth to mouth,
 Take up a station calmly in the perch
 Of sedentary peace. Those lovely forms
 Had also left less space within my mind,
 Which, wrought upon instinctively, had found
 A greatness in those objects of her love,
 A winning power, beyond all other powers.
 Not that I slighted books,—that were to lack
 All sense,—but other passions in me ruled,
 Passions more fervent, making me less prompt
 To indoor study than was wise or well,
 Or suited to those years.”

He complains however with some bitterness of the Cambridge life of those days ; of the eagerness for distinctions of no solid value, of

“ Idleness halting with his weary clog,
 And simple pleasure foraging for death,”

and the general absence of nobleness of aspiration.

In his third long vacation Wordsworth and a friend went on a walking tour through France into Switzerland. It is thought that, very probably, this now familiar excursion was then made by undergraduates for the first time. It was the summer of 1790. The month in which the two friends started was that of one of the greatest scenic performances

which have taken place on this earth. On the 14th July all France was gathered by representation on the Champs de Mars in Paris, and there France "With that oath which smote air, earth, and sea, Stamped her strong foot, and said she would be free," whilst cannon after cannon, taking up the voice of the central gathering, carried the shout to every furthest extremity of the land. The travellers passed through a France intoxicated with joy, and Wordsworth describes how

" All hearts were open, every tongue was loud,
With amity and glee ; we bore a name
Honoured in France, the name of Englishmen,
And hospitably did they give us hail,
As their forerunners in a glorious course ;
And round and round the board we danced again."

Returning from abroad, he spent his last Term at College, and left Cambridge in the January following, at the beginning of 1791. The greater part of that year he spent in London, apparently waiting to determine what he should undertake as the work of his life ; and in November he went to France, intending to stay some time at Orleans and to learn French. The Revolution was advancing on its course. Wordsworth stopped in Paris for a short time—

" In both her clamorous Halls,
The National Synod and the Jacobins,
I saw the Revolutionary Power
'Toss like a ship at anchor, rocked by storms.

Then he went on to Orleans, and settling there obtained admission into the society of the place. Through personal contact both with *enemies* of the Revolution, who were chiefly officers of the troops quartered there, and with enthusiastic *adherents* of it, he was drawn into a deeper

sympathy with the movement than he had yet felt ; and he records a curious impulse that he had when he returned to Paris in October, 1879, to throw himself into the political whirlpool, and—Englishman as he was, not eloquent even in English and speaking French imperfectly—to aim at exercising a personal influence upon the distracted factions of Paris, which might help to save France. Fortunately for his own safety and his future poetical career, the relatives who were supplying him with the moderate allowance on which he was living sent him word that they would maintain him no longer in France, and he was thus compelled to return to England.

At this time the great Continental Powers, supported by England, were seeking to restore the exiled Royalists and Nobility, and to force back upon France its old and discredited institutions, by means of an armed invasion ; and, like Coleridge and Southey at the same moment, Wordsworth was possessed by an indignation which he could scarcely control at the policy of England in making common cause with the invaders of France. He had just the feelings which Coleridge described in his magnificent Ode, of desire for his own country's discomfiture, and of grief that he should be compelled to desire it. When, in its magnificent uprising for the repulse of the invaders, the arm of France "made mockery of the warriors' ramp," its triumphs gave to both the poets a joy upon which in their later and cooler days neither of them looked back with any regret. I dwell with emphasis upon the enthusiasm which was excited independently in all the three Lake-Poets by the French Revolution. This enthusiasm, besides being the most interesting feature of their mental lives, must have had much to do with the raising of their poetic faculty to its highest power. It took

them at the time when enthusiasm was most precious and most powerful, and it allied itself with all that was generous and romantic and inventive in their natures. Wordsworth says :—

“ Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven !”

“ Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise, that which sets
The budding rose above the rose full-blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of ? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away !”

“ Earth was then,
To me, what an inheritance, new fallen,
Seems, when the first time visited, to one
Who thither comes to find in it his home.
He walks about, and looks upon the spot
With cordial transport, moulds it and remoulds,
And is half-pleased with things that are amiss,
'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.”

The bloodshed and violence of the days of the Terror were a profound grief to these enthusiasts, but—as Coleridge puts it—they regarded them as dark clouds which surrounded the rising sun—

“ And as the desert hath green spots, the sea
Small islands scattered amid stormy waves;
So that disastrous period did not want
Bright sprinklings of all human excellence
To which the silver wands of saints in heaven
Might point with rapturous joy.”

And when Robespierre had fallen and a quieter time set in, it was as if the clouds had been dispersed. Wordsworth describes when and how he heard of the death of Robespierre. He was making a journey “over the

smooth sands of Levens ample estuary" "beneath a genial sun"; and he met "a variegated crowd," wandering through the shallow stream of inland waters.

"The foremost of the band,
As he approached, no salutation given
In the familiar language of the day,
Cried, 'Robespierre is dead!'

'Come now, ye golden times,'
Said I, forth-pouring on those open sands
A hymn of triumph: 'As the morning comes
From out the bosom of the night, come ye!'

It was in July, 1794, that Robespierre was put to death. For two or three years after his return from France at the end of 1792, Wordsworth wandered somewhat loosely from place to place. In June, 1793, his sister, writing to a friend, says of him "He is now going upon a tour in the West of England with a gentleman who was formerly a schoolfellow,—a man of fortune, who is to bear all the expenses of the journey, and only requests the favour of William's company. He is perfectly at liberty to quit this companion as soon as anything more advantageous offers." This was a young man named Calvert,—who attached himself to Wordsworth in much the same way as another, Lloyd, attached himself to Coleridge. In 1793 and 1794 the two friends lived mostly together. But then Calvert sickened and died. Wordsworth nursed him in his illness, and it was found that Calvert had left Wordsworth £900. "The act was done entirely from a confidence on his part that I had powers and attainments which might be of use to mankind." The gift was very opportune. Wordsworth's sister Dorothy was ready to come and live with him. She was a remarkable person, and Wordsworth felt himself to be under the deepest

obligations to her. Brother and sister could not have been more devoted to each other. Wordsworth tells us that the mental trials through which the Revolution caused him to pass depressed and bewildered him : he took to questioning everything.

“ till, demanding formal *proof*,
And seeking it in everything, I lost
All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties,
Yielded up moral questions in despair.”

He turned to the study of abstract science

“ Then it was—

Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good !—
That the beloved sister in whose sight
Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice
Of sudden admonition, . . .

Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self ; for, though bedimmed and changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded and a waning moon :
She whispered still that brightness would return ;
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth.”

So it is to Dorothy Wordsworth, it would seem, that the world owes the treasure of her brother's poetry. With her Wordsworth retired to a cottage at Racedown, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire, in the autumn of 1795 ; and from that date he took up the profession of a Poet, and began to work steadily at making poetry. It was in June, 1797, that Coleridge paid the brother and sister the memorable visit which began an intercourse to which both the poets owed so much. The earliest piece of Wordsworth's which has any real interest for his

admirers was written in 1797, whether before or after Coleridge's visit does not appear : it is the short poem entitled "The reverie of poor Susan." But it was after the walk on which Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* was planned and commenced, and to make up the volume, called *Lyrical Ballads*, in which the *Ancient Mariner* first appeared, that Wordsworth began to write the poems by which he is known. This volume was the joint production of Coleridge and Wordsworth, and the intention of the authors was to illustrate the particular views of poetical composition which were at the time commending themselves to them. They were in a mood of defiance towards the formal and rhetorical style of verse which had Pope for its great authority, and which aimed at divorcing poetry from common life. Many lovers of Wordsworth are willing to admit that he went rather far in defiant simplicity in some of his pieces, especially in that early volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*. But such simplicity is far from being characteristic of his poetry in general, which has on the contrary a peculiar dignity of its own.

The well-known poem, "We are Seven," which was in the *Lyrical Ballads*, goes to the furthest point of simplicity, and this and some others, such as "Goody Blake" and the "Idiot Boy," were laughed at by many when the volume appeared ; but wiser readers felt—and all feel now—that it is redeemed from triviality by the solemnity of thought and pathos of feeling which envelope its child's language.

The volume closed with a poem, which had no title to be called a *Lyrical Ballad*, and which no one would think of charging with exaggerated simplicity,—“ Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey, on

revisiting the banks of the Wye during a tour. July 13th, 1798." All who love Wordsworth love these lines of blank verse as being particularly full of his mind and spirit. There is not as much of poetical beauty as we find in many of his later poems,—even in some of the narrative passages which I have read from the Prelude ; and beauty, loveliness, is perhaps what is most precious in poetry : but there is a fulness of thought and suggestion, an appeal to what is deepest in the feelings of all sensitive human beings, and a revelation of Influence which we dimly apprehend, which have caused these lines to sink into the memory of countless readers.

That belief in a Divine Spirit pervading the creation and conversing in many subtle ways with human spirits, which is Wordsworth's special creed, is implied in all the best poetry, and without it verse becomes commonplace, uninspired, unprofitable ; but it puts a strain on the minds of readers in general, and is not unlikely to cause them some discomfort and self-questioning. Few of us are quickly and at all times responsive to that creed. But it is the true faith for those who believe in a living Divine Creator.

In the year 1798, when he was 28 years of age, Wordsworth had arrived at a certain maturity of his powers, of his poetical principles, and of his general opinions. Within the next nine years—or say, the ten years including 1798—almost all that is of high value in his collected works was written. And the same years were the period of settlement in his personal life.

Towards the end of 1798 Wordsworth and his sister paid a visit of four months to Germany. They left England with Coleridge, to whose suggestion the journey

was probably due, but they parted company—wisely, as the chief object of both the poets was to learn German—and the Wordsworths settled at the “romantic Imperial town of Goslar, on the edge of the Hartz Forest.” “The four months spent at Goslar,” writes one of his critics, “were the very bloom of Wordsworth’s poetic career. Through none of his poems has the peculiar loveliness of English scenery and English girlhood shone more delicately than through those which came to him as he paced the frozen gardens of that desolate city.” (Myers, p. 34.) Soon after their return to England the two settled in a cottage at Grasmere. Miss Wordsworth, in a letter dated September 10th, 1800, thus describes their new home. “We are daily more delighted with Grasmere and its neighbourhood. . . . We have a boat upon the lake, and a small orchard and smaller garden, which, as it is the work of our own hands, we regard with pride and partiality. Our cottage is quite large enough for us, though very small; and we have made it neat and comfortable within doors; and it looks very nice on the outside; for though the roses and honeysuckles which we have planted against it are only of this year’s growth, yet it is covered all over with green leaves and scarlet flowers; for we have trained scarlet beans upon threads, which are not only exceedingly beautiful, but very useful, as their produce is immense. We have made a lodging room of the parlour below stairs, which has a stone floor, therefore we have covered it all over with matting. We sit in a room above stairs, and we have one lodging room with two single beds, a sort of lumber room, and a small low unceiled room, which I have papered with newspapers, and in which we have put a small bed. Our servant is an old woman of sixty years of age, whom we

took partly out of charity. She was very ignorant, very foolish, and very difficult to teach. But the goodness of her disposition, and the great convenience we should find if my perseverance was successful, induced me go on." In 1802 Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith, a congenial and devoted wife; his sister continuing to live with them. Sons and daughters were born, in 1803, 4, 6, 8; and it was not till the spring of 1808 that they all removed to another house at Grasmere, called Allan Bank. In the spring of 1813 they occupied the house, Rydal Mount, where Wordsworth lived till his death in 1850. In 1813 he had the rather lucrative office of Distributor of Stamps for the County conferred upon him, the work of it being chiefly performed—we are glad to learn—by a clerk. Wordsworth's habit as a maker of poetry was to compose as he walked, humming the lines to himself or "booing" as his neighbours called it, and often dictating them out of doors to wife or sister. In person, he had a somewhat rustic exterior; his sister says that he would be thought "plain" at first sight. In 1803 Southey writes to a friend, "Hazlitt, a man of real genius, has made a very fine picture of Coleridge for Sir George Beaumont, which is said to be in Titian's manner; he has also painted Wordsworth. but so dismally, though Wordsworth's face is his idea of physiognomical perfection, that one of his friends on seeing it exclaimed, 'At the gallows—deeply affected by his deserved fate—yet determined to die like a man.'" Carlyle, in a description written after meeting him in London at the age of 70, says "A fine wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. . . . He was large-boned, lean, but still firm-knit; tall and strong-looking

when he stood ; a right good old steel-gray figure, with a fine rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a veracious strength looking through him."

Of the poems of Wordsworth's prime there are four, written in Germany in 1799, relating to one "Lucy," who must have been a real person, though nothing seems to be known of her. They all have a simple loveliness which can never pall, and this short one is the simplest and loveliest :—

" She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love :

A violet by a mossy stone,
Half hidden from the eye !
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me ! "

Wordsworth was a great writer of sonnets, and his sonnets are amongst the most delightful and most moving of his compositions. A sonnet, originally a "little sound," the name being applied to any short poem,—may be recognised by its consisting of 14 lines, which always rhyme, though the rhymes may be arranged variously. It is said that "the peculiar pleasure which the ear derives from the sonnet as a metrical form consists in the number and arrangement of the lines being prescribed, and distinctly recognisable as being prescribed." And it is held that in a good sonnet some single wave of emotion or thought should be expressed. To give complete and telling expression to some one idea or feeling within

the compass of the 14 lines is the art of the sonnet ; and the need of saying what the author has to say under these fixed conditions of space and rhyme often leads him to place and polish his words with a care that produces fine effects. Wordsworth gives the following account of his first adoption of the sonnet-form :—

“ In the cottage, Town-end, Grasmere, one afternoon in 1801, my sister read to me the sonnets of Milton. I had long been well acquainted with them, but I was particularly struck on that occasion by the dignified simplicity and majestic harmony that runs through most of them,—in character so totally different from the Italian, and still more so from Shakespeare’s fine sonnets. I took fire, if I may be allowed to say so, and produced these sonnets the same afternoon, the first I ever wrote except an irregular one at school.”

Wordsworth’s finest sonnets take rank with Milton’s, and in several of them Milton’s name is enshrined. One of the earliest is that in which the Lake-poet pays so striking a tribute to London. It was composed on Westminster Bridge, in 1802, and describes the view from it as seen at early dawn :

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

There is a sort of sister to this sonnet, in one composed a few days after, on the sea-beach near Calais, and recording the stillness of evening :

“ It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
 The gentleness of heaven broods o’er the sea :
 Listen ! the mighty being is awake,
 And doth with his eternal motions make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 Dear Child ! dear Girl ! that walkest with me here,
 If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less Divine :
 Thou liest in Abraham’s bosom all the year ;
 And worshipping’st at the Temple’s inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.”

Amongst the better known of Wordsworth’s pieces are two poems which resemble one another in the almost austere loftiness which characterises them,—I mean the Ode to Duty, and The Character of the Happy Warrior. Even better known that these is the poem which begins “ She was a phantom of delight,” illustrating with special felicity the typically Wordsworthian poetry. This poetry, we may say, is a tree whose graceful foliage, lifted high towards heaven, plays with the air and the sunshine ; which has a solid stem of rational meaning ; and which strikes its roots into the elemental affections and obligations in which is the secret and the strength of wholesome human life. The little poem, “ To a Skylark,” a “ gem of purest ray serene,” though not written

till 1826, might well have belonged to Wordsworth's most inspired time :

Ethereal minstrel ! pilgrims of the sky !
 Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound ?
 Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
 Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground ?
 Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
 Those quivering wings composed, that music still !

Leave to the Nightingale her shady wood ;
 A privacy of glorious light is thine ;
 Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
 Of harmony, with instinct more divine :
 Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam,
 True to the kindred points of heaven and home !

I have kept for final mention what would be generally recognised as Wordsworth's masterpiece—the Ode entitled “Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” written between 1803 and 1806. In his own introduction to the poem he says, “When I was impelled to write this poem on the Immortality of the soul, I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.” In this use of the notion of pre-existence there is something that answers to Coleridge's use of a supernatural machinery in constructing *his* masterpiece, “The Ancient Mariner.” Wordsworth, we may say, dwelling upon the susceptibilities of early childhood, accounts for them by the hypothesis of some pre-existent nature: they are *as if* memories of a previous heavenly existence were haunting the first years of this earthly life. The beauty of the poem is in its setting forth those spiritual susceptibilities of childhood. The most modern philosophy would account for them, perhaps, by the

principle of heredity ; would admit them to be traces of previous existence, but the previous existence would be that of parents and ancestors. Wordsworth's " Heaven lies about us in our infancy !" expresses our Christian faith. We hold that the spirit of the child is related to, and visited by, the Divine Spirit ; and that that intercourse lies in the region of mystery and evades the handling of ordinary observation and analysis. According to Wordsworth's poetical faith, it is especially through external Nature that the Creative Spirit touches the nature of the child and the childlike man.

There is a singularly fine passage of Henry Vaughan, the contemporary of Milton, in which we may recognize the leading idea of the Intimations of Immortality :

Happy those early days when I
 Shined in my angel-infancy !
 Before I understood this place
 Appointed for my second race
 Or taught my soul to fancy ought
 But a white celestial thought ;
 When yet I had not walked above
 A mile or two from my first love,
 And, looking back, at that short space
 Could see a glimpse of his bright face ;
 When on some gilded cloud or flower
 My gazing soul could dwell an hour,
 And in those weaker glories spy
 Some shadows of eternity ;
 Before I taught my tongue to wound
 My conscience with a sinful sound,
 Or had the black art to dispense
 A several sin to every sense,
 But felt through all this fleshly dress
 Bright shoots of everlastingness.

In close harmony with this picture Wordsworth says

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
 The earth, and every common sight,
 To me did seem
 Apparelled in celestial light,
 The glory and the freshness of a dream.

There was something to regret in the loss of this susceptibility of childhood, but Wordsworth has his consolation :

What though the radiance that was once so bright
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind ;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which, having been, must ever be ;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering ;
 In the faith that looks through death,
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

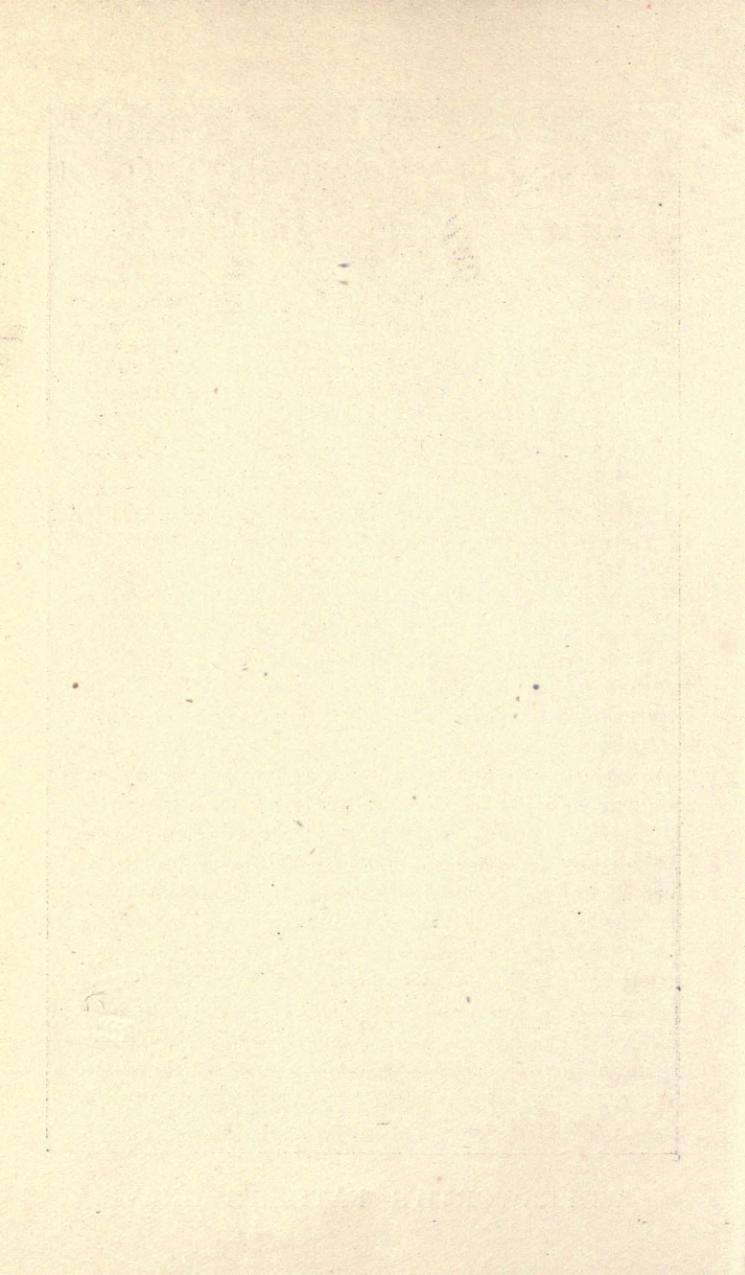
In the life of Wordsworth, prolonged to so advanced an age, there is nothing to lament, nothing to pity. His circumstances were such as he desired, and, accepting his lot with thankfulness, he was happy in it. He always received admiring appreciation from those for whose judgment he cared much ; and before his end came he had won a high reputation throughout the English-speaking world. For the last seven years of his life he was Poet-Laureate—the public Poet of England. We may describe the boons which he has conferred upon our race in the words in which, in 1807, he expressed his own confident hope : “ Of what moment is the present

reception of my poems compared with what I trust is their destiny?—to console the afflicted ; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier ; to teach the young, and the gracious of every age, to see, to think, and to feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous ; this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves.”





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