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V. C. Turnbull
London. Oct. '31.

Some Portraits

of the

Lake Poets

and their Homes.

BY ASHLEY P. ABRAHAM.

"Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares,
The poets—who on earth have made us heirs,
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!"
—Wordsworth's *Personal Talk.*

With 29 full-page Monogravure Illustrations

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List of Illustrations.

CONTENTS.

William Wordsworth,

At Grasmere and Rydal.

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

Intimations of Immortality.

It has been finely said, "What a glorious gift God bestows upon a nation when he gives it a poet!" If this be so, then not only our nation, but the whole world is laid under deep obligation for the gift of William Wordsworth.

But Wordsworth was something more than a poet; he was a teacher, as all great poets have ever been. After years of abuse at the hands of those who failed to understand him, he initiated his own generation into the spirit of Nature and its power to solace the human soul. The green fields, the delicate lichen on country walls, the mountains, woods and streams, the despised flowers of the dells and hedgerows, any and every object in Nature, however lowly or insignificant, formed his text. And what sermons he preached! What lessons he derived from these hitherto unappreciated sources! Sermons and lessons that were cast before the Peter Bells of his time; before the type of man that he pictures thus,

" In vain through every changeful year
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

It is due to Wordsworth, perhaps in a greater measure than to any other, that we of the present generation can see and appreciate the beauties that are around us in the countryside, and drink in therefrom the mental and moral

refreshment which, in this busy, seething age of commerce and city turmoil, is as the breath of life to many of us. Coleridge may have more mystery, Shelley more fire, Keats more music, but it was Wordsworth who really felt the common soul in nature, the fusion of the human and natural into one scale of moods and longings. Further, he taught his contemporaries what we to-day have come to regard as a truism—that all the elements of true poetry are to be found in their greatest purity in the lives and characters of the poor.

But, while we remember that Wordsworth himself said that his teaching was more important than his poetry, we cannot but find the keenest pleasure, whether we be nature lovers or not, in the beauty of his diction, the music of his rhythm, the lofty aspirations that haunted his every thought, and his power to express these thoughts in some of the finest lyrics of the English language.

Of the galaxy of literary and artistic talent that formed the little band known as the "Lake Poets," Wordsworth was the master light, the supreme genius; and it was peculiarly fitting that he alone, of them all, should be a native of the district.

He was born at Cockermouth on April 17th, 1770, a thriving town distant by four miles or so from the most northerly of the Lakes, Bassenthwaite Water, and connected with it by the Derwent River which, as Wordsworth wrote in his *Prelude*, was prone

> "To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
> And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,
> And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
> That flowed along my dreams."

His earliest schooldays were passed at Penrith, which, as every Penrithian will tell you, is in the Lake District. It is also gratifying to a Lakelander to recall the fact that it was here, at his first school, where he met his future wife, the Mary Hutchinson who, in after years, was to be such a true help-meet and sympathetic partner in his life's work. As a boy he was of a "stiff, moody and violent temper," so much so that upon one occasion he retired to the attic of his Grandfather's house at Penrith, labouring

HAWKSHEAD, with Wetherlam behind.

The Grammar School is the white, two-storied building seen immediately below the Church.

"Like a throned Lady, sending out,
A gracious look all over her domain." *The Prelude.*

under some trivial grievance, with the intention of destroying himself with a foil. At the last moment, fortunately for us, his courage failed. Another Penrith picture, drawn by himself:—With his eldest brother, Richard, he was whipping tops in the drawing room. "The walls were hung round with family pictures and I said to my brother, 'Dare you strike your whip through that old lady's petticoat?' He replied, 'No, I won't.' Then said I 'Here goes!' and I struck my lash through her hooped petticoat, for which no doubt, though I have forgotten it, I was properly punished." This was the sturdy spirit, indifferent to chastisement (which he "was rather proud of than otherwise") that stood him in such good stead in after life when attacked by his critics.

Wordsworth lost his father—a solicitor and agent for Sir James Lowther, afterwards Lord Lonsdale—in 1783, and but for the generosity of his two uncles would have received a limited education. It redounds greatly to the credit, and argues much for the discernment, of these men that they sent him to Hawkshead, the little old-world village near the head of Esthwaite Lake, and, later to Cambridge. At the Grammar School at Hawkshead he "learnt some of his lessons" and, what was more important, was brought into daily contact with the "great mother" who moulded his thoughts; for

> "From Nature and her overflowing soul,
> He had received so much, that all his thoughts
> Were steeped in feeling."

Here it was that he wandered by the margin of the lake, or skated along its surface ice, or hung from the cliffs above Yewdale in search of ravens' nests, and trapped woodcock amongst the "intacks" surrounding the village. He lodged with good Dame Tyson, whose little cottage in Grundy Nèuk is to this day the Mecca of all Wordsworth lovers. Upon one of the desks in the grammar school, he carved his name during the dinner hour, an amusement which, judging by the number of other names on the benches, his teachers encouraged. To realise all that his life at Hawkshead did for the poet, one must read *The Prelude*, that epic poem on his own education, with its vivid record of his boyhood and the impulses that first stirred his youthful mind.

In October, 1787, he went as an undergraduate to St. John's College, Cambridge, where, perhaps, the most notable thing he did was to dress well! Picture this man of nature, if you can, dressed up in all the latest fashions, silk stockings, powdered hair, and tricked out as a dude! As De Quincey says in his *Recollections*, "to those who remember the slovenly dress of his middle and philosophic life, this will furnish matter for a smile!"

However, it is not the province of this brief sketch to follow the poet's career much beyond the confines of Lakeland; besides, his B.A. degree, taken in January, 1791, and his subsequent wanderings in the South of England, affected his vital being in a singularly small degree. It is of moment to mention, however, that upon his second long vacation he again met his old school-fellow, Mary Hutchinson, at Penrith, where

> "By her exulting outside look of youth
> And placid under-countenance first endeared"

was laid the foundation of the love that was to be consummated when his need for it was ripe, and which was to be the solace of his later years. Another outside factor in the trend of Wordsworth's ultimate mental state cannot be ignored; this was the French Revolution. He threw himself heart and soul into the study of this, and actually spent nearly a year in and around Paris, Orleans and Blois. This "great moral tempest" undoubtedly gave him a deep insight into the human passions and widened his views so vastly that, from writing of comparatively trivial matters, he began

> "To look on Nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
> The still sad music of humanity."

The wild scenes of the Revolution threw his thoughts inwards into grand meditations upon man; with appreciable swiftness:

> "The coarser pleasures of my boyish days
> And their glad animal movements"

were supplanted by something deeper. Although nature would ever be his grand keynote and

> "the sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,

THE INTERIOR OF HAWKSHEAD GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

(Inset is a photograph of Wordsworth's autograph, which, as a boy, he carved upon his desk).

> Their colours and their forms were then to me
> An appetite; a feeling and a love
> That had no need of a remoter charm . . . ."

he very soon entered into the realization of

> " 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. . . . ."

From this time, during the year 1794, dates the beginning of Wordsworth's real life's work. It was about this period that his " gentle sister " Dorothy joined him, and they set up house together at Racedown, in Dorset. It was probably a year later than this that he met Coleridge and collaborated for a short time with him in *The Ancient Mariner*. The diversity of their styles and general outlook predestined such an experiment to failure; this was mutually realized, and *The Rime* was left to Coleridge's unaided muse.

We must pass over his stay of nearly two years at Alfoxden, and the comparative unimportance of most of the poems he wrote there (always excepting the beautiful *Lines written above Tintern Abbey*) and follow him to his first Lakeland home, Dove Cottage. Hither, with his sister Dorothy, he came in the winter of 1799. Previous to those days Dove Cottage had been an inn—" The Dove and Olive Bough "—and stood quite alone. Let De Quincey tell us what he saw from Hammerscar in 1802. After describing the lake of Grasmere, " revealing all its little bays and wild sylvan margin feathered to the edge with wild flowers and ferns," he pictures, " in one quarter a little wood, stretching for about half-a-mile towards the outlet of the lake; more directly in opposition to the spectator, a few green fields; and beyond them, just two bowshots from the water, a little white cottage gleaming from the midst of trees, with a vast and seemingly never-ending series of ascents rising above it to the height of more than three thousand feet."

How much Wordsworth appreciated this seclusion, and how bitterly he would have deplored the cottage's

present situation amongst other buildings, can well be gathered from the following verse, which is surely one of the most poetical pictures of a dwelling ever penned—

"Well may'st thou halt, and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode: forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look,
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf with harsh impiety.
Think what the home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants! Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away."

It is of interest to remark in passing, that Wordsworth himself wrote but very little. A peculiar nervous affection rendered the actual writing intolerably irksome, but he was greatly relieved by his sister, who acted as an amanuensis and thus proved herself an indispensable help.

From 1799 till 1802 this pair of nature lovers dwelt in peaceful retirement and intercourse, in perfect sympathy with each other, roaming o'er the fells, sauntering through the woods, picnicking on The Island, idyllically happy, but with the happiness of mental industry. For it was during this period that Wordsworth evolved, and Dorothy wrote, much of *The Prelude* and *Excursion*, and other verses that must live as long as their favourite Rothay murmurs over the stones of its bed.

In 1802 an important addition was made to their household, for in the October of that year Wordsworth married Mary Hutchinson, his old school-fellow. This marriage has been described as "the crowning stroke of Wordsworth's felicity." After such an expression it will readily be understood that Mrs. Wordsworth was an acquisition of the highest order And this was indeed the case. In every way she was a true helpmeet. Her beautiful domestic qualities were allied to a mind of rare dignity, delicate refinement and exquisite tact. She was in entire sympathy with her husband's poetry, and, interspersing helpful suggestions the while, committed to paper a considerable proportion of his work.

DOVE COTTAGE, FROM THE GARDEN.

"Thou little nook of mountain ground,
. . . . . .
Sweet garden-orchard eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found."

Farewell to Dove Cottage.

It is not difficult to picture this trio on a fine spring day on Loughrigg Terrace, the ladies sitting on the boulders with paper and pencil in hand, whilst Wordsworth paces to and fro along the level greensward, declaiming, waving his hands languidly in the air and emphasising by a nod of his head the finality of each stanza as it falls from his lips. And "what like," as they say in Westmorland, were the actors in the above scene?

Wordsworth himself was above the average in height (five feet ten inches) and his carriage was typical of that of many of those shepherds about whom he has written so beautifully. Loose-limbed but sturdy, somewhat narrow-chested, with the slight stoop of the thinker, and the roll, almost a slouch, of gait that characterises the man who spends much of his time walking over fellsides, added to a certain carelessness of dress, his was by no means a statuesque form. But his face—"that," as De Quincey says, "was one which would have made amends for the greatest defects of figure." Many such faces this personal friend of Wordsworth had seen "amongst the paintings of Titian and Vandyck," but none had impressed him more. Haydon, in his famous painting of "Christ's Entry into Jerusalem," has introduced Wordsworth in the character of a disciple; according to De Quincey, those who are acquainted with that masterpiece have seen the most impressive likeness of the poet. Our frontispiece portrait is by Haydon; Wordsworth himself wrote to the artist, in 1846, that "this is the best likeness—that is, the most characteristic that has been done of me." We are notoriously bad judges of our own portraits, but undoubtedly this one serves to give us an excellent idea of the contours of Wordsworth's face and head.

Of his wife the poet sang thus,

> "She was a phantom of delight
> When first she gleamed upon my sight,
> . . . . . .
> A perfect woman nobly plann'd
> To warn, to comfort and command,
> And yet a spirit still and bright
> With something of an angel light."

De Quincey's pen picture ascribes to her "a tolerably good figure . . . . fair complexion, accompanied by an

animated expression of health, eyes of vesper gentleness, but with considerable obliquity of vision, the whole concurring to a sunny benignity—a radiant graciousness —such as in this world I never saw surpassed."

Dorothy was of a different type. Her face was naturally sallow, but constant exposure to wind and sun had tanned it to a deep, gipsy brown. Dark, mobile eyes that nothing escaped, a well-formed nose and purposeful chin, and alert, vivacious expression went to form a face that was an excellent index to her character.

For the rest, Coleridge's impression of her, in 1795, is perhaps one of the truest left to us by her personal friends.

"Wordsworth and his exquisite sister are with me. She is a woman indeed! in mind, I mean, and heart: for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her ordinary: if you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty: but her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. In every motion her most innocent soul outbeams so brightly that who saw her would say:

"Guilt is a thing impossible to her."

The even tenor of her life at Dove Cottage was unbroken, save by the death of Wordsworth's sailor brother, John—"the *Silent* Poet" of the Fir Grove near the Wishing Gate. He was drowned in the Abergavenny, in 1805. His loss was a great blow, keenly felt for many a year, and beautifully recorded in the verses to his memory, which are included in the group of *Poems on the Naming of Places.*

The exigencies of a growing family at length necessitated a removal, in 1808, to a more commodious dwelling. The members of the household, enlarged now to six by the advent of the children—John, Dora and Thomas—decided to take possession of Allan Bank, a roomy, but, at that time, uncomfortable house at the northern end of Grasmere Lake. Here they dwelt for about three years, during which period, Catherine and William were born. Wordsworth was a most loving father, and his children, particularly Dora and Catherine, are often alluded to in

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.
1771-1855.

RYDAL MOUNT, GRASMERE.

The last home of William Wordsworth, from 1813 to 1850.

his poetry. The discomforts of Allan Bank ultimately drove the Wordsworths, in 1811, to the Parsonage at Grasmere, but here trouble overtook them, for, first their darling Catherine and then her little brother, Thomas, were taken away and laid to rest in Grasmere Churchyard. The loss of them nearly broke their father's heart, and it was many a long day before he regained his wonted content and happiness. This sad bereavement was the direct cause of his leaving the Parsonage. Its proximity to the graves of his children acted as a reminder of his sorrow. His feelings were constantly being harrowed up, and his work impeded.

Rydal Mount became vacant. He eagerly seized upon the opportunity to take it, and thus the Wordsworths went to their last and most cherished abode. This change was rendered possible by the fact that, just at this time, the distributorship of stamps for the county of Westmorland, with its emoluments, became vacant, and the poet was appointed to the office. It is a singular fact that, during the whole of Wordsworth's life, his worldly needs were always met by a benign Providence at the critical moment. The basis of his prosperity in life was laid by a bequest from one of his most ardent admirers, Raisley Calvert. No sketch of the Poet's career should omit an expression of gratitude for the £900 that was thus left to him. This was in the early days, and it was this bequest that rendered it at all possible for Wordsworth to devote his whole time to poetry. The £900 was invested in an annuity which was added to by no less than six unexpected "windfalls" that occurred just when increase of family, change of residence, or other costly events demanded them. People died in the most obliging manner and left valuable posts that fell into Wordsworth's lap. De Quincey was such a believer in Wordsworth's almost uncanny good fortune, that he very humorously writes, "for myself, had I happened to know of any peculiar adaptation in an estate or office of mine to an existing need of Wordsworth's . . . . . I would have laid it down at his feet." "Take it," I should have said, "take it, or in three weeks I shall be a dead man."

It was during his residence at Rydal Mount that

Wordsworth lived down his unpopularity with the critics, to which reference has already been made. People at length began to realize the beauty of his writings, and to understand his teaching. Honours fell thickly upon him. He passed from the comparative obscurity of his friends' admiration to the position, recognised on all hands, of the most masterly literary mind in England. Not only at home, but in America his poems were read with avidity and delight. This American recognition of his work was perhaps the most grateful and appreciated of all his triumphs. In 1839, he had the honorary degree of D.C.L. conferred upon him by the University of Oxford. The then Professor of Poetry—Keble, amidst a scene of almost unprecedented enthusiasm, advanced Wordsworth's chief claim to the distinction upon the grounds that he had "shed a celestial light upon the affections, the occupations, the piety of the poor." Truly an achievement of which any man might be passing proud! Another proof of public approbation was evidenced in 1842, when he was awarded an annuity of £300 from the Civil List, for distinguished literary merit. Six months later, the Poet Laureateship was rendered vacant by the death of Southey; this was offered to Wordsworth, but, because of its attendant duties, he courteously declined it. Upon further pressure by the Lord Chamberlain, backed by an assurance that "nothing would be required" from him and that the distinction was offered in order to pay to him that tribute of respect which is justly due to the first of living poets," Wordsworth reconsidered his reply, and for seven years, until his death, he filled the office with silent dignity.

These recognitions of his worth affected Wordsworth's life of "plain living and high thinking" not at all. He followed his own course undisturbed, wandering about the countryside, murmuring his verses as they came fresh from his thoughts, alleviating the condition of the poor and lowly around him, and always true to his first love:—

> "Long have I loved what I behold,
> The night that calms, the day that cheers:
> The common growth of mother earth
> Suffices me—her tears and mirth,
> Her humblest mirth and tears."

GRASMERE LAKE AND VILLAGE.

"Grasmere's peaceful vale."

Showing the Island and Grasmere Church, with Dunmail Raise beyond.

Amongst the poor folk around, he was but imperfectly understood, however. On one occasion Hartley Coleridge, who was always at ease with the villagers, passed the time of day with a wayside stonebreaker. "Well, anything fresh?" enquired Hartley, "Why, nowt varra partikler" came the answer, "Nobbut auld Wadsworth frae Rydal's brokken lowce agéan, and gaes booing his pottery up an' doon't roads, sometimes never seein' a body at aw', an' anudder time talking as sensible as owder thee or me!"

At Rydal Mount he entertained his friends, as he had done at Grasmere; De Quincey, now installed at Dove Cottage—Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Southey come over "the Raise" from Keswick—Dr. Arnold from Fox Howe, near by—Charles Lloyd from Brathay—Hartley Coleridge with his latest anecdote—Harriet Martineau, Felicia Hemans, Humphrey Davis, Professor Wilson and many other Lakeland personalities cheered the evening of his life and listened with rapt attention when the master, with the brilliance and dignity that always characterised him in congenial company, spoke of the things that he knew. Wordsworth paid the usual penalty of long life; the sorrow of parting from lifelong friends was his—first his old comrade, Coleridge, in 1834, then Arnold in 1841, Southey in 1843, Dora, his beloved daughter, the wife of Edward Quillinan, in 1847, and lastly in 1849, one whose brilliance, weaknesses and lovable nature always found a warm corner in Wordsworth's heart—Hartley Coleridge.

In 1850, on April 23rd, just as his cuckoo clock, that "constant prompter of vernal thoughts," announced the hour of midday, this great and good man passed away, leaving behind him Dorothy, and a broken-hearted wife who survived him nine years.

He was laid to rest amongst his Westmerian dalesmen, under the yew trees in Grasmere Churchyard, in the very heart of that land of hills and lakes he loved and understood so well. To us remains the reverent memory of one who, by his beautiful example of simple life, pious

teaching and exquisite muse, left the world immeasurably better than he found it; to us the "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears;" whilst to him is given

> "The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is amongst the lonely hills."

MRS. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Robert Southey,

And Greta Hall.

"One small spot
Where my tired mind may rest and call it *Home.*
There is a magic in that little word;
It is a mystic circle that surrounds
Comforts and virtues never known beyond
The hallowed limit."

Hymn to the Penates.

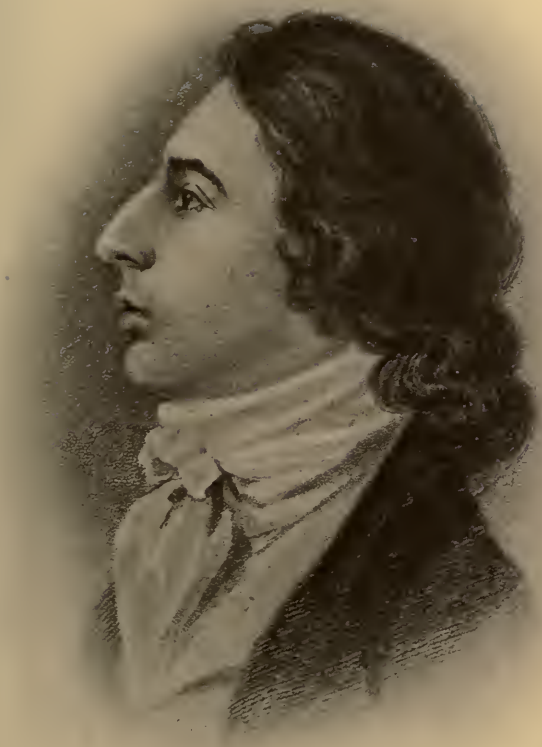
The life of Robert Southey was as complete a self-dedication to literature as the world has ever seen. Books, and the writing of books, were his obsession. "Excepting that peace," he has written, "which through God's infinite mercy is derived from a higher source, it is to literature, humanly speaking, that I am beholden, not only for the means of subsistence, but for every blessing which I enjoy."

But Southey's blameless life and standards of conduct, as well as his manly and fearless personality, must exact our admiration to an equal degree with the pleasure we derive from his writings. For whatever we may think of his poems, and they are highly praised by such men as Sir Walter Scott, W. S. Landor, Dean Stanley and Fox; whatever may be the debt we owe to Southey for his biographies and prose work, we cannot but feel that it is the man behind it all that most merits our esteem. He was a fearless champion of everything that made for good. At a time when powerful and wealthy influences were rampant on every hand, he warmly espoused the cause of our poor factory workers; he advocated, amongst other social reforms, national education, the diminution of public-houses, a well-organised system of emigration, a better order of hospital nurses, the establishment of

Protestant Sisters of Mercy; in fact, he was one of the chief pioneers of the great philanthropies to which most Europeans and Americans owe their present social welfare.

Southey's father was a linen draper at Bristol, and his eldest child, Robert, was born there on August 12th, 1774. The greater part of his early childhood was spent under the care of an eccentric maiden aunt at Bath. His life here would appear to have been one long discipline. He slept with his aunt and was forced to lie awake in bed until nine or ten in the morning, scarce daring to stir for fear of awaking her, "fancying figures and combinations of forms in the curtains, wondering at the motes in the slant sunbeam and watching the light from the crevices of the window shutters"—"early and severe lessons of patience."

His youthful education was such as fostered his dreamy and poetic nature, whilst instilling the method and discipline which ordered all his doings in after life. Later, he was for four years a Westminster Scholar, and it was here that one of his earliest literary attempts received a rude check. He endeavoured to prove that the devil was responsible for the art of chastisement, and upheld his convictions so fearlessly, and with such a Voltairean cynicism and satire, that nothing less than his expulsion from Westminster could stay his pen. He went as an undergraduate to Balliol College, Oxford, in 1792, with a "heart full of poetry and feeling, a head full of Rousseau and Werther, and my religious principles shaken by Gibbon," as he himself has written; but his innate sobriety and goodness nullified any adverse influences these men's works might have exerted over a weaker character. Two years later Coleridge visited Southey at Oxford, where was laid the foundation of a life-long friendship and, incidentally, as we shall see shortly, was established Southey's first link with the Lakes. The two poets were full of the ardour of youth, and when Southey left Oxford, they projected together the most wonderful schemes for a settlement in the Far West. "We preached Pantisocracy and Aspheterism everywhere. These are



ROBERT SOUTHEY.
1774-1843.

SHELLEY'S HOUSE ON CHESTNUT HILL, KESWICK.

The honeymoon cottage of the poet from October 1811, to February, 1812.

two new words, the first signifying the equal government of all, and the other the generalization of public property" —excellent schemes, fostered by congenial friends, but promptly nipped in the bud by Aunt Tyler from Bath. She ejected Robert and his Pantisocracy from her house! Then a stern uncle from Portugal came upon the scene and prescribed for our hero a six months' sojourn in Lisbon.

Prior to this, Southey had fallen in love with a Miss Fricker, the sister of Coleridge's fiancée, and before his banishment he surreptitiously married her. Cottle, the publisher who had bought Southey's *Joan of Arc*, financed the affair. At Bristol on November 14th, 1795, Edith Fricker became the Edith Southey who, in after years at Greta Hall, exerted such an excellent and beneficent influence on the life of her spouse. They parted at the church door, Robert for the continent, Edith, under her maiden name, for the sheltering roof of the friendly Cottle. The probation over, Southey returned to England and joined his wife.

We must pass over the next seven years of his life; years of strenuous endeavour in the quest of literary fame, "working hard and getting little," sometimes beholden to his friends for sustenance, and acquainted with the poignant sorrow of losing his only child. Then came Coleridge's invitations from Greta Hall, backed up by the promise of unlimited books. The joint libraries of Coleridge and his landlord—Sir Gilfrid Lawson—then one of the finest in England—together with free access to the books of the Cathedral Library at Carlisle, proved too much for Southey, so in September, 1803, he finally transferred his goods and chattels to Greta Hall. Here, with Coleridge and his wife and Mistress Lovell—sisters, by the way, of Edith Southey—the poet and his wife finally settled. Not without some qualms, however, for as recently as the previous July he had written to Coleridge that the fogs and rains would not allow him to contemplate even a six months' stay at Keswick. Moreover, the sight and constant companionship of Coleridge's little daughter, Sara, recalled the loss of his own child and depressed his spirits. Ere long, however, the restlessness

vanished; the deep quiet of nature sank into his soul and he wrote to his brother Tom, "Would that you could see these lakes and mountains! How wonderful they are! . . . . . All the poet part of me will be fed and fostered here. I feel already in tune." As with Charles Lamb, the lakes and mountains were an acquired taste to Southey; as such, they took the deeper hold upon his affections and endowed him with "a deep joy for which nothing else could compensate."

With Southey and Coleridge at Greta Hall, and Wordsworth and his satellites at Grasmere, the "Lake Poets" were now complete. Their brilliant circle shed a rich lustre upon the district. Greta Hall was visited by almost all the *literati* of the day. And what memories still cling round it! Memories of little De Quincey, arm in arm with Wordsworth, strolling across the lawn to gaze in rapture at Derwentwater and its "great camp of single mountains, each in shape resembling a giant's tent;" of Shelley, sitting with his young bride in the fork of the mighty tree that guards the approach to the Hall; of Coleridge and Charles Lamb, deep in the study of some new books from Carlisle; of Southey, lithe and muscular, as he gives little "Moses" (as Hartley Coleridge was nicknamed) a pickaback gallop round the house before he toddles off to bed; of Sir Walter Scott, Raisley Calvert from Windy Brow, Jackson the Waggoner, Samuel Rodgers, Dorothy Wordsworth and of many others too numerous to mention.

Southey's life at Keswick was one of close and constant work. The amount of writing, prose and poetry, which he produced was prodigious. Not content with one theme at a time, he often had half a dozen different poems or biographies in hand. In addition to these, he continued to sustain a voluminous correspondence—his letters were amongst his most delightful productions—and to read unlimited books. No doubt his huge literary output was only rendered possible by his method of ordered industry. At certain allotted times, he ate, slept, read or wrote and, come wet or fine, inspiration or none, he stuck to his *régime*. It is impossible for any man always to be at his best. The true poet sings only when

GRETA HALL, KESWICK.

The home of Southey from 1803 to 1843, and of Coleridge from 1800 to 1846.

he must; punctuality and method were ever strangers to the muse. She can only be successfully wooed when her suppliants are burning with the fervour of genius, at odd moments of inspiration. Southey wooed her immediately after breakfast every morning and kept on until two o'clock, returning to the attack every evening. This being so, it is not to be wondered at that in much of his work he has not given us of his best. Perhaps we cannot blame him for this, however, for he had many mouths to fill and, as he has humorously said, with nothing to put in them but what came from his inkstand.

The rest of his time was spent in long, country rambles, games with the children, picnics on the lake, writing letters or, last but not least with him, revelling in the volumes of his beloved library. He gathered together nearly fifteen thousand books—not a bad collection for a man of moderate earnings—always keeping them carefully tabulated and spotlessly clean.

We can easily imagine with what qualms he let Wordsworth loose in his sanctum, for he once told De Quincey that "to introduce Wordsworth into one's library is like letting a bear into a tulip garden." Certainly, the Grasmere poet only valued books for what they contained, for upon one memorable occasion he actually cut the pages of De Quincey's brand new edition of Burke with a butter knife which "left its greasy honours behind it on every page." Perhaps this lack of sympathy with Southey's "other wife" (as Coleridge used to call his library) accounted for the lack of entire cordiality in the relations of the two poets: not that they were ever bad friends, but just that, high as their mutual respect always continued, they were not quite the kindred spirits one would have expected.

Southey was one of the lightest hearted of men, a genial host, a "noble jackass" to the children, a devoted husband, generous to a fault, both in his pecuniary gifts and in his appreciation of other poets and authors, and a friend to whom no sacrifice was too great. Of his work it is impossible to represent even the best features in this

brief sketch, but it can be said at once that his prose was considered by his contemporaries, with the notable exception of Macaulay, to be even better than his poetry. As a biographer he stands alone—a dictum with which all who have read his lives of Wesley, Nelson, Cowper or Baxter will agree—and his essays, which first appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, have won for him an assured position in the world of letters. As a poet, he lacks somewhat that spark of the "divine fire," possessed so eminently by Wordsworth or Coleridge, and it is to be feared that *Madoc*, *Roderick*, *Thalaba*, or his *Visions of Judgement* are not read to any great extent nowadays.

Unlike many men of greater genius, Southey gained the highest recognition of his work during his lifetime. Considerable wealth became his; honours fell upon him—the Poet Laureateship, the offer of a Baronetcy, which he declined, the warmest praise and friendship from those in high places, a degree from the University and, amongst other things, a good pension from the Crown. He lived to a ripe old age and suffered the loss of many of his loved ones.

> "We hurry to the river we must cross,
> And swifter downward every footstep wends,
> Happy who reach it ere they count the loss
> Of half their faculties and half their friends."

Landor's beautiful lines were singularly prophetic of Southey's lot, for he lost his wife Edith in 1837 and three years later his faculties became almost entirely clouded. Even his books were no longer understood, and it must indeed have been a touching sight to see him take them from their shelves, handle them in an absent manner and, from force of long habit, silently restore them to their places.

His last years were lovingly tended by his second wife—the noble-minded Caroline Bowles—until, on a day of driving rain and wind, in March, 1843, all that remained of that scholarly writer and true-hearted gentleman, Robert Southey, was consigned to the beautiful God's Acre of Crosthwaite Church.

CROSTHWAITE CHURCH, KESWICK.

With Skiddaw behind. Southey's tomb is situated a few yards to the left of the Church tower.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his Son, Hartley.

" He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."
The Ancient Mariner.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey were bosom friends. Their paths were the more closely intertwined by their marriage of two sisters, the Misses Fricker of Bristol. So intimate and at ease with each other were they that, as young men, they seriously projected a scheme of retiring to the backwoods of America with their friend Lovell, who married a third Miss Fricker, and of their founding a "Pantisocratic" community, where all that is best in Socialism should be practised.

Their project never materialized, but their families lived together at Greta Hall, at Keswick, Coleridge's in one half of the house, and Southey's in the other. And yet, it would be difficult to find two men more widely divergent in methods of conduct and modes of living. Comparisons are notoriously distasteful, and I do not propose to institute any between these men further than to remark that, in studying Southey's career, I have constantly found my admiration of his writings overshadowed by an even deeper esteem for the man himself, his loyalty of heart, high standards of conduct and gentility of intellect; whilst, in the case of Coleridge, I would fain forget the details of his life story, remembering only his wonderful genius, and the beauty of his poetry. And to those who find the narrative of his career, with its bald statement of domestic infelicity, opium eating, lack of application to work and, to use his own word, "strengthlessness" of character, I would say: "Read the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and all will be forgotten, aye, and forgiven!"

COLERIDGE AT CAMBRIDGE.

Unlike that of Wordsworth and Southey (who, with Coleridge, really stand for the school of "Lake Poets") Coleridge's muse owed but little to the influence of the charms of Lakeland. By far his best work had been accomplished before he came to Greta Hall, and, keenly appreciative as he undoubtedly was of the beauties around him, they did but little to help him to rehabilitate the manhood that opium and ill health had undermined. Indeed, in his later sojourn here he did not afford nature much opportunity. De Quincey tells us that "he burrowed continually deeper and deeper into scholastic subtleties and metaphysical abstractions," and, "at two or four o'clock in the afternoon, he would make his first appearance. Through the silence of the night, when all other lights had disappeared in the quiet cottages, *his* lamp might be seen invariably by the belated traveller, and at seven or eight o'clock in the morning, when man was going forth to his labour, this insulated son of reverie was retiring to bed."

Coleridge's father was a clergyman, vicar of the parish of Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, and headmaster of Ottery Free Grammar School. Samuel was the youngest of ten children, by the vicar's second wife. His father died when he was seven years old, and two years later he lost his mother. Thanks to the influence of family friends, the orphan boy was then taken into the Blue-coat school, where the lad, dreamy and absent minded, was tyrannized over and bullied by the masters and had many indignities put upon him. Charles Lamb, his schoolfellow and friend of after years, has left us very convincing pictures of little Samuel's unhappiness at Christ's Hospital, but on these we cannot dwell. With all kinds of odd, out of the way studies and theories he filled his mind in his spare time, always keeping aloof from the other lads, and ever a prey to fits of abstraction.

As a Greek scholar, however, he was so good that he rose to be deputy Grecian in the classes and was later selected for a scholarship at Cambridge. He was entered at Jesus College, at the age of eighteen, and shortly afterwards raised the hopes of his friends by winning a prize for a Greek ode. This proved to be but a "flash in the

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.
1772-1834.

pan" and the next distinction he attained was of a negative order. He disappeared from College for about six months! It subsequently transpired that he had enlisted in the 15th Light Dragoons, where his incapability of method and drill led him to bewail his sorrows in a Greek verse, written on his horse's saddle. This was observed by an officer who decided that so good a scholar and so bad a soldier had no business in the Army. Thereupon, Coleridge's friends were communicated with, his discharge obtained, and a fresh start made at Cambridge. All to no purpose, however, for very soon afterwards he left it for ever, having taken no degree and with no definite plans for his future.

It is typical of the man that at this epoch of his career he should take to himself a wife, trusting to Providence to liquidate the household bills. He had visited Oxford prior to this, met Southey there,, and struck up a warm friendship. Southey was then in love with a Miss Edith Fricker; his friend Lovell had married her sister, and, there being a third sister unappropriated, Samuel joined the family party and married Miss Sarah Fricker on October 4th, 1795. It was at this time that the "Pantisocratic" craze was at its height, and it is to be feared that sympathy with this betrayed our hero into his marriage, although it is held in some quarters that it was one of mutual affection. In any case it proved a sad failure.

For two or three years all went fairly well, however, and it was during this period, when he enjoyed the friendship and encouragement of Southey and Wordsworth, at Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, in the West Country, that he worked seriously as a poet and wrote the verses that have won for him his exalted position in the realms of literature, notably, *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan.*

It was during this productive time, on September 19th, 1796, to be exact, that his son Hartley, the poet's 'very miniature' was born, but of little Hartley more shortly. Coleridge's blind faith in Providence to provide the needful capital to run his household was quite justified for, beyond a matter of thirty guineas which he received

for the copyright for his first volume of poems, he earned practically nothing. But such was the admiration of his small circle of friends that between them they kept the wolf from his door.. Charles Lloyd, the son of a rich banker, who gravitated to the Lakes with the Poets, was the kindest of these, for he set up house with Coleridge and no doubt discharged most of the accounts. De Quincey, also, contributed a present of three hundred pounds, and the pension of £150 given by two of his admirers, the brothers Wedgwood, must not be forgotten.

As a conversationalist and man of charming personality, Coleridge must at this time have been quite extraordinary. De Quincey made his acquaintance at Nether Stowey, and he describes the poet's discourse as "a continuous strain of eloquent dissertation, certainly the most novel, the most finely illustrated, and traversing the most spacious fields of thought . . . . that it was possible to conceive." Dorothy Wordsworth, too, fell under his charm and wrote, "He is a wonderful man; his conversation teems with soul, mind and spirit." His powers of oratory in private no doubt prompted him to take up lecturing as a means of livelihood, but by this time his nature had become too dilatory, and his movements so erratic (largely, no doubt, by reason of his increasing use of opium;) that the lectures were not a success. He often disappointed his audience, and much kindly expressed sympathy with his "indisposition" ultimately gave way to a feeling of disgust which soon blasted his platform career.

His real life's work—the lyrical poems, expressive of the height and perfection of his imaginative genius—was accomplished during the years 1796-1798, at Nether Stowey.

From that time onward, until near the end, the story is one of steady degeneration. The Poet in Coleridge gave place to the Politician, the Journalist, the Lecturer and the Metaphysician; only feebly and at comparatively rare intervals did his poetic gift reassert itself.

He came to Greta Hall in 1800. Here several drawn battles were fought with his old foes, opium and depression. Periods of deep distraction and opium debauch, added to serious failure of health, alternated

"AN AUTUMN MORNING," DERWENTWATER.

With Causey Pike, one of Coleridge's "great camp of single mountains, each in shape resembling a giant's tent."

with fierce mental struggles for self-mastery, during which some good literary work was done. From 1804 onwards, however, he produced no really great poetry. For a time he became a wanderer upon the face of the earth: from Keswick to Malta, thence to Italy and back to London, lecturing at Bristol, taking a Unitarian pulpit at Bath, editing a new journal, *The Friend*, at Grasmere, with occasional visits to his home circle at Keswick, until, in 1809, he finally cut the cable and quitted his home in the Lake Country for ever.

His wife and children stayed on at Greta Hall, a sad and bereft family, living for the most part on the generosity of Southey and other friends, hearing only through outsiders of the husband and father who had deserted them. A sad picture, truly, but one, we must admit, that can be witnessed every day in our own time. In Coleridge's case, however, the bitterness was accentuated by the thought of what might have been; for even in two short years he achieved almost as much immortality as poetry can bestow.

What, then, has the world missed by the lack of mental balance and physical health in this one man? We cannot tell, but a very short perusal of his poems will suffice to convince us that, in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, there lived a genius as great, an imagination as original, and a word-painter as consummate as the world of letters has ever seen.

It must be with the liveliest feelings of gratitude that lovers of his poetry remember that, from the year 1816 until the time of his death, he regained much of his lost character and self-respect, that he vanquished his old foe and entirely abstained from opium, that he wrote some few works not entirely unworthy of his genius and enjoyed the friendship and good word of such men as Sir Walter Scott, W. S. Landor, Lockhart, Charles Lamb, Faraday, Emerson and, perhaps most cherished of all, William Wordsworth.

He died at Highgate on July 25th, 1834, and was laid to rest in the crypt of the school chapel, some six months after he had written his own epitaph:

"Stop, Christian passer by! Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

A poet lies, or that which once seemed he.
O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.
That he who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death."

. . . . . .

When little David Hartley Coleridge came with his parents to Greta Hall, he was but four years of age—an odd child, full of strange fancies, thinking deeply upon all kinds of "grown-up" subjects, and living in a world peopled by his own imagination. He was the subject of much concern and anxious forebodings amongst his friends and relatives. Wordsworth's poem to "H. C. Six Years Old," voices something of these.

. . . . . .

"O blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years."

. . . . . .

His uncle, Robert Southey, took the greatest delight in the boy, and in his Letters has afforded us some charming pictures of him. "His religion makes one of the most humorous parts of his character. I'm a boy of a very religious turn," he says . . . "Every night he makes an extemporary prayer aloud, but it is always in bed and not until he is comfortable there and got into the mood . . . If he had been behaving amiss, away he goes for the Bible, and looks out for something appropriate to his case, in the *Psalms* or the *Book of Job*. The other day after he had been in a violent passion, he chose out a chapter against wrath, 'Ah! that suits me!' . . . He once made a pun upon occasion of the bellyache, though I will not say that he designed it. 'Oh! Mrs. Wilson, I'se got the *colic*: Read me the Epistle and Gospel for the day.' Mrs. Wilson was his old "Nurse Wilsey"—a woman who loved and tended the strange boy as though he had been her own.

A letter from Mrs. Basil Montague gives us another glimpse of him. "At eight years of age he had found a spot upon the globe which he peopled with an imaginary nation, gave them a name, a language, laws, and a senate;

HARTLEY COLERIDGE,
at the age of ten years.
1796-1849.

where he framed long speeches which he *translated*, as he said, for my benefit, and the benefit of my neighbours, who climbed the garden wall to listen to this surprising child . . . . He called this nation the 'Ejuxrii' and one day, when walking very pensively, I asked him what ailed him He said 'My people are too fond of war, and I have just made an eloquent speech in the Senate, which has not made any impression on them, and to war they will go.'"

Shortly after this, he and his younger brother Derwent went to day school at Ambleside, but the ordinary lessons were too babyish for him. As Derwent tells us "he was educated;—by desultory reading, by the living voice of Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth, Lloyd, Wilson and De Quincey— and again by homely familiarity with the town's folk and country folk of every degree; lastly by daily recurring hours of solitude—with lonely wanderings with the murmur of the Brathay in his ear."

This unusual method of life had a result which could not be altogether unexpected. His nature became very sensitive, and his will began to lack strength and control. The slightest temptations found him quite an easy prey and, to the sorrow of his friends and well-wishers, the infirmity of will thus early displayed never left him. He had a morbid dislike of pain of any kind and could not even bear to hear of anything disagreeable. But with all his oddities, he was a most lovable child. He had a way of touching people's hearts which stayed with him throughout his life. He addressed every new comer as an old friend, and in a perfectly irresistible way. Better, perhaps, would it have been for his success in life had this kind, friendly spirit been suppressed, and had his wonderful powers as a conversationalist, inherited, no doubt from his father, been restrained. For the weakness that beset him in after life, when wine and jovial company were ever his failings, might thus have been more successfully combated.

In 1814, he went as a scholar to Merton College, Oxford, where he did good work, being placed second

class *in literis humanioribus*. He competed each year for the Newdigate Prize and but narrowly missed success. Later, he was elected a Fellow of Oriel College, but his fondness for the "flowing bowl," encouraged no doubt by his failure in the Newdigate, became so great that he ultimately lost his fellowship.

Two years in Gray's Inn, London, followed, and here he contributed various sonnets, many of them of great brilliance, to the *London Magazine*, but a constant longing for the Lake Country of his childhood, coupled with misgivings that his intemperance would lead to complete ruin in a big town, induced him to return to Westmorland. Here he tried his hand as schoolmaster; first at his lodgings in Clappersgate, near Charles Lloyd, to whose kindly influence he owed much, and then, as assistant to a Mr. Stuart, of Ambleside. Teaching was not his *métier*, however, and after various short wanderings, he ultimately settled down at his last home at Nab Cottage. This was in 1837, and his good friends the Richardsons, who found him "as manashable as a bairn," tended him as very parents for the last twelve years of his life.

He was a great favourite with the country folk around. Everybody had a kind word, a hearty salute for him. The yeomen of the dales looked upon him as the cleverest man in England, "an' a powitt, iviry inch of 'im." They even went so far as to persuade themselves that it was really he who "sat down and wrought maist o' Mr. Wudsworth's pottery." He was also a rare hand at a tale or song, and no doubt many of his drinks were "settled" by the rendering of his standard ditty *The Tortoiseshell Cat*.

But not only amongst his friendly rustics was Hartley welcome, for his easy carriage, air of good breeding, and intensely original conversation, to say nothing of his quaint mannerisms and winning expression of countenance rendered him an acquisition to any company. Wordsworth would put aside almost any work for a "crack" with him; one of Professor Wilson's greatest delights was a mental battle with the strange little man,

RYDAL WATER AND NAB SCAR.

Across the lake is seen Nab Cottage, Hartley Coleridge's home from 1834 to 1849.

who could outpoint and put to rout his erudite and well-balanced theories, by an unaided native wit and the sparkling genius of his thoughts, clothed in such language as could scarcely have been excelled by his illustrious father. Tennyson, on his visit to the Lakes, sought him out and said, "I liked Hartley—'Massa' Hartley. He was a lovable little fellow." Uncle Southey, also, loved him; indeed, whatever may have been his failings, the world was a better place for his having been in it, for he brought sunshine, entertainment and human kindness into the lives of all with whom he came in contact.

He supported himself with the proceeds of his pen, helped out on occasion by a timely gift from his mother; *Blackwood's Magazine*, to which Professor Wilson introduced him, taking most of his articles and sonnets. He always spoke of himself as "One of the small poets," and although his own modest estimate of his powers may be the correct one, most of what he has written is decidedly grand, both in conception and expression. Certainly, there is a freshness, a humanity, a loving charity and introspection about his poems that forbids the use of the word "minor" as applied to them, except as regards their actual length. "Lile Hartley," as he was affectionately called by the country folk, was seized by bronchitis in December, 1848, and the last glimpse we have of him is one in the January of 1849 when, in the presence of his honoured master, Wordsworth, he took his last sacrament in the little bedroom at Nab Cottage.

He lies in Grasmere Churchyard, but a few feet from his "mighty Seer," who said to the sexton, "Let him lie by us; he would have wished it. Keep the ground for us—we are old people and it cannot be for long."

"May all thy aimless wishes be forgiven,
And all thy sighs be registered in Heaven,
And God His mercy and His love impart
To what thou shouldst have been, and what thou art."

Thomas De Quincey.

THE ENGLISH OPIUM EATER.

"Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure, not by sounds that perish, or by words, that go astray, but by signs in heaven, by changes on earth, by pulses in secret rivers, heraldries painted on darkness, and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain." *Our Ladies of Sorrow.*

The life story of Thomas De Quincey is the richest in human interest, one of the most fascinating and, at the same time, one of the saddest in the whole realms of literature. Whether we see him in early childhood, during his schooldays, or in his after life, we cannot but be astounded by the revelations of a Bohemian career that the purest inventions of romance could scarcely excel.

He was born on August 5th, 1785, at *The Farm*, just outside Manchester. De Quincey's father, a merchant of considerable opulence, died when his son Thomas was but seven years of age, leaving him to the care of four guardians. Prior to this his education had been in the hands of a tutor. His early child-life was warped and loveless, for his shy and retiring nature, crowded with fantasies and weird dreams of the imagination, was entirely misunderstood by his mother—a cold stately woman much engrossed by the county society in which she moved. His guardians sent him first to Bath Grammar School, thence to a private seminary, and ultimately to Manchester Grammar School. He soon showed remarkable classical ability, and at the age of fifteen he could converse quite fluently in Greek; indeed, one of his masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to little Thomas, said,

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.
1785-1859.

A BOHEMIAN EXISTENCE.

"That boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you and I could address an English one."

At Manchester his extraordinary abilities were stultified and his mind aggrieved by the fact that he was a more finished scholar than his tutor. His mental powers were starved, and time after time he begged his guardians to permit him to go to college. This they obstinately refused, so he resolved to take the law into his own hands. A well-to-do lady, whom he had known as a child, lent him ten guineas; with this and about two guineas saved from his pocket money, he stole under cover of night out of the school.

Very amusing is the account, in his *Confessions*, of the manner in which, aided by a burly groom, he manœuvred his luggage down the stairs and past the headmaster's door. The groom insisted upon carrying down De Quincey's trunk unaided, but, as he neared the dread door, such was his trepidation that his foot slipped "and the mighty burden falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of impetus at each step of the descent that, on reaching the bottom, it trundled, or rather leaped, right across with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bedroom door of the archididasculus." De Quincey and the groom roared with laughter, feeling sure of instant discovery, but determined to derive what fun they could from their escapade. Strange to say, the master slept soundly through all the racket, and thus our hero was free to set forth upon his wanderings.

He visited North Wales, staying in various towns and seeing life generally, until his money became exhausted. He then pottered about the countryside, living sometimes on his slender earnings as a letter-writer, at others on the casual hospitality of strangers, but more often than not he went hungry to bed in the open air. For four months this seventeen-year-old lad, delicately nurtured in the lap of luxury, led the life of a vagrant: a Bohemian existence greatly in accord with his strange temperament.

His restless spirit ultimately conceived a fierce longing

for London, and thither, in 1802, but by what means he does not tell us, he ultimately went. Here misery, tangible misery in the shape of dire physical hunger, came upon him. He led a life of almost incredible hardship in Soho, his sole food for many days the remains of sundry breakfasts left by a charitable man of very questionable calling, his only companion a friendless girl of about ten years of age who laid the table, swept the floor, and looked after the wants of the individual referred to above.

During the day-time De Quincey sat in the public parks, solaced by those dreams and fancies that alone could have rendered such a life bearable; whilst at night he dozed with his small friend on the floor of an upper room in her employer's house.

His existence was for long an intimate acquaintance with the seamiest side of the life of a great city, dealings with Jew money lenders, and dark scenes that, after many weeks, found their culmination in night after night passed on a door-step, or under porticoes, with no better companion than "Poor Ann," a fallen girl who befriended him, and who, upon one occasion, undoubtedly saved him from starving to death by supplying him with some wine bought by her own earnings. Yet he had only to write to his guardians or his mother and he might have been restored to all the comforts a man could possibly desire. His pride forbade such a course, however, and but for his accidental discovery by his friends, the brilliant genius of this shy, retiring little man—for he was of quite diminutive stature—would undoubtedly have been lost amongst the labyrinths of submerged London.

Prior to this time, De Quincey's mother had shifted her *ménage* to Chester, and thither went our hero, as dreamy, erratic and irresponsible as ever, but still with the fixed idea of going to College—an idea destined to be realized in the following Autumn, that of 1803. In our next glimpse of him he is installed as an undergraduate of Worcester College, Oxford, an unobtrusive student, passing his time in voluntary seclusion, absorbed in German metaphysics, and an avid reader of the giants of English Literature.

DOVE COTTAGE, GRASMERE.

"The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook."

The home of Wordsworth from 1799 to 1808, and of De Quincey from 1809 to 1830.

DOVE COTTAGE.

About a year after he went up to Oxford he formed the habit which, although at a fearful cost to himself, enabled him to give to the world that marvellous and unique masterpiece, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater.* A severe attack of toothache, followed by rheumatic pains in his face and head, drove him to try opium as a remedy, with what effect upon his ailment, his mental state and ultimate life, is recorded in his *Confessions*, surely the most essential human revelation of a man's moral, intellectual and spiritual entity that the world has ever seen.

The written part of his examination for his B.A. degree caused one of his examiners to describe him as the cleverest man of his experience, but for some reason or other, probably due to the effects of opium, he never completed his examination.

Always a devout admirer of Coleridge's work, he determined to make the poet's acquaintance, and in 1807, at Bridgwater, he attained his desire.

This proved to be the first link with the Lakes. Coleridge's wife and family were due to pay a visit to Southey at Keswick. Coleridge was unable to accompany them, so De Quincey acted as escort. They travelled *via* Lancaster, and spent their first night in the Lake District under the roof of Dove Cottage. Here De Quincey realized one of the greatest joys of his life—"a meeting for which beyond all things under Heaven I longed." He was received by Wordsworth, "who held out his hand and saluted me with most cordial expressions of welcome"—a momentous literary meeting: that of the future "greatest living poet" and "the most brilliant master of English," staged to perfection in the flower-embowered porch of this "loveliest spot that man hath ever found"! On the morrow, the Coleridges went forward to Keswick, over Dunmail Raise, and were followed four days later by Wordsworth and De Quincey (by this time firm friends), who went round by way of Kirkstone Pass, Ullswater and Penrith.

We must pass over his subsequent short renewal of London life and its intercourse with Hazlitt, Charles Lamb and other leading men of letters, and his generous present

of £300 to his friend Coleridge. Our next picture discloses him in November, 1809, as the permanent tenant of Dove Cottage, the centre of an extravagant wealth of *litterateurs*. His refined personality, scholarly conversation, lovable nature and unselfish admiration of the talent of others, soon won for him the friendship of the contemporary *habitués* of Lakeland. Robert Southey, the Wordworths, Bishop Watson, the Coleridges, Charles Lloyd, Humphrey Davy, Professor Wilson, and many others visited him at Dove Cottage, and made him warmly welcome at their own firesides.

Let us picture him six years later. He has met Professor Wilson of Ambleside, and the pair of them—the majestic giant and his small comrade—have wandered up the shoulder of Red Screes, deep in conversation ranging from cock-fighting to German metaphysics, and thence by way of St. Sunday's Crag, "battling against a snow-storm that tears in mad hunt across the ridges," to Grisedale Tarn, where they part—Wilson galloping along the pass towards Elleray, whilst De Quincey strolls leisurely, somewhat fatigued, down to Dove Cottage.

Four hours later darkness has fallen, and the storm beats upon the apple trees in the garden (Wordsworth's "little nook of mountain-ground") and howls round the angle of the cottage. Let us peep inside! There we see the same little man, with the dreamy face and peculiar stoop; the shutters tightly closed; a roaring fire, and his room—"The Library,"—"populous with books, and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of the scholar." Near by the fire is the tea table, for he is an inveterate tea-drinker, and seated beside him is his future wife, Margaret Simpson of Nab Cottage—"her arms like Aurora's and her smile like Hebe's"—whilst his "little gold receptacle of the pernicious drug" lies beside him on the table. A cosy picture, truly, but not one that will earn a man of genius a world-wide publicity; as a matter of fact, at this time De Quincey had written practically nothing.

In the following year 1816, he married Margaret Simpson, and soon afterwards pecuniary difficulties obliged him to bestir himself for a living. But he was

A ROOM IN DOVE COTTAGE.

In De Quincey's time, "the library, populous with books, with a good fire and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar."

Confessions of an Opium Eater.

totally unfitted for writing. By constantly inuring himself to opium he was now consuming six or seven wine glasses full of an evening. His opium-sodden dreams were haunted and terrible,

"With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery arms."

And now follows the most astounding epoch of his life, and one that must command our admiration. Spurred by his love for his wife and children, he persevered in a fight with his dread enemy. That stubbornness that characterized his flight from school was invoked. From 8000 drops of laudanum per day, he gradually forced himself to be content with an eighth of that quantity, and then, as he himself has said, he was happier, for "I read Kant again, and again I understood him." Towards the end of 1819, he was offered the Editorship of *The Westmorland Gazette*, and at the munificent salary of a guinea a week! For nearly a year he retained this office, but with indifferent success, and upon its termination he devoted himself to writing magazine articles.

Amongst his earliest contributions were his famous *Confessions*, which appeared in 1821, in the September Number of the *London Magazine*. These brought considerable grist to the family mill and no little reputation to their writer. But they necessitated long visits to London and Edinburgh and foreshadowed a parting from Dove Cottage.

It was beyond De Quincey's means to keep up two establishments. His chief interests were now centred in Edinburgh—his work, friends, and literary avenues lay there—and, in 1830, the whole family finally abandoned the little cottage at the Lakes. (It was about this period that the accompanying portrait of him was executed—a portrait that Miss Emily De Quincey, one of his granddaughters, informs me is 'a truly wonderful likeness.')

Although the period of his Edinburgh life was productive of the work that has rendered him famous, our space forbids us to dwell on his later career. The rest must be briefly told. For twenty-nine years he led the life of a Bohemian literary hack, shiftless, erratic, wandering from lodging to lodging, still fighting his old enemy, and

faithfully tended by his devoted wife, until her death in 1837. Her place was beautifully filled by her children, who took the cottage "Mavis Bush," at Lasswade. Here the "eccentric little bookworm" was under their devoted care until, on August 7th, 1859, he was laid to rest in the West Cemetery, close under the Castle Rock, at Edinburgh.

It is impossible to attempt here any review of this remarkable man's abilities, or the wonderful flashes of nervous, brilliant writing that have rendered him an outstanding figure in literature. Better were it to refer my readers to his *Confessions* and that marvellous intellectual composition, *Our Ladies of Sorrow*, for had he written nothing but these, his name would be enrolled upon that scroll of fame which is reserved for those of striking genius, lovable personality, and inspired accomplishment.

GRISEDALE TARN, with Ullswater beyond.

The scene of Wordsworth's last farewell to his brother John, 'the silent poet.

"Here did we stop; and here looked round,
While each into himself descends,
For that last thought of parting friends
That is not to be found."

John Wilson.

("CHRISTOPHER NORTH.")

"A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun,

. . . . . .

Emblem methought of the departed soul!
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is given;
And by the breath of mercy made to roll
Right onwards to the golden gates of Heaven,
Where, to the eye of Faith, it peaceful lies,
And tells to man his glorious destinies."

The Evening Cloud.

It is indeed refreshing to turn from the records of the lives of some who were more strictly "Lake Poets" than John Wilson, to a contemplation of the wholesome character and personality of this astonishing man. For astonishing in every way he certainly was, and a unique figure amongst men of letters. He would seem to have burst the limits of all honoured traditions. One can understand Wordsworth's wanderings along country lanes and their consequent fruition in poetry; Coleridge's opium and ill-health permitting the expression of beautiful verse, or, even, Southey's well-ordered day's work bringing forth literature of a high order.

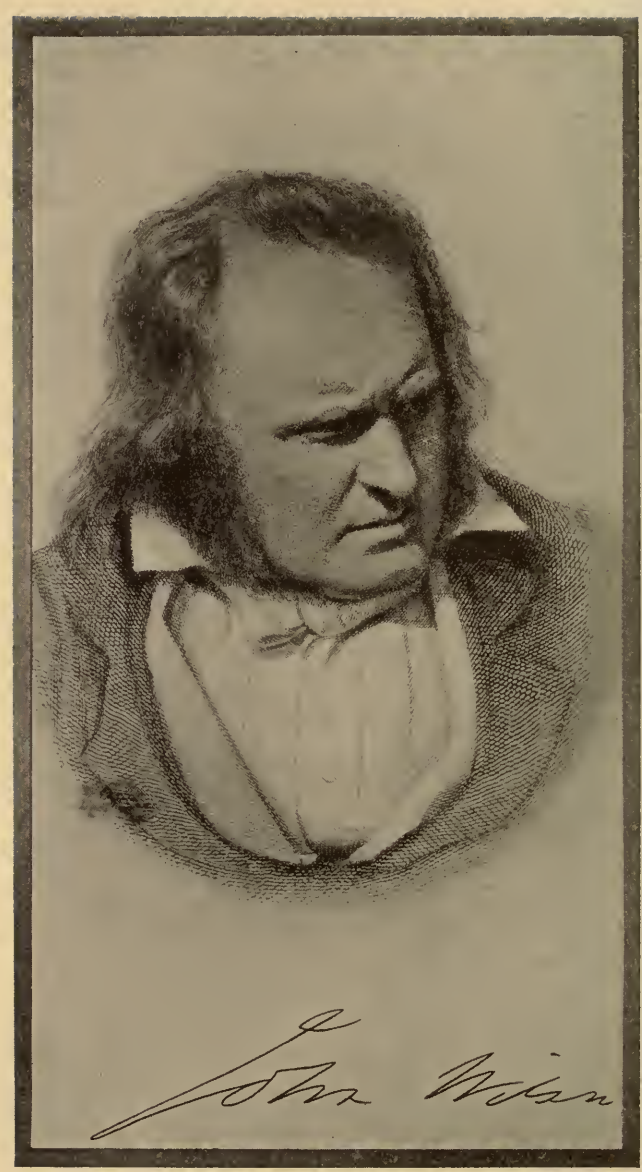
But what are we to think of the man who would jump into the local wrestling ring and challenge the conqueror of the "heavy weights," and prove himself a "varra bad 'un to lick?" who would throw himself amongst the convivial company of gypsies or strolling players, with the sole object of having a "dust-up" with the strongest and best boxer they could produce; or would floor his dining room at Elleray, not with boards in the orthodox way, but with good, dry sods whereon his favourite cock, "Caradice," could take a "main" against all comers; who

would, in short, bull-hunt, horse-race, jump or swim with the roughest and strongest and, yet, would write such poetry as could touch the heart of a woman, and had withal such delicacy of intellect and tenderness of feeling that gentle Harriet Martineau said of him, "he made others happy by being so intensely happy himself, and when he was mournful none desired to be gay." For such was John Wilson, author of the exuberant *Isle of Palms*, *Unimore*, *City of the Plague*, *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, and many other distinguished prose and poetic works.

Our hero was a Lowland Scot, born at Paisley in 1785 the eldest son of a prosperous gauze manufacturer. His father died when John was twelve years old, leaving £50,000 in trust for him, a sum that guaranteed the lad a happy well-tended boyhood and good education. From the care of a private tutor he went to Glasgow University, where he soon gave promise of a career greatly above the average. Thus early, too, his love of manly sports went hand in hand with mental industry. He boxed "with Lloyd" a three round contest and "beat him," as he tells us in his diary; he ran races and wrestled, the while he evolved clever philosophical essays and won the first prize for Logic. Whether he wrote, fought or ran, he did it with all his might, and through it all shone his genial good nature and generous soul.

It was at Glasgow that he first heard of Wordsworth and the Lake Country. The *Lyrical Ballads* came into his hands, and he immediately wrote to their author such a letter of appreciation, subtle criticism and entire understanding as won Wordsworth's instant admiration and laid the foundation of their life-long friendship.

At the age of eighteen, the brilliant Glasgow student went as a Gentleman Commoner to Magdalen, Oxford, and, as was to be expected with his sparkling wit, honest Scotch heart, excellence in manly games, and "handiness" at a song, he soon became the life and soul of his college. Unruly he undoubtedly was, and upon one occasion became so obtrusive in the "High" that the Proctor came upon the scene, but alas, what could he do with a man



1785-1854

who, upon the instant, aroused his envy and admiration by reciting in perfect and finished style Pope's "Essay on Man"? The Proctor was rendered speechless and the delinquent escaped!

It was during a vacation about this time that Wilson first visited the Lakes—drawn thither no doubt by Wordsworth's presence at Dove Cottage—and took such a fancy to an estate upon Orrest Head, above Windermere, that he became the purchaser.

Unlike so many men of social parts who go up to Oxford, Wilson found time to cover himself with glory in the eyes of his tutors. His poem on the *Study of Greek and Roman Architecture* won the Newdigate Prize in 1806 and, a year later, in his Final Schools he did better work than his examiners had ever seen; so excellent, that one of them actually wrote to him a "public expression of our approbation and thanks . . . . . a distinction very rarely conferred."

From Oxford he went to the Lakes and settled down in a small house on his estate at Elleray. Here his many-sided personality found all it could possibly desire—the beauties of nature, a society of kindred intellects, and an open-air, free life amongst the fell and dale sportsmen. At any time during the next four years, his burly six foot figure, crowned with luxuriant leonine hair blowing in the breeze, and face beaming with health and good nature, might have been seen striding down to Bowness with his faithful boatman, Billy Balmer, intent upon a day's boating or fishing; or entertaining to dinner, at various times, friends as diverse in character as his wrestling dalesmen and Wordsworth or Hartley Coleridge; or, wandering over Loughrigg and up great Langdale with De Quincey, whom he first met at Allan Bank, deep in argument on subjects as far removed from wrestling or cock-fighting as the timid little writer and his giant comrade were in personal appearance; or taking afternoon tea with Miss Martineau at the Knoll; or, again, communing with solitude in a retired corner of Elleray Woods, busy upon his poem, the *Isle of Palms*.

De Quincey, his devoted friend and comrade of

numberless fell rambles, likened him at this time to the Athenian Alcibiades, "for he had his marvellous versatility . . . . the same position in society, the same wealth, the same temper, and the same jovial hospitality. He could adapt himself to all companies, and the wish to conciliate and to win his way, by flattering the self-love of others, was so predominant over all personal self-love and vanity

> "That *he* did in the general bosom reign
> Of young and old."

There we may leave him until the spring of 1810, when a great change was wrought in his life. He went to a ball at Kendal and met Miss Jane Penny, "a very beautiful girl who danced divinely." John was "struck all of a heap" as his rustic friends put it; when Miss Penny and her sister later took up their abode at Gale House, Ambleside, his old haunts knew him no more. Afternoon teas, picnics and dances became the order of the day, and night, and, when Miss Jane accepted his invitation to open a ball with him at Bowness, the local wiseacres nodded their heads and declared it to be "a case." And they were quite right, for in the merry month of May, 1811, he brought his beautiful Jane, now Mrs. John Wilson, to his retreat at Elleray.

Days of idyllic happiness followed, careless days of love-making and poetry, of regattas on Windermere, and joyous intercourse with their friends, until, in 1816, there arrived the news that, through some short-comings on the part of his father's trustee, his fortune was all dispersed. A real facer this, but Wilson met it like the man he was and, I imagine, he rather welcomed the thought of trying a fall with poverty. He went to Edinburgh, and became a member of the Scottish bar, but his hurricane temperament was ill-suited to the usual waiting for a brief. He was driven to take up literature as a means of livelihood. Then came his famous connection with *Blackwood's Magazine*. As "Christopher North," he and his legal friend, Lockhart, led it to greater success than even such contributors as De Quincey, or Sir William Hamilton, had been able to attain for it.

His *Noctes Ambrosianæ* of *Blackwood's* brought him

WINDERMERE FROM NEAR ELLERAY.

"O blessed Lake! thy sparkling waters roll
Health to my frame, and rapture to my soul.
Emblem of peace, of innocence, and love!
Sleeping in beauty given thee from above."

John Wilson's *Lines to Windermere.*

instant popularity. They were ostensibly records of nights at Ambrose's Tavern, Edinburgh, where Christopher North gathered round him in fancy such companions as "The English Opium Eater" (De Quincey), "The Ettrick Shepherd," "Timothy Tickler" (an uncle of Wilson's) and others, and made them talk in most brilliant and witty fashion on every conceivable subject. Their reckless humour, pungent personalities, hearty criticism of current literature and politics, and happy descriptive passages in the Scots tongue, gave him such a *locus standi* amongst his contemporaries that he was nerved to join in the contest for the then vacant Chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, a stern fight which he brought to a successful issue.

As Professor of Moral Philosophy, then, his position was assured, and his means were such as would permit his thoughts to dwell upon vacations at Elleray. For, during those days of strife in Edinburgh, Wilson had ever at the back of his mind a return to his Lakeland home. The depths of his love for it are well sounded in his beautiful lines, *My Cottage*.

> "Here guilt might come
> With sullen soul abhorring Nature's joy,
> And in a moment be restored to Heaven.
> Here sorrow, with a dimness o'er his face,
> Might be beguiled to smiles— . . . . .
> . . . . . O earthly Paradise!
> Of many a secret anguish hast thou healed
> Him who now greets thee with a joyful strain."

So at Elleray we see him once more, now a middle-aged professor and the father of five children. But changed? Not one whit! He is still, in spite of his added dignities, the same rollicking, irresponsible jester as ever. The following prank, told me in Windermere the other day by a friend of one of his contemporaries, well illustrates this side of his nature.

The professor was strolling down to Bowness one wild August afternoon when, across the way, he espied two local boatmen, rather the worse for drink. "Hi!" shouted he, "I want you men to take me across to Wray." "Reet sir!" exclaimed the boatmen, delighted at the prospect of such a fare as "t' girt yaller-haired purfessor."

They lurched down to the boat landings. Wilson insisted upon having their largest boat, and set the men at the oars, while he himself pushed off and then lay down in the bows. Anxious to show such a famous oarsman what they could do, they bent to their oars with a will.

They thus had their backs to the professor and, when they were just off the point beyond Bowness Bay, Wilson slipped quietly over into the water, dived, and then swam ashore. For two or three hundred yards the half-tipsy men rowed lustily away, until one of them, expecting a little approbation from their fare, turned round to the bows and found them empty. "Seesta' Harry," he exclaimed to his pal, "whooar's t' purfesser?" And then, in a second or two, "By gum! 'e must have tummelt ower into t' watter. Ah dooan't see 'im. He must be drownded!"

Thoroughly alarmed and suddenly sobered, the men pulled back, peering down into the water. Then, seeing nothing of Wilson, they rowed back to Bowness with the news, "t' purfesser's tummelt oot o' t' boat and gitten drownded. What shall we do?" A crowd gathered round and, after some discussion, the general opinion was that Mrs. Wilson should be told of her husband's fate. Accordingly, our two heroes, followed by a large crowd of sympathisers, set off to Elleray and, arrived there, with many misgivings one of them pulled the bell. The door was opened by the professor, rigged out in a suit of dry clothes! "Well, my men, what is it?" "What!" screamed the boatmen, "it's t' purfesser, or t' divil hisself," and the discomfited tipplers fled down to Bowness, followed by the gibes of their comrades, and not quite sure whether they had been seeing things again, or whether they were the victims of a practical joke. In any case, they abstained from whiskey for a quite unusual period after that.

It was in 1819 that John Wilson won his chair at Edinburgh, and for thirty-one years he brought the keenest zest to his professional duties, but, as "Christopher North," always finding time to devote to *Blackwood's*, which, as time passed, became almost dependent upon him.

We can easily imagine what an affection such a man

THE MARGIN OF ULLSWATER.

"Beside the lake, beneath the trees."
Below Gowbarrow Park, the scene of Wordsworth's *Daffodils*.

as he inspired in his students. I passed a night with one of them at Paisley a few years ago and it did me good, as a Lakesman, to see his old face light up as he talked of Wilson, and to note the genuine pride he took in having known him personally. And what a cheer went up, in the course of a lecture I once delivered there, when I mentioned Christopher North! His is indeed a name to conjure with in Paisley.

In 1837, his wife Jane was taken from him—a sorrow that cast a lasting shadow over his soul. Even in the manly solace of strenuous work this shadow could not be dispelled. We have a glimpse of its gloomy depth when, upon one memorable occasion, he broke down before his students and buried his face in his hands, exclaiming, "Forgive me, gentlemen, but since last we met, I have been in the Valley of the Shadow of Death." No wonder they loved him!

He never regained his wonted gaiety. Even Elleray lost its charm. Only once after his wife died did he sojourn there, but its sad memories proved too much for him. He returned to Edinburgh, where he remained until 1850, working hard at the University and on *Blackwood's*. And then, quite suddenly, his powers failed. The erstwhile stalwart giant became an old, infirm man whose last years were lovingly tended by his brother Robert at Dalkeith and, later, at Edinburgh, where, as had always been his wish, with his children gathered round him, he passed away on April 2nd, 1854,

"Mid the blest stillness of a Sabbath day."

John Ruskin,

And Brantwood.

" The Spirit of God is around you in the air that you breathe, His glory in the light that you see, and in the fruitfulness of the earth, and in the joy of its creatures. He has written for you day by day his revelation, as he has granted you day by day your daily bread."

(*From the " Deucalion" and inscribed on the memorial stone to Ruskin at Friar's Crag, Derwentwater.*)

No collection of Lakeland writers would be complete that omitted John Ruskin—one of the noblest figures of the Victorian Era—and in these pages a brief outline of his life and work must necessarily find a place. While it cannot be claimed for him that he belonged to the district as entirely did Wordsworth or Southey, for instance, yet his intense love for the beauties of mountain, valley and lake, and his long residence at Brantwood, by Coniston Water, combined with the true poetic feeling evinced in many of his works, demand that he should be included amongst the " Lake Poets."

He was born in London on February 8th, 1819. His parents were cousins and of Scotch family; the one leaving Perth in early manhood, for years of hard work in London; the other keeping house for an old uncle until better fortunes enabled her, after nine years of waiting, to become her patient lover's bride.

John was their only child, and more beautiful or healthful domestic surroundings and influences cannot be imagined than were enjoyed by him in his boyhood at Herne Hill. The house was surrounded by an old-fashioned garden and well-stocked orchard; from the windows the childish eyes gazed on the sweep of the Norwood Hills and Thames Valley, and in the grounds he played and dreamed through most of his time. Of the

JOHN RUSKIN.

A portrait taken near the gateway at Brantwood

home life, the man has touchingly written and has left on record that never could he recall any hurry or disorder in household affairs, not the slightest friction or sign of anger between his parents. Small wonder, then, that he should write, "this is the true nature of home—it is the place of peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt and division." It was part of his life's work to ensure that the ideal set forth in the quotation might be more generally striven for, and more often realized.

In his earliest years, Ruskin displayed the love of nature which was such a vital characteristic of his later life. When only three and a half years old, he was asked to choose a background for a portrait of himself, then in process of painting, and he unhesitatingly replied, "*blue hills.*" His boyhood's holidays, spent travelling at home or abroad with his parents, gave the first impulse to his future studies in beauty and art, his father taking special care to point out any beautiful scenery or fine paintings within access. With the exception of his lessons in Greek, he was his mother's pupil for several years, and a stern, though patient and discriminating mentor she proved herself. From her care he went to the school-room of the Rev. Thomas Dale, and later to Christ Church College, Oxford. All through his three years of college life, his devoted mother lodged in the High Street, in order to be near him; his father joined her at the week-ends. John worked steadily, desirous of being a credit to his parents, and in 1839 he carried off the Newdigate Prize for a poem entitled *Salsette and Elephanta*, which described the dawn of Christianity in Hindustan.

After leaving the University, he entered on his life's work, determined to uphold in his writings and his actions the principles of truth, justice and beauty.

The first volume of *Modern Painters*, written in 1843, was followed between then and 1860 by four other companion volumes, also *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and the three volumes of *The Stones of Venice.*

It is of interest to note that Ruskin's parents, in his

childhood, dedicated him to, and trained him for, the priesthood of the Established Church of England, but the world held other work for him, though his different choice of a career was unceasingly regretted by his father and mother. Had he loved his fellow-men less, and only sought personal gratification, one can imagine that he would have spent his days in wandering here and there seeing beautiful places, and painting pictures of them, roaming through Italian art galleries and Europe's ancient churches, with spare hours devoted to the poetic muse. For during all his youth he had a marked knack of arranging words with accurate rhythm, and many of his poems are worthy of much wider reading than falls to their lot. Amongst these *Charitie*, *The Old Water Wheel* and the *Hills of Carrara* are specially notable.

His earliest prose articles were on Geology, followed by a series of essays for the *Architectural Magazine*, but it was the first volume of *Modern Painters* that determined Ruskin's future as a writer whose opinions should be opposed to the well-nigh unanimous verdict of his day.

He was in great sympathy with the pre-Raphaelite movement. Millais and Rossetti were at one time his close companions; with Burne-Jones and Holman Hunt he formed life-long friendships. His literary associates in those days were Coventry Patmore, Samuel Rogers, Miss Mitford, the Brownings and, from 1851 onwards, Thomas Carlyle, whom he reverenced as his master.

From 1854 to 1858, he helped the Working Men's College (Great Ormond Street), London, as head of the Art Department. Then, as always, he urged forward any movement for the good of his fellow-men.

On coming into his inheritance he endowed museums and dwelling-houses for the poor; indeed, it is pleasant to remember that, out of a fortune of £157,000, but £12,000 was left for himself, the rest being distributed in various philanthropic schemes. The fact that many of these proved futile, and were a source of bitter disappointment to their author, does not lessen the beautiful memory of his generosity. The year 1860, of such moment in the history of Europe and America (by the way, the exact

middle year of Ruskin's life) saw the beginning of his career as a social reformer. At this time he was a man of slight but active figure, inexhaustibly vivacious, playful in his ways, "the very mirror of courtesy, with an indescribable charm of spontaneous lovingness." After 1860, his writings spread over a wider range of subjects; amongst these, perhaps his most popular and widely read volumes, mention should be made of *The Crown of Wild Olive*, *Sesame and Lilies* and *Unto this Last.*

In 1864, a great change took place in Ruskin's life. His father died leaving him a large fortune. It is of interest to mention here that throughout their lives together the relationship between Ruskin and his parents was of the most affectionate and beautiful nature. The son, whose genius elevated him far above his father and mother, submitted without a murmur to all their wishes with regard to the household, even to the screening of his beloved Turners and Tintorettos on Sundays; indeed, though a man in middle life, he continued to display an almost childlike docility to the old people.

After the death of the father, a Scotch cousin, Miss Joanna Ruskin Agnew, came to Denmark Hill to be company for Mrs. Ruskin, now in her eighty-fourth year, infirm, and with failing sight. The bright nature, brilliant gifts and loving care of this charming girl soothed the last years of the old lady's life, which ended peacefully, seven years after her husband's death. Miss Agnew married Mr. Arthur Severn, in 1871, and afterwards remained beside Ruskin, to whom in his later years, she stood in the light of a daughter.

Between 1865 and 1868, Ruskin gained popularity as a lecturer on ethics and general culture. He chose all sorts of subjects with which to illustrate his discourse, sometimes crystals or plants, or Alpine geology; at others literature, education, or the future of England, but always trending towards the principal lesson he longed that the world should learn—healthful and happy life in an industrious and well-ordered society.

In August, 1869, Ruskin was elected Slade Professor of Art at Oxford, and so great were the crowds to hear

his lectures that the series was given, not in the usual Museum, but in the larger Sheldonian Theatre. In January, 1873, he was re-elected for another term of three years, and again, in 1876, for a third term which, owing to ill-health, he did not complete. He was again re-elected in 1883, but resigned at the end of 1884, which date marked the last of his public utterances. It has been truly said, that if his family and intimates called him "The Professor"—after his first term—and if the public thought that the office gave him new honours, it is equally certain that he on his part conferred an honour and left a new force at work in the University itself.

The story of Ruskin's Oxford lectures bears cruel evidence of the effect of his physical weakness on his mental balance. From childhood he had suffered periodically from severe illnesses of one kind or another, while in the intervals his ancestral vitality seemed to reassert itself. In early manhood he had more than one alarming attack of lung trouble, and after his fortieth year he seemed unable to shake off a brooding melancholy—the result undoubtedly of intense strain of mind, and many private sorrows and disappointments,—one in particular (about his fortieth year) over which reverence for the master demands that a veil should be drawn.

In 1871 he purchased the estate at Brantwood, near Coniston, at the Lancashire extremity of our beautiful Lakeland. Here he spent the last twenty years of his life in peaceful retirement. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Severn, with their two sons and two daughters, completed the family circle, and the home atmosphere was verily one of peace, simplicity and kindness. The house was quaint, roomy and old-fashioned, its furniture simple and unpretentious, but it contained untold treasures in the shape of old curios, minerals and precious stones, rare MSS. and pictures, exquisite remains of great collections, many of them now lavished so generously on public museums and libraries, Ruskin's bedroom being hung with his beloved drawings by Turner. Here, after his strenuous life, with its many disappointments and sorrows, John Ruskin looked for rest and peace, and enjoyed them during the respites from recurring attacks of his old malady.

BRANTWOOD.

John Ruskin's home, on the banks of Coniston Lake, from 1875 to 1900.

Truly, he chose a lovely spot for the evening of his life. Brantwood stands on the north-eastern side of Coniston Lake. From the windows can be seen Coniston Old Man, with its rocky flanks and rich colouring. As we watch the morning mists roll up to the sky, disclosing the heather-purpled slopes and shimmering water, or listen to a belated thrush while the last roseate flush of the sunset fades away to the West, we can share in the peace and beauty which ministered to Ruskin's weary heart and brain. He devised a kind of oriel window in one room, from which he might see, not only the glorious stretch of surrounding country, but also both the rising and setting of the sun. He also gradually formed a garden of roses, flowers and shrubs in natural terraces leading down to the margin of the lake, where a tiny bay harboured the boats.

After his final resignation, the attacks of mental disease—due to over stimulus in childhood, intense application to work in middle life, and bitter disappointment in the fruits of his labours—began to recur at frequent intervals, and the periods of good health became more and more brief. In 1888, Ruskin made his last journey abroad, but it did not revive or refresh him as his friends had hoped. Thence onward he remained at Brantwood, peaceful, gentle and happy, able to enjoy games or reading with the family, and often gazing long and silently across Coniston Water at the blue hills beyond. Did they perchance appear to him as the Delectable Mountains of old to the way-worn pilgrim? Who can tell? Surely he, if any, needed that rest for the weary, and perhaps he saw beyond the summits a vision of the fair land of the future, where the evils that had wrung his heart might be unknown, where the best that is in humanity should reach its true fruition, and where all should live in honour and peace.

For the last ten years of his life at Brantwood, Ruskin dwelt in close retirement. His slowly ebbing strength at length gave out to such an extent that he became a Bath-chair invalid and, but for exceedingly rare visits from his intimates, the solicitous and ever kindly members of the Severn family were his only companions. His eightieth birthday was marked by numerous tokens

of goodwill—flowers, telegrams, letters and gifts, not only from all over our own country, but from different parts of the world. A great address, signed by the Prince of Wales and many of the highest official personages, was tendered by an illustrious deputation. Other addresses, ranging from that of his cherished University to a hearty appreciation from the Coniston Parish Council, cheered his remaining months and must have brought home to him the fact that, although many had rejected his ideas of Political Economy as impracticable and fantastic, his long work had resulted in an immeasurable elevation of his fellow-countrymen's standards of conduct, and in a wonderful vivifying of their ideals of life.

Shortly after his eightieth birthday his old friend, Burne-Jones ("dear brother Ned"), died and the blow undoubtedly hastened the end. In January, 1900, Ruskin was attacked by influenza, and upon the 20th of that month the illness proved fatal.

A grave in Westminster Abbey was offered, but his family declined the honour because it was the master's expressed wish that he should be laid to rest in Coniston churchyard, beneath its fir trees and under the shadow of his beloved Lakeland Fells. A fine runic cross, beautifully carved with figures symbolical of his works and teaching, now fittingly marks the place where rest the remains of a great teacher, a consummate master of the English language, a man who ever strove for the well-being and elevation of his fellows, one of the greatest influences for purity and beauty that the world has ever known.

DR. THOMAS ARNOLD.
1795-1841.

Miss Harriet Martineau, Dr. Arnold and some other Lake Notabilities.

The charms of the Lake District, and of its brilliant coterie of poets, have attracted in the past a greater number of distinguished writers than any other single spot under the sun. A bold statement this, but one that only a person unacquainted with Lakeland's literary associations would challenge.

Although it is, of course, quite outside the scope of this small book to dwell upon the connection of these people with Lakeland, I feel that it may be interesting to mention briefly some of the most illustrious. Hither, for instance, Shelley, as a youth recently "sent down" from Oxford, brought his bride of seventeen summers. They rented a small cottage at Chestnut Hill, near Keswick, where the boy, with a head full of ideas of Catholic Emancipation, wrote his *Address to the Irish People*, and some poems to the same end. He called upon Southey, whom, by the way, he found most uncongenial company, visited the Duke of Norfolk at Greystoke, and took meals with the Calverts at Windy Brow, but the intolerance of his views at this period, and the arrogance of his conversation, seemed to set everybody against him; at the end of a few short months he left the district for ever. But Lakeland did a good deal for him. It instilled in him his first love of the mountains, of which he subsequently wrote with, perhaps, greater fire, realism and understanding than any other poet.

Here also, at the beautiful "Dove Nest," above Low Wood, Mrs. Hemans resided for the summer of 1830. Wordsworth's personality it was that first drew her hither, but that wonderful sweep of lake and mountain, with the twin peaks of Langdale dominating the scene, soon entranced her and detained her for many weeks after her visit to Rydal Mount was ended. She left Dove Nest for Scotland, fully intending to return, but the Fates ordered otherwise, and some very beautiful word-painting of Lakeland scenery are all that now mark her sojourn here.

At Green Bank, Ambleside, F. W. Faber, the poet, lived. As curate to Parson Dawes, leader of the parish choir, private tutor, high church preacher, a poet whose verses embrace the whole of Lakeland, and a friend of the Lake Poets," Faber was a man who owed much to Lakeland.

Just across the road from Green Bank is the charming dwelling that Harriet Martineau chose for her home. She lived at "The Knoll" from 1846 to 1876, and it was here that she did her best work. Her *Tales of Political Economy*, her famous *History of the Thirty Years' Peace* and the fearless contributions to the press, which called down upon her head much opprobrium, but which, nevertheless did yeoman service in the cause of religious and political freedom, all emanated from the retirement of Ambleside.

Within a few minutes' walk of The Knoll stands Fox Howe, the holiday home of perhaps the greatest schoolmaster England has produced. Dr. Thomas Arnold came to the Lakes in 1832, and was so enamoured of the beauty of the surrounding country that he bought a small estate on Loughrigg and built upon it a home that should be a retreat and rest from the stress of Rugby School life. When the worries incidental to the reform and thorough overhaul of our Public Schools system proved too great, he would retire to Fox Howe for a while, where Nature and his close friendship with the "Lake Poets" never failed to restore him and send him back to Rugby, ready once more for all "the ills that time and life oppose."

Lord Alfred Tennyson had plans at one time of adopting Lakeland as his home; plans that were inspired

HARRIET MARTINEAU.
1802-1876.

FOX HOW, AMBLESIDE.

"A poet's dream of river, valley, copse and lawn."

The Lakeland Home of Dr. Arnold from 1883 to 1841.

by his visit to Mirehouse, near Keswick, but which he put into execution four or five years later at Tent Lodge, on Coniston Water. Here he dwelt for some time, but whether the life of retirement was uncongenial, or the scenery of Southern Lakeland lacked the necessary charm, he soon abandoned Tent Lodge, and removed from the district.

We must dismiss the names of many others with but bare mention—Sir Walter Scott, who has left to us his *Bridal of Triermain*, amongst other poems to remind us of his visit to Wordsworth and Christopher North; Charles Lamb, who stayed with Southey at Greta Hall and, from a positive aversion to the Lake District at first (for he wrote that for the joys of London might "Keswick and her giant brood go hang!") ultimately returned to town feeling "very little," remembering Skiddaw as "a fine creature," and the day upon which he climbed it as "a day that will stand out like a mountain in my life;" Matthew Arnold, the brilliant son of the great headmaster of Rugby school, and Charlotte Brontë who, as a young woman, wrote and asked Southey for his advice about her literary plans, and received the reply that "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life." She came to "Briery," near Ambleside, for the first time, many years after she had proved the fallacy of Southey's advice.

John Keats, Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Gray, of *Elegy* fame, George Fox, Emerson, Benjamin Franklin, Clarkson, the abolitionist, who lived at Eusemere on Ullswater, Wilberforce, his co-worker against the slave trade, and many other great and good men were lovers of Lakeland at one time or another, and here left the impress of their personalities, just as this favoured spot uplifted their eyes to the hills and brought to their hearts and thoughts "the calm that Nature breathes amongst her votaries."

April 2/60

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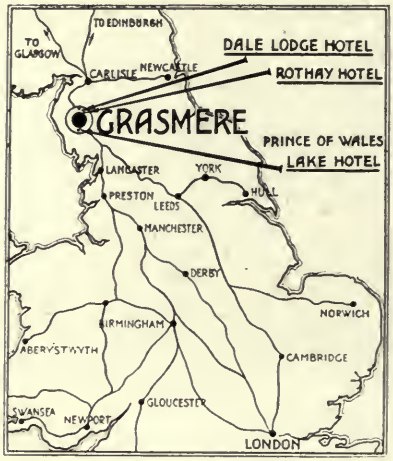

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