

Hence sovereignty within and peace at will,
115 Emotion which best foresight need not fear,
Most worthy then of trust when most intense;
Hence cheerfulness in every act of life;
Hence truth in moral judgements; and delight
That fails not, in the external universe.

120 Oh, who is he that hath his whole life long
Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself?—
For this alone is genuine liberty.
Witness, ye solitudes, where I received
My earliest visitations (careless then
125 Of what was given me), and where now I roam,
A meditative, oft a suffering man,
And yet I trust with undiminished powers;
Witness—whatever falls my better mind,
Revolving with the accidents of life,
130 May have sustained—that, howso'er misled,
I never in the quest of right and wrong
Did tamper with myself^o from private aims;
Nor was in any of my hopes the dupe
Of selfish passions; nor did wilfully
135 Yield ever to mean cares and low pursuits;
But rather did with jealousy^o shrink back
From every combination that might aid
The tendency, too potent in itself,
Of habit to enslave the mind—I mean
140 Oppress it by the laws of vulgar^o sense,
And substitute a universe of death,
The falsest of all worlds, in place of that
Which is divine and true.⁷

my conscience

vigilance

commonplace

[FINAL PROPHECY]

Oh, yet a few short years of useful life,
And all will be complete—thy race be run,
430 Thy monument of glory will be raised.⁸
Then, though too weak to tread the ways of truth,
This age fall back to old idolatry,
Though men return to servitude as fast
As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame
435 By nations sink together,⁹ we shall still
Find solace in the knowledge which we have,
Blessed with true happiness if we may be
United helpers forward of a day
Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work—
440 Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe^o—
Of their^o redemption, surely yet to come.

grant
men's

7. In *Paradise Lost* 2.622, the phrase "universe of death" is used to describe Hell. Wordsworth's Hell is a place in which individuals are enslaved by an unimaginative reliance on the senses and habitual perceptions.

8. In his conclusion, Wordsworth once again addresses Coleridge.

9. I.e., though men—whole nations of them together—sink to ignominy (disgrace) and shame.

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
A lasting inspiration, sanctified
By reason and by truth; what we have loved
445 Others will love, and we may teach them how:
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which, 'mid all revolutions in the hopes
450 And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of substance and of fabric more divine.

1805

1926

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH
1771-1855

Dorothy Wordsworth has an enduring place in English literature even though she wrote almost nothing for publication. Not until long after her death did scholars gradually retrieve and print her letters, a few poems, and a series of journals that she kept sporadically between 1798 and 1828 because, she wrote, "I shall give William pleasure by it." It has always been known, from tributes to her by her brother and Coleridge, that she exerted an important influence on the lives and writings of both these men. It is now apparent that she also possessed a power surpassing that of the two poets for precise observation of people and the natural world, together with a genius for terse, luminous, and delicately nuanced description in prose.

Dorothy was born on Christmas Day 1771, twenty-one months after William; she was the only girl of five Wordsworth children. From her seventh year, when her mother died, she lived with various relatives—some of them tolerant and affectionate, others rigid and tyrannical—and saw William and her other brothers only occasionally, during the boys' summer vacations from school. In 1795, when she was twenty-four, an inheritance that William received enabled her to carry out a long-held plan to join her brother in a house at Racedown, and the two spent the rest of their long lives together, first in Dorsetshire and Somersetshire, in the southwest of England, then in their beloved Lake District. She uncomplainingly subordinated her own talents to looking after her brother and his household. She also became William's secretary, tirelessly copying and recopying the manuscripts of his poems to ready them for publication. Despite the scolding of a great-aunt, who deemed "rambling about . . . on foot" unladylike, she accompanied her brother, too, in vigorous cross-country walks in which they sometimes covered as much as thirty-three miles in a day.

All her adult life she was overworked; after a severe illness in 1835, she suffered a physical and mental collapse. She spent the rest of her existence as an invalid. Hardest for her family to endure was the drastic change in her temperament: from a high-spirited and compassionate woman she became (save for brief intervals of lucidity) bad-tempered, demanding, and at times violent. In this half-life she lingered for twenty years, attended devotedly by William until his death five years before her own in 1855.

Our principal selections are from the journal Dorothy kept in 1798 at Alfoxden, Somersetshire, where the Wordsworths had moved from Racedown to be near

Coleridge at Nether Stowey, as well as from her journals while at Grasmere (1800–1803), with Coleridge residing some thirteen miles away at Greta Hall, Keswick. Her records cover the period when both men emerged as major poets, and in their achievements Dorothy played an indispensable role. In book 10 of the 1805 *Prelude*, William says that in the time of his spiritual crisis, Dorothy “maintained for me a saving intercourse / With my true self” and “preserved me still / A Poet”; in a letter of 1797, Coleridge stressed the delicacy and tact in the responses of William’s “exquisite sister” to the world of sense: “Her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. . . . Her information various—her eye watchful in minutest observation of nature—and her taste a perfect electrometer—it bends, protrudes, and draws in, at subtlest beauties & most recondite faults.”

The verbal sketches of natural scenes given in the journal passages reprinted here are often echoed in Wordsworth’s and Coleridge’s poems. Of at least equal importance for Wordsworth was her chronicling of the busy wayfaring life of rural England. These were exceedingly hard times for country people, when the suffering caused by the displacement of small farms and of household crafts by large-scale farms and industries was aggravated by the economic distress caused by protracted Continental wars (see Wordsworth’s comment in *The Ruined Cottage*, lines 133ff., p. 323). Peddlers, maimed war veterans, leech gatherers, adult and infant beggars, ousted farm families, fugitives, and women abandoned by husbands or lovers streamed along the rural roads and into William’s brooding poetic imagination—often by way of Dorothy’s prose records.

The journals also show the intensity of Dorothy’s love for her brother. Inevitably in our era, the mutual devotion of the orphaned brother and sister has evoked psychoanalytic speculation. It is important to note that Mary Hutchinson, a gentle and openhearted young woman, had been Dorothy’s closest friend since childhood, and that Dorothy encouraged William’s courtship and marriage, even though she realized that it entailed her own displacement as a focus of her brother’s life. All the evidence indicates that their lives in a single household never strained the affectionate relationship between the two women; indeed Dorothy, until she became an invalid, added to her former functions as William’s chief support, housekeeper, and scribe a loving ministrations to her brother’s children.

In 1897 William Wordsworth’s biographer William Knight published the first transcripts of Dorothy Wordsworth’s Alfoxden and Grasmere journals, and those transcripts are the basis for the excerpts printed here. The exception is the entry from autumn 1802, in which Dorothy describes her distress on her brother’s wedding day: because Knight excluded it from his edition, we rely there on Pamela Woolf’s edition of the Grasmere journals (Oxford University Press, 1991). Dorothy Wordsworth’s poems, many of them originally written for the children in her brother’s household, survived through the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries mainly as manuscripts in various family commonplace books. (William Wordsworth did, however, include three in his *Poems* of 1815, ascribing them to a “Female Friend.”) Her poems were not collected until 1987, when Susan M. Levin edited thirty of them in an appendix (“The Collected Poems of Dorothy Wordsworth”) to her *Dorothy Wordsworth and Romanticism*. The two poems included here are reprinted from that source.

From The Alfoxden Journal

Jan. 31, 1798. Set forward to Stowey¹ at half-past five. A violent storm in the wood; sheltered under the hollies. When we left home the moon immensely

1. I.e., to Coleridge’s cottage at Nether Stowey, three miles from Alfoxden.

large, the sky scattered over with clouds. These soon closed in, contracting the dimensions of the moon without concealing her.² The sound of the pattering shower, and the gusts of wind, very grand. Left the wood when nothing remained of the storm but the driving wind, and a few scattering drops of rain. Presently all clear, Venus first showing herself between the struggling clouds; afterwards Jupiter appeared. The hawthorn hedges, black and pointed, glittering with millions of diamond drops; the hollies shining with broader patches of light. The road to the village of Holford glittered like another stream. On our return, the wind high—a violent storm of hail and rain at the Castle of Comfort.³ All the Heavens seemed in one perpetual motion when the rain ceased; the moon appearing, now half veiled, and now retired behind heavy clouds, the stars still moving, the roads very dirty.

* * *

Feb. 3. A mild morning, the windows open at breakfast, the redbreasts singing in the garden. Walked with Coleridge over the hills. The sea at first obscured by vapour; that vapour afterwards slid in one mighty mass along the sea-shore; the islands and one point of land clear beyond it. The distant country (which was purple in the clear dull air), overhung by straggling clouds that sailed over it, appeared like the darker clouds, which are often seen at a great distance apparently motionless, while the nearer ones pass quickly over them, driven by the lower winds. I never saw such a union of earth, sky, and sea. The clouds beneath our feet spread themselves to the water, and the clouds of the sky almost joined them. Gathered sticks in the wood; a perfect stillness. The redbreasts sang upon the leafless boughs. Of a great number of sheep in the field, only one standing. Returned to dinner at five o’clock. The moonlight still and warm as a summer’s night at nine o’clock.

Feb. 4. Walked a great part of the way to Stowey with Coleridge. The morning warm and sunny. The young lasses seen on the hill-tops, in the villages and roads, in their summer holiday clothes—pink petticoats and blue. Mothers with their children in arms, and the little ones that could just walk, tottering by their side. Midges or small flies spinning in the sunshine; the songs of the lark and redbreast; daisies upon the turf; the hazels in blossom; honeysuckles budding. I saw one solitary strawberry flower under a hedge. The furze⁴ gay with blossom. The moss rubbed from the pailings by the sheep, that leave locks of wool, and the red marks with which they are spotted, upon the wood.⁵

Feb. 8. Went up the Park, and over the tops of the hills, till we came to a new and very delicious pathway, which conducted us to the Coombe.⁶ Sat a considerable time upon the heath. Its surface restless and glittering with the motion of the scattered piles of withered grass, and the waving of the spiders’ threads.⁷ On our return the mist still hanging over the sea, but the opposite coast clear, and the rocky cliffs distinguishable. In the deep Coombe, as we

2. Cf. Coleridge’s *Christabel*, lines 16–19 (p. 468).

3. A tavern halfway between Holford and Nether Stowey.

4. Evergreen shrub with yellow flowers, sometimes called gorse.

5. Cf. Wordsworth’s *The Ruined Cottage*, lines 330–36 (p. 327).

6. Hodder’s Coombe is in the Quantock Hills, near Alfoxden. A coombe is a deep valley.

7. Cf. Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, line 184 (p. 453).

stood upon the sunless hill, we saw miles of grass, light and glittering, and the insects passing.

Feb. 9. William gathered sticks.

Feb. 10. Walked to Woodlands, and to the waterfall. The adder's-tongue and the ferns green in the low damp dell. These plants now in perpetual motion from the current of the air; in summer only moved by the drippings of the rocks. A cloudy day.⁸

Mar. 7. William and I drank tea at Coleridge's. A cloudy sky. Observed nothing particularly interesting—the distant prospect obscured. One only leaf upon the top of a tree—the sole remaining leaf—danced round and round like a rag blown by the wind.⁹

Mar. 8. Walked in the Park in the morning. I sate under the fir trees. Coleridge came after dinner, so we did not walk again. A foggy morning, but a clear sunny day.

Mar. 9. A clear sunny morning, went to meet Mr. and Mrs. Coleridge. The day very warm.

Mar. 10. Coleridge, Wm., and I walked in the evening to the top of the hill. We all passed the morning in sauntering about the park and gardens, the children playing about, the old man at the top of the hill gathering furze, interesting groups of human creatures, the young frisking and dancing in the sun, the elder quietly drinking in the life and soul of the sun and air.

Mar. 11. A cold day. The children went down towards the sea. William and I walked to the top of the hills above Holford. Met the blacksmith. Pleasant to see the labourer on Sunday jump with the friskiness of a cow upon a sunny day.

1798

From The Grasmere Journals

1800

May 14, 1800.—Wm. and John set off into Yorkshire¹ after dinner at half past two o'clock, cold pork in their pockets. I left them at the turning of the Lowwood bay under the trees. My heart was so full that I could hardly speak to W. when I gave him a farewell kiss. I sate a long time upon a stone at the margin of the lake, and after a flood of tears my heart was easier. The lake looked to me, I knew not why, dull and melancholy, and the weltering on the shores seemed a heavy sound. I walked as long as I could among the stones of the shore. The wood rich in flowers; a beautiful yellow (palisid yellow) flower, that looked thick, round, and double—the smell very sweet (I supposed it was a ranunculus), crowfoot, the grassy-leaved rabbit-looking

8. Cf. the description of the dell in Coleridge's "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," lines 13–20 (p. 446).

9. Cf. *Christabel*, lines 49ff. (p. 469).

1. William and his younger brother John, on the way to visit Mary Hutchinson, whom William was to marry two and a half years later.

white flower, strawberries, geraniums, scentless violets, anemones, two kinds of orchises, primroses, the hackberry very beautiful, the crab coming out as a low shrub. Met an old man, driving a very large beautiful bull, and a cow. He walked with two sticks. Came home by Clappersgate. The valley very green; many sweet views up to Rydale, when I could juggle away the fine houses; but they disturbed me, even more than when I have been happier; one beautiful view of the bridge, without Sir Michael's.² Sate down very often, though it was cold. I resolved to write a journal of the time, till W. and J. return, and I set about keeping my resolve, because I will not quarrel with myself, and because I shall give William pleasure by it when he comes home again. At Rydale, a woman of the village, stout and well dressed, begged a half-penny. She had never she said done it before, but these hard times! Arrived at home, set some slips of privet, the evening cold, had a fire, my face now flame-coloured. It is nine o'clock. I shall now go to bed.

Friday, 3rd October. Very rainy all the morning. Wm. walked to Ambleside after dinner. I went with him part of the way. He talked much about the object of his essay for the second volume of "L. B."³ * * *

N.B.—When William and I returned from accompanying Jones, we met an old man almost double.⁴ He had on a coat, thrown over his shoulders, above his waistcoat and coat. Under this he carried a bundle, and had an apron on and a night-cap. His face was interesting. He had dark eyes and a long nose. John, who afterwards met him at Wytheburn, took him for a Jew. He was of Scotch parents, but had been born in the army. He had had a wife, and "she was a good woman, and it pleased God to bless us with ten children." All these were dead but one, of whom he had not heard for many years, a sailor. His trade was to gather leeches, but now leeches were scarce, and he had not strength for it. He lived by begging, and was making his way to Carlisle, where he should buy a few godly books to sell. He said leeches were very scarce, partly owing to this dry season, but many years they have been scarce. He supposed it owing to their being much sought after, that they did not breed fast, and were of slow growth. Leeches were formerly 2s. 6d.⁵ per 100; they are now 30s. He had been hurt in driving a cart, his leg broken, his body driven over, his skull fractured. He felt no pain till he recovered from his first insensibility. It was then late in the evening, when the light was just going away.

Saturday, [Oct.] 11th. A fine October morning. Sat in the house working all the morning, William composing. * * * After dinner we walked up Greenhead Gill in search of a sheepfold.⁶ We went by Mr. Olliff's, and through his woods. It was a delightful day, and the views looked excessively cheerful and beautiful, chiefly that from Mr. Olliff's field, where our own house is to be

2. Sir Michael le Fleming's estate, Rydal Hall. "Without": outside or beyond.

3. The Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800.

4. William's "Resolution and Independence," composed one and a half years later, incorporated various details of Dorothy's description of

the leech gatherer. See May 4 and 7, 1802 (pp. 416 and 417), for William working on the poem he originally called "The Leech Gatherer."

5. Two shillings, six pence.

6. The sheepfold (pen for sheep) in William's "Michael." Lines 1–7 of the poem describe the walk up Greenhead Gill.

built. The colours of the mountains soft, and rich with orange fern; the cattle pasturing upon the hilltops; kites sailing in the sky above our heads; sheep bleating, and feeding in the water courses, scattered over the mountains. They come down and feed, on the little green islands in the beds of the torrents, and so may be swept away. The sheepfold is falling away. It is built nearly in the form of a heart unequally divided. Looked down the brook, and saw the drops rise upwards and sparkle in the air at the little falls. The higher sparkled the tallest. We walked along the turf of the mountain till we came to a track, made by the cattle which come upon the hills.

* * *

Sunday, October 12th. Sate in the house writing in the morning while Wm. went into the wood to compose. Wrote to John in the morning; copied poems for the L. B. In the evening wrote to Mrs. Rawson. Mary Jameson and Sally Ashburner dined. We pulled apples after dinner, a large basket full. We walked before tea by Bainriggs to observe the many-coloured foliage. The oaks dark green with yellow leaves, the birches generally still green, some near the water yellowish, the sycamore crimson and crimson-tufted, the mountain ash a deep orange, the common ash lemon-colour, but many ashes still fresh in their peculiar green, those that were discoloured chiefly near the water. Wm. composing in the evening. Went to bed at 12 o'clock.

1801

Tuesday, [Nov.] 24th * * * It was very windy, and we heard the wind everywhere about us as we went along the lane, but the walls sheltered us. John Green's house looked pretty under Silver How. As we were going along we were stopped at once, at the distance perhaps of 50 yards from our favourite birch tree. It was yielding to the gusty wind with all its tender twigs. The sun shone upon it, and it glanced in the wind like a flying sunshiny shower. It was a tree in shape, with stem and branches, but it was like a spirit of water. The sun went in, and it resumed its purplish appearance, the twigs still yielding to the wind, but not so visibly to us. The other birch trees that were near it looked bright and cheerful, but it was a creature by its own self among them. . . . We went through the wood. It became fair. There was a rainbow which spanned the lake from the island-house to the foot of Bainriggs. The village looked populous and beautiful. Catkins are coming out; palm trees budding; the alder, with its plum-coloured buds. We came home over the stepping-stones. The lake was foamy with white waves. I saw a solitary butter-flower in the wood. * * * Reached home at dinner time. Sent Peggy Ashburner some goose. She sent me some honey, with a thousand thanks. "Alas! the gratitude of men has," etc.⁷ I went in to set her right about this, and sate a while with her. She talked about Thomas's having sold his land. "I," says she, "said many a time he's not come fra London to buy our land, however." Then she told me with what pains and industry they had made up their taxes, interest, etc. etc., how they all got up at 5 o'clock in the morning to spin and Thomas carded, and that they had paid off a hundred pounds of the interest. She said she used to take much pleasure in the cattle and sheep. "O how pleased I used to be when they fetched them down, and

7. A quotation from William's "Simon Lee." "Alas! the gratitude of men / Has oft'ner left me mourning."

when I had been a bit poorly I would gang out upon a hill and look over 't fields and see them, and it used to do me so much good you cannot think." Molly said to me when I came in, "Poor body! she's very ill, but one does not know how long she may last. Many a fair face may gang before her." We sate by the fire without work for some time, then Mary read a poem of Daniel.⁸ * * * Wm. read Spenser, now and then, a little aloud to us. We were making his waistcoat. We had a note from Mrs. C., with bad news from poor C.—very ill. William went to John's Grove. I went to find him. Moonlight, but it rained. * * * He had been surprised, and terrified, by a sudden rushing of winds, which seemed to bring earth, sky, and lake together, as if the whole were going to enclose him in. He was glad he was in a high road.

In speaking of our walk on Sunday evening, the 22nd November, I forgot to notice one most impressive sight. It was the moon and the moonlight seen through hurrying driving clouds immediately behind the Stone-Man upon the top of the hill, on the forest side. Every tooth and every edge of rock was visible, and the Man stood like a giant watching from the roof of a lofty castle. The hill seemed perpendicular from the darkness below it. It was a sight that I could call to mind at any time, it was so distinct.

1802

Thursday [Mar. 4]. Before we had quite finished breakfast Calvert's man brought the horses for Wm.⁹ We had a deal to do, pens to make, poems to put in order for writing, to settle for the press, pack up; and the man came before the pens were made, and he was obliged to leave me with only two. Since he left me at half-past 11 (it is now 2) I have been putting the drawers into order, laid by his clothes which he had thrown here and there and everywhere, filed two months' newspapers and got my dinner, 2 boiled eggs and 2 apple tarts. I have set Molly on to clean the garden a little, and I myself have walked. I transplanted some snowdrops—the Bees are busy. Wm. has a nice bright day. It was hard frost in the night. The Robins are singing sweetly. Now for my walk. I *will* be busy. I *will* look well, and be well when he comes back to me. O the Darling! Here is one of his bitten apples. I can hardly find it in my heart to throw it into the fire. * * * I walked round the two Lakes, crossed the stepping-stones at Rydale foot. Sate down where we always sit. I was full of thought about my darling. Blessings on him. I came home at the foot of our own hill under Loughrigg. They are making sad ravages in the woods. Benson's wood is going, and the woods above the River. The wind has blown down a small fir tree on the Rock, that terminates John's path. I suppose the wind of Wednesday night. I read German after tea. I worked and read the L. B., enchanted with the *Idiot Boy*. Wrote to Wm. and then went to bed. It snowed when I went to bed.

Monday [Mar. 22]. A rainy day. William very poorly. 2 letters from Sara, and one from poor Annette. Wrote to my brother Richard. We talked a good deal about C. and other interesting things. We resolved to see Annette,

8. Identified as Samuel Daniel's poem *Musophilus: Containing a General Defence of Learning*

(1599).

9. For a journey to Keswick to visit Coleridge.

and that Wm. should go to Mary.¹ Wm. wrote to Coleridge not to expect us till Thursday or Friday.

Tuesday.—A mild morning. William worked at *The Cuckoo* poem.² I sewed beside him. After dinner he slept. I read German, and, at the closing-in of day, went to sit in the orchard. William came to me, and walked backwards and forwards. We talked about C. Wm. repeated the poem to me. I left him there, and in 20 minutes he came in, rather tired with attempting to write. He is now reading Ben Jonson. I am going to read German. It is about 10 o'clock, a quiet night. The fire flickers, and the watch ticks. I hear nothing save the breathing of my Beloved as he now and then pushes his book forward, and turns over a leaf. * * *

Thursday, [Apr.] 15th It was a threatening, misty morning, but mild. We set off after dinner from Eusemere. Mrs. Clarkson went a short way with us, but turned back.³ The wind was furious, and we thought we must have returned. We first rested in the large boathouse, then under a furze bush opposite Mr. Clarkson's. Saw the plough going in the field. The wind seized our breath. The lake was rough. There was a boat by itself floating in the middle of the bay below Water Millock. We rested again in the Water Millock Lane. The hawthorns are black and green, the birches here and there greenish, but there is yet more of purple to be seen on the twigs. We got over into a field to avoid some cows—people working. A few primroses by the roadside—woodsorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, strawberries, and that starry, yellow flower which Mrs. C. calls pile wort. When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side.⁴ We fancied that the sea had floated the seeds ashore, and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more; and at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and above them; some rested their heads upon these stones, as on a pillow, for weariness; and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, that blew upon them over the lake; they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. This wind blew directly over the lake to them. There was here and there a little knot, and a few stragglers higher up; but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity, unity, and life of that one busy highway. We rested again and again. The bays were stormy, and we heard the waves at different distances, and in the middle of the water, like the sea. Rain came on. * * * William was sitting by a good fire when I came downstairs. He soon made his way to the library, piled up in a corner of the window. He brought out a volume of Enfield's *Speaker*,⁵ another miscellany, and an odd volume of Congreve's plays. We had a glass of warm rum

1. It had been arranged several months earlier that William was to marry Mary Hutchinson (Sara is Mary's sister, with whom Coleridge had fallen in love). Now the Wordsworths resolve to go to France to settle affairs with Annette Vallon, mother of William's daughter, Caroline. William did not conceal the facts of his early love affair from his family, or from Mary Hutchinson.

2. "To the Cuckoo."

3. Catherine Clarkson, the wife of the anti-slave-

trade campaigner Thomas Clarkson, was a neighbor and became one of Dorothy Wordsworth's closest friends.

4. William did not compose his poem on the daffodils, "I wandered lonely as a cloud," until two years later. Comparison with the poem will show how extensive was his use of Dorothy's prose description (p. 345).

5. William Enfield's *The Speaker* (1774), a volume of selections suitable for elocution.

and water. We enjoyed ourselves, and wished for Mary. It rained and blew, when we went to bed. * * *

Friday, 16th April (Good Friday).—When I undrew curtains in the morning, I was much affected by the beauty of the prospect, and the change. The sun shone, the wind had passed away, the hills looked cheerful, the river was very bright as it flowed into the lake. The church rises up behind a little knot of rocks, the steeple not so high as an ordinary three-story house. Trees in a row in the garden under the wall. The valley is at first broken by little woody knolls that make retiring places, fairy valleys in the vale, the river winds along under these hills, travelling, not in a bustle but not slowly, to the lake. We saw a fisherman in the flat meadow on the other side of the water. He came towards us, and threw his line over the two-arched bridge. It is a bridge of a heavy construction, almost bending inwards in the middle, but it is grey, and there is a look of ancientry in the architecture of it that pleased me. As we go on the vale opens out more into one vale, with somewhat of a cradle bed. Cottages, with groups of trees, on the side of the hills. We passed a pair of twin children, two years old. Sate on the next bridge which we crossed—a single arch. We rested again upon the turf, and looked at the same bridge. We observed arches in the water, occasioned by the large stones sending it down in two streams. A sheep came plunging through the river, stumbled up the bank, and passed close to us. It had been frightened by an insignificant little dog on the other side. Its fleece dropped a glittering shower under its belly. Primroses by the road-side, pile wort that shone like stars of gold in the sun, violets, strawberries, retired and half-buried among the grass. When we came to the foot of Brothers Water, I left William sitting on the bridge, and went along the path on the right side of the lake through the wood. I was delighted with what I saw. The water under the boughs of the bare old trees, the simplicity of the mountains, and the exquisite beauty of the path. There was one grey cottage. I repeated *The Glow-worm*,⁶ as I walked along. I hung over the gate, and thought I could have stayed for ever. When I returned, I found William writing a poem descriptive of the sights and sounds we saw and heard. There was the gentle flowing of the stream, the glittering, lively lake, green fields without a living creature to be seen on them; behind us, a flat pasture with forty-two cattle feeding; to our left, the road leading to the hamlet. No smoke there, the sun shone on the bare roofs. The people were at work ploughing, harrowing, and sowing; . . . a dog barking now and then, cocks crowing, birds twittering, the snow in patches at the top of the highest hills, yellow palms, purple and green twigs on the birches, ashes with their glittering stems quite bare. The hawthorn a bright green, with black stems under the oak. The moss of the oak glossy. We went on. Passed two sisters at work (they first passed us), one with two pitchforks in her hand, the other had a spade. We had come to talk with them. They laughed long after we were gone, perhaps half in wantonness, half boldness. William finished his poem.⁷ Before we got to the foot of Kirkstone, there were hundreds of cattle in the vale. * * *

Thursday, [Apr.] 29th. * * * After I had written down *The Tinker*, which William finished this morning,⁸ Luff called. He was very lame, limped into the kitchen. He came on a little pony. We then went to John's Grove, sate a

6. William's poem beginning "Among all lovely things my Love had been," composed four days earlier; "my Love" in this line is Dorothy.

7. The short lyric "Written in March."

8. William never published his comic poem "The Tinkers." It was first printed in 1897.

while at first; afterwards William lay, and I lay, in the trench under the fence—he with his eyes shut, and listening to the waterfalls and the birds. There was no one waterfall above another—it was a sound of waters in the air—the voice of the air. William heard me breathing, and rustling now and then, but we both lay still, and unseen by one another. He thought that it would be so sweet thus to lie in the grave, to hear the peaceful sounds of the earth, and just to know that our dear friends were near. The lake was still; there was a boat out. Silver How reflected with delicate purple and yellowish hues, as I have seen spar; lambs on the island, and running races together by the half-dozen, in the round field near us. The copses greenish, hawthorns green, . . . cottages smoking. As I lay down on the grass, I observed the glittering silver line on the ridge of the backs of the sheep, owing to their situation respecting the sun, which made them look beautiful, but with something of strangeness, like animals of another kind, as if belonging to a more splendid world. * * *

Tuesday, May 4th. Though William went to bed nervous, and jaded in the extreme, he rose refreshed, wrote out *The Leech Gatherer*⁹ for him, which he had begun the night before and of which he wrote several stanzas in bed this Monday morning. It was very hot. * * * We rested several times by the way,—read, and repeated *The Leech Gatherer*. * * * We saw Coleridge on the Wytheburn side of the water; he crossed the beck to us. Mr. Simpson was fishing there. William and I ate luncheon and then went on towards the waterfall. It is a glorious wild solitude under that lofty purple crag. It stood upright by itself; its own self, and its shadow below, one mass; all else was sunshine. We went on further. A bird at the top of the crag was flying round and round, and looked in thinness and transparency, shape and motion like a moth. We climbed the hill, but looked in vain for a shade, except at the foot of the great waterfall. We came down, and rested upon a moss-covered rock rising out of the bed of the river. There we lay, ate our dinner, and stayed there till about four o'clock or later. William and Coleridge repeated and read verses. I drank a little brandy and water, and was in heaven. The stag's horn is very beautiful and fresh, springing upon the fells; mountain ashes, green. We drank tea at a farm house. * * * We parted from Coleridge at Sara's crag, after having looked for the letters which C. carved in the morning. I missed them all. William deepened the T. with C.'s pen-knive.¹ We sat afterwards on the wall, seeing the sun go down, and the reflections in the still water. C. looked well, and parted from us cheerfully, hopping upon the side stones. On the Raise we met a woman with two little girls, one in her arms, the other, about four years old, walking by her side, a pretty little thing, but half-starved. * * * The mother, when we accosted her, told us how her husband had left her, and gone off with another woman, and how she "pursued" them. Then her fury kindled, and her eyes rolled about. She changed again to tears. She was a Cockermouth woman, thirty years of age—a child at Cockermouth when I was. I was moved, and gave her a shilling. . . . We had the

9. The poem that was published as "Resolution and Independence." For its origin see the entry for October 3, 1800 (p. 411).

1. The rock, which has since been blasted away to make room for a new road, contained the carved

letters W. W., M. H., D. W., S. T. C., J. W., and S. H.: William Wordsworth, Mary Hutchinson, Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Wordsworth, and Sara Hutchinson.

crescent moon with the "auld moon in her arms."² We rested often, always upon the bridges. Reached home at about ten o'clock. * * * We went soon to bed. I repeated verses to William while he was in bed; he was soothed, and I left him. "This is the spot"³ over and over again.

Thursday, 6th May.—A sweet morning. We have put the finishing stroke to our bower, and here we are sitting in the orchard. It is one o'clock. We are sitting upon a seat under the wall, which I found my brother building up, when I came to him.—He had intended that it should have been done before I came. It is a nice, cool, shady spot. The small birds are singing, lambs bleating, cuckoos calling, the thrush sings by fits, Thomas Ashburner's axe is going quietly (without passion) in the orchard, hens are cackling, flies humming, the women talking together at their doors, plum and pear trees are in blossom—apple trees greenish—the opposite woods green, the crows are cawing, we have heard ravens, the ash trees are in blossom, birds flying all about us, the stitchwort is coming out, there is one budding lychnis, the primroses are passing their prime, celandine, violets, and wood sorrel for ever more, little geraniums and pansies on the wall. We walked in the evening to Tail End, to inquire about hurdles for the orchard shed. * * * When we came in we found a magazine, and review, and a letter from Coleridge, verses to Hartley, and Sara H. We read the review,⁴ etc. The moon was a perfect boat, a silver boat, when we were out in the evening. The birch tree is all over green in *small leaf*, more light and elegant than when it is full out. It bent to the breezes, as if for the love of its own delightful motions. Sloe-thorns and hawthorns in the hedges.

Friday, 7th May.—William had slept uncommonly well, so, feeling himself strong, he fell to work at *The Leech Gatherer*; he wrote hard at it till dinner time, then he gave over, tired to death—he had finished the poem.⁵ I was making Derwent's frocks. After dinner we sat in the orchard. It was a thick, hazy, dull air. The thrush sang almost continually; the little birds were more than usually busy with their voices. The sparrows are now full fledged. The nest is so full that they lie upon one another; they sit quietly in their nest with closed mouths. I walked to Rydale after tea, which we drank by the kitchen fire. The evening very dull; a terrible kind of threatening brightness at sunset above Easedale. The sloe-thorn beautiful in the hedges, and in the wild spots higher up among the hawthorns. No letters. William met me. He had been digging in my absence, and cleaning the well. We walked up beyond Lewthwaites. A very dull sky; coolish; crescent moon now and then. I had a letter brought me from Mrs. Clarkson while we were walking in the orchard. I observed the sorrel leaves opening at about nine o'clock. William went to bed tired with thinking about a poem.

[July.] On Thursday morning, 29th, we arrived in London.⁶ Wm. left me at the Sun. * * * After various troubles and disasters, we left London on

2. From the "Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens." See p. 36.

3. William never completed this poem.

4. The *Monthly Review* for March 1802.

5. Later entries show, however, that William

kept working on the manuscript until July 4.

6. On the way to France to visit Annette Vallon and Caroline (see the entry for March 22, 1802, p. 413).

Saturday morning at half-past five or six, the 31st of July. We mounted the Dover coach at Charing Cross. It was a beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river, and a multitude of little boats, made a most beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge. The houses were not overhung by their cloud of smoke, and they were spread out endlessly, yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a fierce light, that there was even something like the purity of one of nature's own grand spectacles.⁷

We rode on cheerfully, now with the Paris diligence before us, now behind. We walked up the steep hills, a beautiful prospect everywhere, till we even reached Dover. * * * We arrived at Calais at four o'clock on Sunday morning, the 31st of July.⁸ We stayed in the vessel till half-past seven; then William went for letters at about half-past eight or nine. We found out Annette and C. chez Madame Avril dans la Rue de la Tête d'or. We lodged opposite two ladies, in tolerably decent-sized rooms, but badly furnished. * * * The weather was very hot. We walked by the sea-shore almost every evening with Annette and Caroline, or William and I alone. I had a bad cold, and could not bathe at first, but William did. It was a pretty sight to see as we walked upon the sands when the tide was low, perhaps a hundred people bathing about a quarter of a mile distant from us. And we had delightful walks after the heat of the day was passed—seeing far off in the west the coast of England like a cloud crested with Dover castle, which was but like the summit of the cloud—the evening star and the glory of the sky, the reflections in the water were more beautiful than the sky itself, purple waves brighter than precious stones, for ever melting away upon the sands.

[Sept. 24 and following.] Mary first met us in the avenue. She looked so fat and well that we were made very happy by the sight of her—then came Sara, & last of all Joanna.⁹ Tom was forking corn standing upon the corn cart. We dressed ourselves immediately & got tea—the garden looked gay with asters & sweet peas—I looked at everything with tranquillity & happiness but I was ill both on Saturday & Sunday & continued to be poorly most of the time of our stay. Jack & George came on Friday Evening 1st October. On Saturday 2nd we rode to Hackness, William Jack George & Sara single, I behind Tom. On Sunday 3rd Mary & Sara were busy packing. On Monday 4th October 1802, my Brother William was married to Mary Hutchinson. I slept a good deal of the night & rose fresh & well in the morning—at a little after 8 o'clock I saw them go down the avenue towards the Church. William had parted from me up stairs. I gave him the wedding ring—with how deep a blessing! I took it from my forefinger where I had worn it the whole of the night before—he slipped it again onto my finger and blessed me fervently. When they were absent my dear little Sara prepared the breakfast. I kept myself as quiet as I could, but when I saw the two men running up the walk, coming to tell us it was over, I could stand it no longer & threw myself on the bed where I lay in stillness, neither hearing or seeing any thing, till

7. Cf. William's sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (p. 355).

8. The actual date was August 1. One of the walks by the sea that Dorothy goes on to describe was the occasion for William's sonnet "It is a beautiful evening."

9. The Wordsworths have come to Gallow Hill,

Yorkshire, for the marriage of William and Mary. The people mentioned are Mary's sisters and brothers (Sara, Joanna, Tom, Jack, and George Hutchinson). Out of consideration for Dorothy's overwrought feelings, only Joanna, Jack, and Tom attended the ceremony at Brampton Church.

Sara came upstairs to me & said "They are coming." This forced me from the bed where I lay & I moved I knew not how straight forward, faster than my strength could carry me till I met my beloved William & fell upon his bosom. He & John Hutchinson led me to the house & there I stayed to welcome my dear Mary. As soon as we had breakfasted we departed.¹ It rained when we set off. Poor Mary was much agitated when she parted from her Brothers & Sisters & her home. Nothing particular occurred till we reached Kirby. We had sunshine & showers, pleasant talk, love & cheerfulness. * * * It rained very hard when we reached Windermere. We sate in the rain at Wilcock's to change horses, & arrived at Grasmere at about 6 o'clock on Wednesday Evening, the 6th of October 1802. Molly was overjoyed to see us,—for my part I cannot describe what I felt, & our dear Mary's feelings would I dare say not be easy to speak of. We went by candle light into the garden & were astonished at the growth of the Brooms, Portugal Laurels, &c &c &c—The next day, Thursday, we unpacked the Boxes. On Friday 8th we baked Bread, & Mary & I walked, first upon the Hill side, & then in John's Grove, then in view of Rydale, the first walk that I had taken with my Sister.

24th December.—Christmas Eve. William is now sitting by me, at half-past ten o'clock. I have been * * * repeating some of his sonnets to him, listening to his own repeating, reading some of Milton's, and the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*. It is a quick, keen frost. * * * Coleridge came this morning with Wedgwood. We all turned out * * * one by one, to meet him. He looked well. We had to tell him of the birth of his little girl, born yesterday morning at six o'clock. William went with them to Wytheburn in the chaise, and M. and I met W. on the Raise. It was not an unpleasant morning. * * * The sun shone now and then, and there was no wind, but all things looked cheerless and distinct; no meltings of sky into mountains, the mountains like stone work wrought up with huge hammers. Last Sunday was as mild a day as I ever remember. * * * Mary and I went round the lakes. There were flowers of various kinds—the topmost bell of a foxglove, geraniums, daisies, a buttercup in the water (but this I saw two or three days before), small yellow flowers (I do not know their name) in the turf. A large bunch of strawberry blossoms. * * * It is Christmas Day, Saturday, 25th December 1802. I am thirty-one years of age. It is a dull, frosty day.

Grasmere—A Fragment

Peaceful our valley, fair and green,
And beautiful her cottages,
Each in its nook, its sheltered hold,
Or underneath its tuft of trees.

Many and beautiful they are;
But there is *one* that I love best,

1. Dorothy accompanied William and Mary on the three-day journey back to their cottage at Grasmere.

A lowly shed, in truth, it is,
A brother of the rest.

Yet when I sit on rock or hill,
10 Down looking on the valley fair,
That Cottage with its clustering trees
Summons my heart; it settles there.

Others there are whose small domain
Of fertile fields and hedgerows green
15 Might more seduce a wanderer's mind
To wish that *there* his home had been.

Such wish be his! I blame him not,
My fancies they perchance are wild
—I love that house because it is
20 The very Mountains' child.

Fields hath it of its own, green fields,
But they are rocky steep and bare;
Their fence is of the mountain stone,
And moss and lichen flourish there.

25 And when the storm comes from the North
It lingers near that pastoral spot,
And, piping through the mossy walls,
It seems delighted with its lot.

And let it take its own delight;
30 And let it range the pastures bare;
Until it reach that group of trees,
—It may not enter there!

A green unfading grove it is,
Skirted with many a lesser tree,
35 Hazel and holly, beech and oak,
A bright and flourishing company.

Precious the shelter of those trees;
They screen the cottage that I love;
The sunshine pierces to the roof,
40 And the tall pine-trees tower above.

When first I saw that dear abode,
It was a lovely winter's day:
After a night of perilous storm
The west wind ruled with gentle sway;

45 A day so mild, it might have been
The first day of the gladsome spring;
The robins warbled, and I heard
One solitary throstle sing.

A Stranger, Grasmere, in thy Vale,
50 All faces then to me unknown,
I left my sole companion-friend
To wander out alone.

Lured by a little winding path,
I quitted soon the public road,
55 A smooth and tempting path it was,
By sheep and shepherds trod.

Eastward, toward the lofty hills,
This pathway led me on
Until I reached a stately Rock,
60 With velvet moss o'ergrown.

With russet oak and tufts of fern
Its top was richly garlanded;
Its sides adorned with eglantine
Bedropp'd with hips of glossy red.

65 There, too, in many a sheltered chink
The foxglove's broad leaves flourished fair,
And silver birch whose purple twigs
Bend to the softest breathing air.

Beneath that Rock my course I stayed,
70 And, looking to its summit high,
"Thou wear'st," said I, "a splendid garb,
Here winter keeps his revelry.

— "Full long a dweller on the Plains,
I griev'd when summer days were gone;
75 No more I'll grieve; for Winter here
Hath pleasure gardens of his own.

"What need of flowers? The splendid moss
Is gayer than an April mead;
More rich its hues of various green,
80 Orange, and gold, & glittering red."

—Beside that gay and lovely Rock
There came with merry voice
A foaming streamlet glancing by;
It seemed to say "Rejoice!"

85 My youthful wishes all fulfill'd,
Wishes matured by thoughtful choice,
I stood an Inmate of this vale
How *could* I but rejoice?

ca. 1802–1805

1892

Thoughts on My Sick-Bed¹

- And has the remnant of my life
Been pilfered of this sunny Spring?
And have its own prelusive sounds
Touched in my heart no echoing string?
- 5 Ah! say not so—the hidden life
Couchant° within this feeble frame
Hath been enriched by kindred gifts,
That, undesired, unsought-for, came
- 10 With joyful heart in youthful days
When fresh each season in its Round
I welcomed the earliest Celandine
Glittering upon the mossy ground;
- With busy eyes I pierced the lane
In quest of known and *unknown* things,
15 —The primrose a lamp on its fortress rock,
The silent butterfly spreading its wings,
- The violet betrayed by its noiseless breath,
The daffodil dancing in the breeze,
The carolling thrush, on his naked perch,
20 Towering above the budding trees.
- Our cottage-hearth no longer our home,
Companions of Nature were we,
The Stirring, the Still, the Loquacious, the Mute—
To all we gave our sympathy.
- 25 Yet never in those careless days
When spring-time in rock, field, or bower
Was but a fountain of earthly hope
A promise of fruits & the *splendid* flower.
- No! then I never felt a bliss
30 That might with *that* compare
Which, piercing to my couch of rest,
Came on the vernal air.
- When loving Friends an offering brought,
The first flowers of the year,
35 Culled from the precincts of our home,
From nooks to Memory dear.

1. In a letter of May 25, 1832, William Wordsworth's daughter Dora mentions this as "an affecting poem which she [her aunt Dorothy] has written on the pleasure she received from the first spring flowers that were carried up to her when

confined to her sick room." The lines refer to half a dozen or more poems by William, including "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (in line 18) and "Tintern Abbey" (lines 45–52).

lying

40 With some sad thoughts the work was done,
Unprompted and unbidden,
But joy it brought to my *hidden* life,
To consciousness no longer hidden.

I felt a Power unfelt before,
Controlling weakness, languor, pain;
It bore me to the Terrace walk
I trod the Hills again;—

45 No prisoner in this lonely room,
I saw the green Banks of the Wye,
Recalling thy prophetic words,
Bard, Brother, Friend from infancy!

50 No need of motion, or of strength,
Or even the breathing air:
—I thought of Nature's loveliest scenes;
And with Memory I was there.

May 1832

1978

SIR WALTER SCOTT 1771–1832

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, but as a small boy, to improve his health, he lived for some years with his grandparents on their farm in the Scottish Border country (the part of southern Scotland lying immediately north of the border with England). This region was rich in ballad and folklore, much of it associated with the Border warfare between northern English and southern Scottish raiders. As a child Scott listened eagerly to stories about the past, especially to accounts of their experiences by survivors of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, the last in a series of ill-fated attempts to restore to the throne of Britain the Stuart dynasty, who had been living in exile since 1688. The defeat of the ragtag army of Scottish Highland soldiers who had rallied around Charles Edward Stuart brought to an end not just the Jacobite cause but also the quasi-feudal power that the Highland chiefs had exercised over their clans. The Highlands' native traditions were suppressed by a government in London that was determined, to the point of brutality, to integrate all its Scottish subjects more fully into the United Kingdom. Ideally situated to witness these social and cultural transformations, Scott early acquired what he exploited throughout his work—a sense of history as associated with a specific place and a sense of the past that is kept alive, tenuously, in the oral traditions of the present.

Scott's father was a lawyer, and he himself was trained in the law, becoming in 1799 sheriff (local judge) of Selkirkshire, a Border county, and in 1806 clerk of session—that is, secretary to the highest civil court in Scotland—in Edinburgh. Scott viewed the law, in its development over the centuries, as embodying the changing social customs of the country and an important element in social history, and he often used it (as in *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Redgauntlet*) to give a special dimension to his fiction.