THE INFLUENCE OF DOROTHY WORDSWORTH ON THE
POETRY OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to show, through a study of the letters and a comparison of the journals and poems, the extent of the influence of Dorothy Wordsworth on the poetry of William Wordsworth and to bring together for the first time evidences of her influence.

Some secondary sources have been used in the study. Since there is much material on Wordsworth, however, it has been impossible to examine more than a small portion of what is available. Naturally, the greater part of the study has been confined to the primary sources: The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, and The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. Fortunately, the journals and the letters are those edited by Ernest De Selincourt. De Selincourt's biography of Dorothy also has been available. The main source of material on Wordsworth's life has been the biography by Harper. The Complete Poetical Works used is the Student's Cambridge edition, edited by A. J. George. All references to the poems are made to this edition. All references to letters, however, are not to the De Selincourt edition, for some letters have been cited from The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle, edited by E. J. Morley. These letters, nevertheless, can easily be determined from the footnotes.
The poems have been considered in the order of the arrangement in the Complete Poetical Works, with the exception of "The Recluse." This poem is discussed in the thesis along with "Bleak Season Was It, Turbulent and Wild" and "On Nature's Invitation Do I Come," because the latter poems are parts of "The Recluse." It seemed logical, therefore, to complete the discussion of "The Recluse" in this order.

Portions of the journals which are similar to lines of the poems, those which show evidence of influence or indicate Dorothy's help in any way, and those which record the writing of the poems have been cited along with the poems which they concern.

The writer has attempted, with evidences from the journals, letters, and poems, to show how Dorothy's writings and the deep love and close companionship of Dorothy and William affected William's life and work.
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CHAPTER I

LIFE OF DOROTHY AND WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

In the field of literature there have been some important brother-sister and husband-wife combinations. None, however, has been more interesting or more important than the Dorothy Wordsworth-William Wordsworth combination. These two with Coleridge were often spoken of as the three persons with one soul. It is almost a literal truth that Dorothy and William Wordsworth had one soul. They saw through each other's eyes; they heard with each other's ears; they spoke the same language—a language filled with love of nature and love of common man.

Why was this so? What brought about such a mutual understanding and love between these two people? Perhaps it was mainly their heritage.

Anne Cookson, daughter of William Cookson, mercer of Penrith, and a descendant of the ancient family of Crackanthorpe, was married to John Wordsworth, a solicitor and law agent of the Earl of Lonsdale, on February 5, 1766. The couple went to live in a large manor house at Cockermouth, Cumberland, where their four sons and one daughter were born. The first son, Richard, was born August 19, 1768. William, the second son, was born April 7, 1770. One year and nine months later, on December 26, 1771, his sister Dorothy was
born. John, born December 4, 1772, and Christopher, born
June 9, 1774, were the youngest children.

Only a little is known of Anne and John Wordsworth. Glimpses of them are gathered from the conversations of William and Dorothy and from the poems. The father was absent from home a great deal, yet he had time to introduce to William, and perhaps to all of his children, the works of the great English poets. This early teaching evidently had a great influence on William. Dorothy and William both held a deep love for their mother, a love which never seemed to die but to remain fresh and vivid throughout most of their life. The mother, wise with understanding, granted her children many indulgences and left the boys, especially William, free to roam the surrounding hills and dales. Her second son was the most difficult of the children to guide. He was of a stiff and violent temper and was given to moods. There were times when he would permit only his sister as a companion and other times when he would not even allow her. It is said that Anne Wordsworth often remarked that her boy William would become either a very good man or a very bad man.

Of his early life at Cockermouth Wordsworth wrote to

1Catherine MacDonald MacLean, Dorothy and William Wordsworth, p. 20.


3Eric Robertson, Wordsworth and the English Lake Country; An Introduction to a Poet's Country, p. 23.
some extent, especially in *The Prelude* and in some of the shorter poems. Among the latter is one, "Address from the Spirit of Cockermouth Castle," written in 1833, which tells of his climbing about the ruins of the castle, a landmark near the manor house in which he was born." These ruins exerted a powerful influence on his childish mind. Cockermouth and the surrounding country had once been controlled by feudal lords, and Cockermouth Castle was a relic of the tyranny of that age. Robertson says that it was not the castle that drew Wordsworth's fancy, but the fact that "... the steady reasons and pure elements have found a worthy fellow-labourer--man, free now--man, working for himself--his wants, occupations, and cheerful cares 'followed by an unsought train of simplicity and inevitable grace.'"

Although Wordsworth wrote of himself, he left only "one or two delightful impressions of the 'little Prattler among men.'" One of these impressions, "To a Butterfly," was written in 1802, but it refers to this period of their life. Sight of the butterfly in his garden at Grasmere recalls to his mind the happy days of his childhood, when he and his sister, whom he calls Emmeline in the poem, chased butterflies in their father's garden:

Thou bring'ist, gay creature as thou art!  
A solemn image to my heart,  
My father's family!  
Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,

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5 *MacLean, op. cit.*, p. 20.
The time, when in our childish plays,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey!—with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to brake;
But she, God love her, feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

Another beautiful poem, written in 1801 and referring to
this same period of their life, is "The Sparrow's Nest." In
the Fenwick note to this poem, William says that at the end
of the garden at his home at Cockermouth was a high terrace,
which was his and Dorothy's favorite playground. The terr-
race wall was covered with privet and roses, in which birds
found shelter and built their nests. It was here, presum-
ably, that the sparrow's nest with the bright blue eggs was
found. 6

In the note to a poem, "On the High Part of the Coast
of Cumberland," written in 1833, Wordsworth gives another
interesting incident of this period. He says that he has
been familiar with this part of the coast from his earliest
childhood, and remembers his first impression of the town and
port of Whitehaven, with the white waves breaking against its
quays and piers. Dorothy, when she first heard the "voice of
the sea" here and looked upon the view spread before her,
burst into tears. William says that this fact was often

6William Wordsworth, The Complete Poetical Works of
A. J. George, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904, p. 262. All
page references to Wordsworth's poems are made to this edi-
tion, hereafter abbreviated to Poetical Works.
mentioned by members of the family as indicating the "sensitivity for which she was so remarkable."7

In *The Prelude*, Book XIV, lines 231-266, Wordsworth has given another tribute to Dorothy, which refers to this time as well as to a later period of their life. According to Harper, "It is probable, from their nearness of age and similarity of disposition, that even in these earliest days of childhood William's favorite companion was his sister Dorothy."8

In 1776-1777 Dorothy and William were sent to Penrith to stay with their maternal grandfather, William Cookson. It has been said that William was sent there to be out of mischief; and it is supposed that Dorothy accompanied him as a comfort and a check. If so, the plan was only half successful, for the headstrong moods still came to him.9 The Cooksons had none of the sympathetic understanding for the grandchildren which their daughter had for her children. Life there was a dreary, frustrated existence for Dorothy and William. Perhaps the very country had some influence on the disposition of the inhabitants of Penrith. Even the rivers had become placid streams by the time they reached there. Robertson says that the Penrith man had acquired a somewhat flatfooted way of going about his conquered world.10 This

7Ibid., p. 705.  
9Robertson, op. cit., p. 39.  
10Ibid., p. 65.
flatfooted way of going about did not suit either Dorothy or William. Both chafed under the narrow, restricted life they were forced to lead there; so it must have been with great pleasure that they left Penrith in 1778 for their Cockermouth home.

On March 11, 1778, Anne Cookson Wordsworth died. Before her death, she requested that a cousin of hers, Elizabeth Threlkeld, who lived in Halifax, take Dorothy and supervise her education. Elizabeth Threlkeld was a sensible woman, with whom Dorothy was happy for the next nine years. It was here that Dorothy met Jane Pollard and formed a friendship which was to last the rest of her life.

William and Richard were sent to Hawkshead to school soon after the death of their mother. Hawkshead was a town of small landowners, weavers, sheepbreeders, and shopkeepers. Newspapers and wheeled conveyances were unknown to them.¹¹ In these surroundings William was withdrawn in every way from the teaching of the plains of Penrith. "Mankind here had not been conquered by monarchs and the soil and hills had not been conquered by mankind."¹²

The directors of the Hawkshead Grammar School were somewhat modern in their viewpoints on education. The policy of the school was to consider Nature as the greatest head master. In keeping with this policy, out of school hours and

¹¹Ibid., p. 63. ¹²Ibid., p. 65.
on holidays the boys were allowed to wander free and alone within certain boundaries. This system gave Wordsworth's eyes and ears almost as much as Dorothy did.  

On December 30, 1783, John Wordsworth died, leaving his children penniless and to the care of two cold, unsympathetic relatives.

In 1786 the head master of Hawkshead, William Taylor, asked William, along with some of his classmates, to write some verses in commemoration of an anniversary of the school. With the composition of the poem William realized that he could write poetry. While he was still in school, he wrote a long poem of his own adventures and the scenery of the country in which he was brought up. 

In the spring of 1787 Dorothy's education was considered complete. Leaving Elizabeth Threlkeld, she returned to Penrith to live with her grandparents. In this same year William and John, the two brothers nearest to her age and dearest to her heart, left Hawkshead. Perhaps they went directly to Penrith. At any rate, in the summer of 1787 Dorothy, in a letter to her friend Jane Pollard, asked forgiveness for not having written sooner and gave as her excuse that William was sitting by her and she could not help talking with him until it was too late to finish, that she

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13 Ibid., p. 72.  
14 Ibid., p. 103.  
had so few hours to pass with her brothers she could not leave them.

You know not how happy I am in their company. I do not now want a friend who will share with me my distresses. I do not now pass half my time alone. I can bear the ill-nature of all my relations, for the affection of my Brothers consoles me in all my griefs, but how soon alas! shall I be deprived of this consolation! and how soon shall I again become melancholy, even more melancholy than before. They are just the boys I could wish them, they are so affectionate and so kind to me as makes me love them more and more every day.16

On August 5 or 6, 1787, Dorothy again wrote to Jane:

Yesterday morning I parted with the kindest and most affectionate of Brothers, I cannot paint to you my distress at their departure, I can only tell you that for a few hours I was absolutely miserable, a thousand tormenting fears rushed upon me, the approaching winter, the ill-nature of my Grandfather and Uncle Chris, the little probability there is of my soon again seeing my younger Brother . . .17

Late in the autumn another letter was sent to Jane:

I had my Br Wm with me for three weeks, I was very busy during his stay, preparing his cloaths for Cambridge, so that I had very little leisure, and what I had, you may be sure I wished to spend with him.18

In the summer of 1788 William had his first long vacation. It is strange that he wished to go immediately to Hawkshead to see the hills and dales, to fish in the lake, and to sleep in the accustomed bed at Dame Tyson's, rather than to go to Penrith to see his sister. Dorothy, under the

16The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth (1787-1805), arranged and edited by Ernest de Selincourt, p.2, hereafter referred to as Early Letters.

17Ibid., p. 5.

18Ibid., p. 10.
same circumstances, surely would have rushed to William as soon as possible. Perhaps he had a divine call to return to the scenes of his childhood which was too strong for him to resist; perhaps, after the year at Cambridge, he felt too strongly the need for being rejuvenated by the atmosphere of the Hawkshead country. It was at this time that William dedicated himself, or felt himself dedicated, to poetry.

All of the second long vacation, which came in the summer of 1789, was given to Dorothy and to Mary Hutchinson. Biographers disagree as to whether it was this summer of 1789 or the preceding summer of 1788 to which Wordsworth referred in the sixth book of The Prelude when he wrote that he was blest

    Above all joys, that seemed another morn
    Risen on mid noon; blest with the presence, Friend,
    Of that sole Sister, her who hath been long
    Dear to thee also, thy true friend and mine,
    Now, after separation desolate,
    Restored to me—such absence that she seemed
    A gift then first beston’d. 19

Harper and Robertson maintain that this reference is to the summer of 1789. DeSelincourt says there must have been a confusion of dates and that it was to the summer of 1788 that Wordsworth was referring. 20 At any rate, all three of these biographers agree that this summer when Dorothy was restored to William was doubly important in that they realized

19 Poetical Works, The Prelude, VI, 11. 196-203.

20 Ernest DeSelincourt, Dorothy Wordsworth: A Biography, p. 20.
their need for each other. According to DeSelincourt, Dorothy was "conscious of her mission to be always at his side, smoothing his path before him, and helping him with loving sympathy to be true to his chosen vocation. We can hardly doubt that their dream of a lifelong companionship now first took definite shape." Harper says that many changes had taken place in both of them as the years had passed, and these changes made them more interesting in each other's eyes. During this second long vacation the brother and sister visited many romantic scenes within easy reach of Penrith. According to Harper, the "long companionship, the deep and unbroken communion of spirits really began in this happy season." Robertson also is of the opinion that during this vacation the brother and sister were wrapt in a mutual love that was never thereafter broken. He gives Dorothy the greater share of credit for this continuity of sympathy. Although Dorothy was the predominant partner in this compact of affection, William did show for her, especially in his youth, a steadfast and reverent love.

Dorothy's grandfather died in January, 1768. In December of that year her uncle, William Cookson, married Dorothy Cowper. The uncle and his bride took Dorothy Wordsworth to live with them. The following years were much happier ones for her.

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21 Ibid., p. 21.
23 Robertson, op. cit., p. 149.
During the long vacation of 1790, Wordsworth made a tour on the Continent with Robert Jones. On September 6, 1790, William wrote a letter to Dorothy which shows his deep concern for his sister.

I have had, during the course of this delightful tour, a great deal of uneasiness from an apprehension of your anxiety on my account. I have thought of you perpetually; and never have my eyes burst upon a scene of particular loveliness but I have almost instantly wished that you could for a moment be transported to the place where I stood to enjoy it. 24

Later in the letter he expressed a hope that he might soon see Dorothy for three weeks or a month if it would be agreeable with her uncle. William was fast becoming very much out of favor with his relatives.

Perhaps it was a blessing that Dorothy had Jane Pollard to correspond with during these years. She poured out her heart to Jane. Sometimes her letters were filled with unhappiness over the mortifications suffered at the hands of her relatives; more and more often the letters were filled with her happiness over some word received from William or a visit from him. She wrote of William's comings and goings as though she was so full of joy over his pleasures that she must tell someone else, as though she felt that everyone else should be as interested in his activities as she. Sometimes she realized that she was "led on insensibly," as she put it, and apologized for thinking that Jane would be so interested.

24 Early Letters, p. 34.
Being able to write of him to a sympathetic friend compensated somewhat for his absence from her.

William was with Dorothy for six weeks that winter. The next spring he was in Wales, staying with his friend Robert Jones. According to a letter of Dorothy's, written June 26, 1791, to Jane Pollard, William was likely to spend the entire summer there.

The following autumn William returned to France, where he planned to spend the winter. In May, 1792, Dorothy was very worried for his safety and wished him back in England. About this time, Dorothy remarked in a letter to her brother Richard that she and her uncle had had some conversation about William. They still had hopes that he would go into the ministry, but it is probable that Dorothy was broaching the subject of William's proposed marriage to Annette Vallon. William returned to England that fall, and went to London to publish "An Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches."

One of the most interesting of Dorothy's letters at this time is the one written to Jane Pollard February 16, 1793, in which she contrasts her brothers Christopher and William. Christopher was steady and sincere in his attachments, but

... William has both these Virtues in an eminent degree; and a sort of violence of Affection if I may so term it which demonstrates itself every moment of the Day when the Objects of his affection are present with him, in a thousand almost imperceptible attentions to

25Ibid., p. 72. 26Ibid., p. 69.
their wishes, in a sort of restless watchfulness which I know not how to describe, a Tenderness that never sleeps, and at the same time such a delicacy of manners as I have observed in few men. I hope you will one day be much better acquainted with him than you are at present, much as I have talked to you about him. . . .

. . . I cannot help heaving many a Sigh at the Reflection that I have passed one and twenty years of my life, and that the first six years only of this time was spent in the Enjoyment of the same Pleasures that were enjoyed by my Brothers, and that I was then too young to be sensible of the Blessing. We have been endeared to each other by early misfortunes—we in the same moment lost a father, a mother, a home, we have been equally deprived of our patrimony by the cruel Hand of lordly Tyranny. These afflictions have all contributed to unite us closer by the bonds of affection notwithstanding we have been compelled to spend our youth for asunder. 'We drag at each remove a lengthening Chain' this idea often strikes me forcibly. Neither absence nor Distance nor Time can ever break the Chain that links me to my Brothers.27

Dorothy's letter to Jane Pollard June 16, 1793, indicates that she realized her importance to her brother as well as his importance to her.

. . . he is certainly very agreeable in his manners, and he is so amiable, so good, so fond of his Sister; Oh Jane the last time we were together he won my affection to a degree which I cannot describe; his attentions to me were such as the most insensible of mortals must have been touched with, there was no pleasure that he would not have given up with joy for half an hour's conversation with me. . . . I am as heretical as yourself in my opinions concerning Love and Friendship; I am very sure that love will never bind me closer to any human being than friendship binds me to you my earliest female friend, and to William my earliest and my dearest male friend.28

Again, in a letter of July 10, 1793, to Jane she

27Ibid., pp. 83-84.

28Ibid., pp. 92-93. Brackets indicating missing words are given as they appear in the text.
apologizes for writing so much about her brother and tells more of William's love for her.

I am willing to allow that half the virtues with which I fancy him endowed are the creation of my love, but surely I may be excused! he was never tired of comforting his sister, he never left her in anger, he always met her with joy, he preferred her society to every other pleasure, or rather when we were so happy as to be within each other's reach he had no pleasure when we were compelled to be divided.  

In this same letter she quotes from William's letter to her:

'How my dearest friend could you dare to apologize for writing me a second letter particularly when its object was to inform me of an addition to your happiness? How much do I wish that each emotion of pleasure and pain that visits your heart should excite a similar pleasure or a similar pain within me, by that sympathy which will almost identify us when we have stolen to our little cottage! . . . Alas! my dear sister how soon must this happiness expire, yet these are moments worth ages. . . .

Oh my dear, dear sister with what transport shall I again meet you, with what rapture shall I again wear out the day in your sight. I assure you so eager is my desire to see you that all obstacles vanish. I see you in a moment running or flying to my arms.'

That Dorothy's love for William was returned is very evident from the above quotation.

The years 1793-1795 were upsetting ones for Wordsworth. He had gone to France fired with ideas on liberty and equality for man. When England prepared for war against France in 1793, he was filled with sorrow that his country would do anything to hinder so wonderful a cause. Soon, however, the Revolution became such a cruel, bloody affair that Wordsworth suffered the greatest disappointment of his life. As a result,

29Ibid., p. 95.  30Ibid., pp. 98-99
he turned to the philosophy of Godwin, and tried to "determine the origin, impulses, motives, and obligations which caused such actions" as those demonstrated in France. He lost his communion with nature and simple man, and sank low in despair. Still undecided as to what line of work to follow, he wandered with Robert Jones in Wales and with Dorothy in the lake country. Early in 1795 Raisley Calvert, a friend whom William had nursed for several months in 1794-1795, died, leaving Wordsworth a small legacy. With this legacy William and Dorothy were able to realize their life-long dream of a life together in a home of their own. In the summer of 1795 they settled at Racedown Lodge, Dorsetshire. There, in daily communion with Dorothy and with nature, he was restored to his former self. All of Wordsworth's biographers agree that Dorothy was the most powerful influence in this restoration. Walter Raleigh thinks that, through the gentle ministrations of Dorothy and the memory of his own boyish delight in nature, he was brought again to see the good in familiar things about him, and was made a poet. Torrey maintains, however, that Wordsworth was not "made a poet," but was born a poet and that Dorothy helped to bring him back to nature and to poetry.//

Dorothy made a home for William and ministered to his


physical as well as to his intellectual and spiritual comfort. Lee points out that while Wordsworth roamed restlessly about the world, he was "drawn in by every eddy and obeyed the influence of every wind," but through the steadying influence of Dorothy and a peaceful domestic life, he was restored to himself.  

Wordsworth himself, in the eleventh book of The Prelude, gives due credit to his sister for leading him back to poetry. She could see that, underneath the effect of the French Revolution and the philosophy of Godwin, William was not changed, but was still a poet. Through her sympathy and understanding, her companionship and admonitions she helped restore his faith in love, nature, and humanity.  

It was during these years, also, that Wordsworth turned from nature alone and began to consider man. The question has been asked: "Did Wordsworth, boy and youth, neglect Man for Nature because he had never awaked to curiosity about Man?" The question also might be asked: How much of this change from the love of Nature alone to include the love of Man can be attributed to the influence of Dorothy? Dorothy loved people. She could converse with any and all kinds of people. She was, in the travels in Scotland and on the

33 Edmund Lee, Dorothy Wordsworth; The Story of a Sister's Love, p. 18.


35 Robertson, op. cit., p. 144.
Continental, who found things to say to almost everyone they met, whether it was a stranger on the road or people at the inns where they stopped. Wordsworth, however, tells in the seventh book of *The Prelude* of his visit to London, of "The comers and the goers face to face, Face after face;" of his observation of these faces and the joys and sorrows mirrored there:

> How oft, amid those overflowing streets,  
> Have I gone forward with the crowd, and said  
> Unto myself, "The face of everyone  
> That passes by me is a mystery!*  
> Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed  
> By thoughts of what and whither, when and how,  
> Until the shapes before my eyes became  
> A second-sight procession, such as glides  
> Over still mountains, or appears in dreams.36

So Wordsworth was studying the forces of mankind, as he said, "As parts, but with a feeling of the whole;" but nowhere in the book does he tell of one word spoken to any of these faces. It was as though he were a dumb creature, all eyes and ears and drinking in with those senses all the sights and sounds and impressions of the universe. According to Sneath, Wordsworth was indebted to Dorothy for this change of attitude toward Nature and Man,37 and he quotes from the fourteenth book of *The Prelude* the passages in which Wordsworth says that Dorothy softened down the sternness of his character by teaching him to see beauty in simple, common things. Wordsworth


says it was then that Nature fell back to second place in his affections. 38

Soon after moving to Racedown, William and Dorothy met Coleridge. With this acquaintance the formative period of Wordsworth’s life ended and the first creative period began. 39 In order to be nearer Coleridge, they moved to Alfoxden, near Nether Stowey, Somersetshire. The three friends “with one soul” visited, talked, roamed the surrounding country, wrote and published the Lyrical Ballads, and Dorothy began to record the happiness of each day in her journal. 40 According to Dorothy herself, this first journal was written for the sake of her brother.

The people about Alfoxden soon became suspicious of the Wordsworths and Coleridge, thinking they were traitors to the country, and a government spy was sent to investigate them. The house which they were living in was rented to someone else, and, as they knew it would be impossible to rent another in the neighborhood, they made plans to go to Germany to spend two years in seeing the country and in studying the German language. During their residence in Germany, William composed some of his most beautiful poetry, including the Lucy poems.

On May 13, 1799, William wrote to his brother Richard

38 Poetical Works, The Prelude, XIV, 11. 246-266.
40 MacLean, op. cit., p. 22.
that they had arrived safely in England and were then at Sockburn with Mary Hutchinson. On December 19, 1799, Dorothy and William set out for their new home at Grasmere.

Dorothy's Grasmere journal was begun at Dove Cottage. The journal reveals their manner of plain living, gives an insight into Dorothy's own poetic nature, and discloses *the day and hour, with attendant incidents, of the birth of most of the poems her brother wrote here.*

The entry for May 14, 1800, in the Grasmere journal contains the following, which gives her reasons for writing the journal:

> Wm and John set off into Yorkshire after dinner at 1/2 past 2 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. . . . 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.

Harper, in commenting on Dorothy's journals, says there is nothing sentimental about them, but they contain much of wild joy, sorrow, and disappointment. He thinks that at times it is clear she is making studies of scenes and incidents with the intention of providing material for William, but more

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41 *Early Letters*, p. 223.

42 A. J. George, notes to *Poetical Works*, p. 832.

43 *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, edited by Ernest DeSelincourt, 1, 37, hereafter referred to as *Journals*. 
often, he says, she puts down artlessly what she sees for its own sake. The minute descriptions of the travellers they saw, beggars, pedlers, gypsies, discharged sailors, and other wanderers were written down for her brother's sake.\textsuperscript{44}

The second, which was also the greatest, creative period of Wordsworth, began with his removal to Grasmere. His external life became of less importance, while his intellectual and spiritual life became more enriched.\textsuperscript{45} During their residence at Dove Cottage, which lasted nearly nine years, the poet's best work was done. Dorothy wrote or transcribed his poems, accompanied him on his daily walks, and, when he had worn himself out with composing, she read him into calmness and often into sleep.

The year 1801 was rather a barren one for Wordsworth in comparison with the three preceding years. It is significant that this year was the last stage of his courtship of Mary Hutchinson. Perhaps courtship would have made some poets productive, but not William. He was not a poet of love and romance.

In the March 22, 1802, entry of her Grasmere journal, Dorothy recorded that two letters were received, one from Sara Hutchinson and one from Annette. She wrote that they resolved to see Annette, and that William should go to Mary.

\textsuperscript{44}Harper, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 12-13.

\textsuperscript{45}George, "Biographical Sketch," \textit{Poetical Works}, p. xxxvii.
Two days later a letter came from Mary, and Dorothy wrote in her journal that she made a vow they would not leave Grasmere for Gallow Hill, where the Hutchinsons lived. From this time until William's marriage to Mary, Dorothy was ill, out of spirits, disheartened, and spent much time in bed. On April 7, 1802, William went to see Mary. On April 12 Dorothy received a letter from them. She wrote in her journal:

It was a sharp, windy night. Thomas Wilkinson came with me to Barton, and questioned me like a catechizer all the way. Every question was like the snapping of a little thread about my heart—I was so full of thought of my half-read letter and other things. I was glad when he left me. Then I had time to look at the moon while I was thinking over my thoughts.46

In June, 1802, William, after learning that Lord Lowther was intending to pay the debt he owed the Wordsworths, knew that he could now afford to marry. He seemed more concerned with the poem he composed in anticipation of leaving Grasmere and breaking up his life with Dorothy rather than with his approaching marriage.47

At last, on Monday, October 4, 1802, William was married to Mary Hutchinson. Dorothy, who had been dreading the hour for months, was prostrated. She wrote in her journal:

On Monday, 4th October, 1802, my brother William was married to Mary Hutchinson. I slept a good deal of the night, and rose fresh and 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 upstairs. ... I kept myself as quiet as I could, but when I saw the two men

46 Journals, I, 130.

running up the walk, coming to tell us it was over, I could stand it no longer, and threw myself on the bed, where I lay in stillness, neither hearing or seeing anything till Sara came upstairs to me, and said, "They are coming." This forced me from the bed where I lay, and I moved, I knew not how, straight forward, faster than my strength could carry me, till I met my beloved William, and fell upon his bosom. He and John Hutchinson led me to the house, and there I stayed to welcome my dear Mary.48

In August, 1803, William and Dorothy left Mary and her month-old baby to go on a six-weeks tour of Scotland. After their return home, Dorothy wrote the journal of a tour in Scotland. In 1832 she wrote an appendix to the journal in which she said that in looking back on the tour, she found it was both begun and ended on a Sunday, a fact of which she was sorry. She hoped that their thoughts and feelings were not seldom as pious and serious as if they had attended a place devoted to public worship. She confessed that her sentiments had undergone a great change after 1803 respecting the absolute necessity of keeping the Sabbath by a regular attendance at church.49 William's ideas on religion and attendance at church seemed to undergo the same change.

Perhaps this change of attitude toward religion began with the death of John Wordsworth February 5, 1805. Neither Dorothy nor William seemed ever to recover from this shock. William had believed that Nature was kind to man and that no harm could come to man from Nature, but when his brother was shipwrecked and drowned at sea, the joy which he had felt in

Nature faded away. Whether Dorothy, too, had held this feeling about Nature, or whether her love for her brother was such a deep and lasting one that time and separation could not dim it, she was no longer capable of a certain joyousness which took her outside herself.50

Wordsworth's life after the death of his brother John was uneventful for some time. Having a serene, happy home life, with two devoted women to see to his every want, he could spend much time in composition. In 1805 The Prelude was completed. In 1808, his family having become too large for the cottage at Grasmere, he moved to Allan Bank. The estrangement with Coleridge occurred about this time. Critics agree that this estrangement and the close of the great creative period in the life of each poet were coincident. Wordsworth was now middle-aged, a husband, a father, a property-owner. His years of obscurity were past, and his writings were beginning to have some influence.51

In a letter of May 1, 1809, to Thomas DeQuincey, Dorothy states that her brother had begun to correct and add to "The White Doe of Hylstone," and that he had made up his mind to publish this poem and also the poems "Peter Bell" and "The Waggoner." Wordsworth was very reluctant to publish his works. Even Dorothy and Mary's encouragement could not overcome his reluctance. The hostile criticism of Jeffrey and other reviewers had affected Wordsworth so deeply that he did

50 Harper, op. cit., II, 84. 51 Ibid., II, 129.
not wish to subject his poems to further criticism. Partly because of this harsh criticism, he drew inspiration less from Nature than he had been accustomed and more from history. Henceforth he found little poetic material in the episodes of his own everyday life and the lives of the simple folk around him. The six or seven years between the completion of "The White Doe of Rylstone" in 1807 and the writing of "Laodamia," "Dion," and "Yarrow Visited," in 1814 are relatively barren. According to Harper, however, more significant than their infertility is the character of their lean product.52

During these six or seven barren years a few significant things happened to the poet and his family. In 1811 they moved to the parsonage at Grasmere. In May, 1812, Wordsworth's daughter Catherine died; on December 1, 1812, his son Thomas died. The family was so distressed over the loss of the children that they wished to leave the parsonage and the sad memories connected with it. In 1813 they moved to Rydal Mount, which was their final home. At this time Wordsworth was given the office of distributor of stamps in the county of Westmoreland.

On April 24, 1814, Dorothy, being at that time away from home, wrote to Catherine Clarkson that she wished then above all other times to be at home, for William was actually printing nine books of "The Excursion." A few months later, however,

52Ibid., II, 142.
she was very downcast over the slow sale of her brother's poems. She was sure they would never sell during his lifetime, but she had all confidence in his powers and intentions, and she knew that his writings would live, would comfort the afflicted and animate the happy to purer happiness long after he and his family were gone and forgotten. 53

Ever since William had made the tour of the Alps in 1790, Dorothy had longed to visit the spots which had stirred him so much. In 1820 her long-cherished desire was fulfilled. She, with her brother and his wife, the newly-married Thomas Monkhouse, his bride, and his sister-in-law, set forth on July 10, 1820, on a four-months tour of the Continent. Dorothy kept complete notes on the travels. These notes she later transcribed in her journal.

The tour left William in good spirits. Still, he could not find inspiration to go on with "The Recluse." He was interested in three great public questions during the years 1821-1822: Parliamentary Reform, Catholic Emancipation, and the Liberty of the Press. These interests colored all the poetry he wrote then, and kept him from working on "The Recluse." He had become so conservative in his thinking that his writings had lost the fresh enthusiasm which his earlier work contained. Dorothy's writings seem to have suffered somewhat from the same cause. Her way of thinking and

53 The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth; the Middle Years, arranged and edited by Ernest deSelincourt, II, 678, hereafter referred to as Letters: Middle Years.
believing followed that of her brother so closely that it is difficult to separate them. She retained, however, a more hopeful and cheerful outlook on life than her brother did.

In February, 1826, Dorothy went to visit Joanna Hutchinson at Brinsop Court. William promised to join her in May at Robert Jones's parsonage in the Vale of Clwyd, and together they were to ascend Snowden, for Dorothy wished to relive with her brother one more of his great poetic experiences. William, however, became engrossed in politics, and did not join Dorothy. It was November before she returned home, making this the longest period they had been separated since they had gone to Racedown to live.54

In 1828 Dorothy went to the Isle of Man to visit Joanna and Henry Hutchinson. The last of her journals was written during this visit. Her power to seize essentials is more apparent than ever. No moody temper, no preoccupation rose to distort her view. The same happy spirit was in her. Harper says, "... the reader feels that she was as well fitted as ever to walk beside a musing master of words and show him what to describe."55

Wordsworth and Coleridge had become reconciled to the extent that in June, 1828, they and Wordsworth's daughter, Dora, left England for a tour of the Rhine Valley, Holland, and Flanders. It is noticeable that Dora Wordsworth had taken a

54DeSelincourt, op. cit., p. 370.
place alongside her aunt in her father's heart. The tour failed to rouse the hearts of the poets to sing. The following November Wordsworth wrote to Edward Quillinan that he had not written a verse during the past nine months, and concluded with these melancholy words: "My vein I fear is run out." In a short time, however, he took new inspiration and produced 730 verses within a month.

Wordsworth's oldest son, John, was now a minister in Leicestershire. In November, 1828, Dorothy went to keep house for John, remained there during the winter, and in April, 1829, became seriously ill. After her recovery, William wrote to Crabb Robinson:

What a shock it was to our poor hearts. Were she to depart, the Phasis of my Moon would be robbed of light to a degree that I have not courage to think of.

From this time on Wordsworth felt a growing anxiety about his sister.

By 1830 Dorothy had recovered enough that William was again her chief concern. She and Mary, still with hopes that he would finish "The Recluse," tried to encourage him to work on it, telling him that he should not leave the work undone, and that, since man's life was short at the most, he had no time now to waste. William himself knew this, and resolved

56 The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth; the Later Years, arranged and edited by Ernest DeSelincourt, I, 319, hereafter referred to as Letters: Later Years.

to work at the poem, but he could not keep his resolutions. The light, having burned out within him, could not be rekindled.

As the months went by, Dorothy's condition became worse. She remained cheerful and her only cares were public affairs and the fact that she required so much attention. She read a great deal, especially on religious subjects.

A letter of William's at this time is important for the tribute he pays to Dorothy and to Coleridge.

He and my beloved sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted, and they are now proceeding, as it were, pari passu, along the path of sickness, I will not say towards the grave, but I trust towards a blessed immortality.

Wordsworth's fears were well founded, for the next few years were fatal ones. One by one the friends of the family passed away. Scott died in 1832, Lamb in 1834, Coleridge on July 25, 1834, and Sara Hutchinson on June 23, 1835. In this same year the Wordsworth family believed that Dorothy's days were fast drawing to a close. Perhaps it would have been better if her days had ended, for soon after the death of Sara, her mind became weak and remained so, with only scattered moments of her old-time brightness, until her death in 1855.

During 1835 there was one pitifully short note from Dorothy's pen--a note to Jane Marshall, which must have been

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58 Letters: Later Years, I, 443-444.
59 Letters: Later Years, II, 616. 60 Ibid., pp. 625-626.
written on the insistence of other members of her family. In 1836 there was another short note written to Jane, thanking her for a turkey, and again it seemed that the family had brought pressure on her to write. During 1837 her faculties seemed to be stronger, for at least two letters came from her hand. In one of these she said that she had a hard task to write at all among the many thoughts which pressed upon her, that she had had a long, long struggle, but through God's mercy there she sat with a clear head and a thankful heart. 61

In October of the same year she wrote to Edward Ferguson:

A madman might as well attempt to relate the history of his own doings, and those of his fellows in confinement, as I to tell you one hundredth part of what I have felt, suffered, and done. 62

A letter written to her niece in the spring of 1838 has a few lines reminiscent of the Grasmere journal:

They say I must write a letter--and what shall it be? News--news I must seek for news. My own thoughts are a wilderness--'not pierceable by power of any star'--News then is my resting-place . . . My Friend Mrs. Rawson has ended her ninety and two years pilgrimage--and I have fought and fretted and striven--and am here beside the fire. The Doves behind me at the small window--the laburnum with its naked seed-pods shivers before my window and the pine-trees rock from their base.--More I cannot write so farewell! 63

In July, 1842, Wordsworth resigned the office of stamp distributor, which he had held for nearly thirty years. In March, 1843, after Southey's death, he was offered the Laureateship. Fearing he would have to write annual and birthday

odes, however, he declined, but after being assured that this could not be expected of him, he accepted.

Of his children, Wordsworth had always been partial to his daughter, Dora. As she became older, she grew more and more into his heart. She was a fair, sprightly creature, perhaps with some of the vivaciousness and other characteristics of her aunt. When Dorothy became unable to participate in William’s daily life and to be a companion to him, Dora took her place and filled that need in Wordsworth’s life. Wordsworth objected so strongly to Dora’s marriage to Edward Quillinan that the wedding was postponed a number of years. Her health had been delicate for sometime, and in 1847, only a few years after her marriage, she died. All the joy of life left William and he never again could raise his voice in song.64 At this time Isabella Fenwick wrote to Henry Crabb Robinson:

... his poor Sister now is his chief employment—attending on her both indoors and out of doors—in these sad offices he seems to find relief from a heavy burs-

On January 15, 1848, Henry Crabb Robinson wrote to Isabella Fenwick:

Poor Miss W: I thought sunk still deeper in insen-
sibility—By the bye, Mrs. W: says that almost the only enjoyment Mr. W: seems to feel is in his attendance on her—and that her death would be to him a sad calamity!!!66

In writing of William’s care for and influence on Dorothy

64Lee, op. cit., p. 213.

in her last years when her mind had given way, DeSelincourt says:

The secret of his spell over her lay deeper than that, deeper even than the love that bound them together; it had its roots in an affinity of mind and temper that had united them instinctively in childhood, and had been strengthened by years of intimate companionship. Like William in the intensity of her emotions, she had always been like him too in her power of drawing inspiration from 'hiding places ten years deep,' in the habit, consciously and passionately cultivated, of flooding the present with a light that shone from the remotest past ... Hence for William her mind was still the mansion, though ruined, of all lovely forms, her memory the dwelling place of all sweet sounds and harmonies ... The life thus shared was no less necessary to William than to Dorothy. And when, with the death of his passionately loved daughter, the last shattering blow fell upon him, the broken hearted old man found his only consolation in unremitting attendance upon his sister.67

On March 12, 1850, Wordsworth took a cold, which developed into an inflammation of the pleura and the bronchial tubes. The son-in-law, Edward Quillinan, wrote to Henry Crabb Robinson of Wordsworth's illness and how it was affecting the family:

Miss Wordsworth too is as much herself as she ever was in her life, and has an almost absolute command of her own will! does not make noises; is not all self; thinks of the feelings of others (Mrs. W's for example), is tenderly anxious about her brother; and, in short, but for age and bodily infirmity, is almost the Miss Wordsworth we know in past days. Whether this will last, or be the sign that she will not long survive her brother, is beyond us.68

At noon, April 23, 1850, William Wordsworth died. Dorothy and Mary continued to live at Rydal Mount. At

67DeSelincourt, op. cit., p. 398.
68Robinson, op. cit., II, 725.
last, on January 25, 1855, Dorothy's life was ended.

... Dorothy ends an exquisite life in painful exhaustion of all the senses. We know not how much of that exhaustion is to be laid to the charge of Nature, with its innumerable calls on the fine passions of such a being, and how much is to be laid to the charge of Wordsworth who used freely, while he loved as freely, the dower of divination which gave this woman— one of England's darlings—her station in our literature, Dorothy was a poet. In a measure, William, her brother, is her poetry.69

Much as in the ending of a novel in which the author works out everything to benefit the principal characters, Dorothy lost her sensibilities so that she never fully realized the death of her brother. He it was who went first. He was spared the sorrow of his sister's or his wife's death; then Dorothy must go, leaving Mary to the last— Mary, who was the one who could bear it all.70 She remained serene and strong until the end— January 17, 1859. The Wordsworth circle had vanished.

69 Robertson, op. cit., p. 37.
70 Robinson, op. cit., II, 829.
CHAPTER II

EVIDENCE OF INFLUENCE ON THE EARLY

POEMS (1787-1804)

Most of Wordsworth’s greatest poetry was written before 1807. It is significant that the best of these poems dealt with intimacies of his daily life, especially those happenings with which Dorothy had some connection. Her influence was effected in three ways: first, she lent a sympathetic, understanding ear and mind to his writings, a fact which caused William to write some of his poems, such as "An Evening Walk," especially for her; second, the association of Dorothy and William during their early childhood and young manhood and womanhood produced a great many experiences which William used as subjects for his poems; third, her observation of nature and of people was so keen and her ability to describe these observations was so exact that William often used her descriptions, even her very phrases, in his poems.

William’s first poem of consequence, "An Evening Walk," was written during the first two college vacations in the years 1787 and 1789, but was not published until 1793. In the note prefacing the poem he states that the young lady to whom he addressed the poem was his sister. In the first line of the poem he speaks of her as "my dearest Friend."

"Descriptive Sketches," William’s second poem of
importance, was also published in 1793. Following this publication, Dorothy sent Jane Pollard a letter which contained criticisms of both poems. She was able not only to see beauty in the poetry but also to see faults, and she did not hesitate to name the faults. She said that the scenes which William described had been viewed with a poet's eye and were portrayed with a poet's pencil, and that the poems contained many passages of exquisite beauty. Obscurity was the chief fault which she charged against the poems. Another fault was too frequent use of some particular expressions and uncommon words. She was sure that if he had let a friend read the manuscripts before their publication, a great many of the errors and faults could have been corrected. This kind of criticism Dorothy seemed to indulge in less and less as time went by.

William's first poem written after he and Dorothy were reunited and went to Racedown to live in 1795 was "Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree." William, in his notes to the poem, says that it was composed in part while he was in school at Hawkshead, but it must have been finished in 1795. The joy of being in a home of his own in daily association with Dorothy, the relief from his depression suffered because of the failure of the Revolution in France, his return to nature, and his "emotion recollected in tranquillity" brought forth this poem, which contains some of the elements of his poetry which were his greatest gift to English literature. The poem

\[1\text{Early Letters, p. 85.}\]
is a reference to his life at Hawkshead and connects that happy time with the new life he was beginning.

In the latter part of 1795 and during 1796 Wordsworth worked on a play which he called "The Borderers." On November 20, 1797, Dorothy wrote to Mary Hutchinson that William had completed the play and it had been sent to the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre. Neither she nor William had the faintest expectation that it would be accepted.\(^2\) William, in his notes to the play, was apologetic that he had offered it for performance, saying that he had no hope nor even a wish that it be accepted; therefore he felt no disappointment when the play was returned to him as being unsuitable for the stage, for in this judgment he entirely concurred.\(^3\)

The acquaintance of Coleridge had been made only a short while before "The Borderers" was finished. Dorothy and William had moved to Alfoxden in order to be nearer Coleridge. Soon afterwards, the idea of the Lyrical Ballads was born. In the letter referred to above, Dorothy, in a few short, terse sentences, told Mary about the beginning of the Lyrical Ballads. At half past four o'clock on a dark and cloudy evening, they had set out on a tour. They went eight miles, William and Coleridge employing themselves in laying the plan

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 171.

\(^3\) Poetical Works, notes to "The Borderers," p. 33.
of a ballad to be published with some pieces of William's. It was in this way that the *Lyrical Ballads* was born.

Early in the journal which Dorothy began at Alfoxden is an entry which is important because of William's poem "A Night-piece." On January 25, 1798, while walking to Poole's after tea, they observed the sky spread over with a continuous cloud through which the moon was dimly visible. Suddenly, the clouds parting, the moon sailed along in a blue-black vault, trailing multitudes of stars. Dorothy's phrases used to describe the scene and William's lines in the poem are very similar.

**William's lines:**

---The sky is overcast  
With a continuous cloud of texture close,  
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon.

**Dorothy's lines:**

The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon . . .

**William's lines:**

Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,  
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light  
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,  
Chequering the ground . . .

**Dorothy's lines:**

. . . which, though her dim shape was seen, did not throw forth so strong a light as to chequer the earth with shadows.

**William's lines:**

At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam  
. . . . . . . . . . . . the clouds are split  
Asunder . . .
Dorothy's lines:

At once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder ... 

William's lines:

There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright ... 

Dorothy's lines:

... and left her in the centre of a black-blue vault.
She sailed along, followed by multitudes of stars, small,
and bright, and sharp.  

In Dorothy's entry for January 31, also, is this description: "When we left home the moon immensely large, the sky scattered over with clouds. These soon closed in, contracting the dimensions of the moon without concealing her."  

These lines are very similar to those quoted above from William's poem:

Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle ... 

William, however, in his notes to the poem, says that it was composed extemporaneously on the road between Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, and that he distinctly remembered the very moment when he looked up and was struck by the sight of the moon. If this is true, Dorothy's entry in her journal for January 31 could have had little influence on the poem. Since William, in these notes, makes no mention of Dorothy and gives no credit to her, he leaves the impression that he was alone on the walk, which is not true, for Dorothy was there. It is
to be remembered that William wrote the notes many years after the poem was written.

Under date of March 19, 1798, Dorothy records that she, William, and Basil Montagu, the small son of a friend, walked to the hill-tops. It was a very cold, bleak day. On their return, they were met by a severe hailstorm. William wrote his poem "The Thorn." According to William's notes, the poem, written at Alfoxden, arose from his observation on the ridge of Quantock Hill, a thorn which he had often passed in calm, bright weather but which he had never noticed until that stormy day. It was brought so forcibly to his notice that he wished to make it permanently an impressive object. The poem was begun accordingly and proceeded with great rapidity.7

The poem "Lines Written in Early Spring" is one of the first of Wordsworth's most beautiful poems. In it is revealed his conception of Nature as "having its own peculiar life, an infinite activity of giving and receiving love and joy in itself." When some of the passages in Dorothy's journals are read, it is easy for one to believe that she had the same conception of Nature. The following entries are examples:

After the wet dark days, the country seems more

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6Ibid., p. 13.
7Poetical Works, notes to "The Thorn," pp. 74-75.
8A. J. George, notes to Poetical Works, p. 829.
populous. It peoples itself in the sunbeams. The garden, mimic of spring, is gay with flowers. The purple-starred hepatica spreads itself in the sun.

The sea very black, and making a loud noise as we came through the wood, loud as if disturbed, and the wind was silent.

The still trees only gently bowed their heads, as if listening to the wind.

In the preface to "Lines Written in Early Spring" William states that the poem was composed while he was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the Comb and through the grounds of Alfoxden. The point where the brook made a waterfall was a favorite spot of William's. A tree had fallen across the pool below the waterfall, and from the trunk of the tree hung long streamers of ivy that waved gently in the breeze, which might, "poetically speaking, be called the breath of the waterfall." The motion of the ivy varied with the amount and flow of the water in the brook.

Dorothy has an entry in her journal for February 10, 1798, which seems to have some connection with these notes of William's. If her lines have any relation to the notes of the poet, evidently they have some relation to the poem itself.

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.

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12 *Poetical Works*, notes to "Lines Written in Early Spring," p. 81.
13 *Journals*, I, 8.
She does not say, as William does in his poem, that the adder's-tongue and the ferns enjoy the air they breath. She merely paints a word-picture of the spot, yet her words have a fleeting, intangible quality that connects them with the idea expressed in William's poem.

"To My Sister" is William's admonition to Dorothy to leave her work and her books behind and to come outside where she might enjoy Nature on that fine day early in March. This communion with Nature, he tells her, will be of greater value to them than "years of toiling reason." According to the poem, William had finished his morning meal and had gone outside. The day was so beautiful and he was suddenly so filled with the love of Nature and the love of Man that he sent little Basil Montagu for Dorothy so that she might enjoy it also.

William's next poem, "A Whirl-blast from behind the Hill," was occasioned by a sudden hail-shower which came on during a walk he and Dorothy took. Dorothy wrote on March 18 about the incident. The Coleridges had been to visit the Wordsworths. When they were going home, Dorothy and William accompanied them a part of the way, and on their return to Dove Cottage, the following happened:

... sheltered under the hollies, during a hail-shower. The withered leaves danced with the hailstones. William wrote a description of the storm.14

William's poem goes more into detail about the hail-shower.

He requires a whole poem to say the leaves danced with the hailstones; Dorothy requires only one sentence.

But see! where'er the hailstones drop The withered leaves all skip and hop; . . . . . . . . . . . . . The leaves in myriads jump and spring, As if with pipes and music rare Some Robin Good-fellow were there, And all those leaves, in festive glee, Were dancing to the minstrelsy.

Although Dorothy says in the quotation above that William wrote the poem, which leads one to believe that the poem was already written when she made her entry, William, in his notes, says the poem was written in the spring of 1799. There is a confusion of dates, unless Dorothy added her statement at some later time after writing the original entry.

In 1798, after the lease on Alfoxden had expired and the Wordsworths and Coleridge had made arrangements to go to Germany, William and Dorothy made a tour along the Wye River. Out of this ramble grew "Lines Composed A Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour." According to William, he began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as he was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with his sister.15 This poem, one of Wordsworth's greatest, is addressed indirectly to Dorothy. He names her as his dearest friend, and says, "May I behold in thee what

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15 Poetical Works, notes to "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," p. 91.
I was once, My dear, dear Sister!* The ending of the poem is
touched with passionate pleading:

If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwarried in that service; rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

Wordsworth's interpretation in this poem of Dorothy's atti-
tude toward Nature is inconsistent with the interpretation
he has given in other poems. He likens her to himself as
he was in his youth when the sounding cataract haunted him
like a passion and he bounded, like a roe, over the moun-
tains, and as he was five years before when he paid his
first visit to the Wye. In most of the other poems about
Dorothy he has shown her as being a "quiet, confident wor-
shipper at the heart of Nature in full faith and health,
with no need even of that deeper human experience which he
himself had achieved."16 Gray maintains that this wavering
interpretation of Dorothy's attitude helps little in es-
ablishing William's development.

In her entry for April 20, 1798, Dorothy wrote,*Wil-
liam all the morning engaged in wearisome composition. . . .

16 Charles Harold Gray, "Wordsworth's First Visit to
Tintern Abbey," Modern Language Association Publication, XL
(March, 1934), 132.
Peter Bell begun . . . . 17 Earlier in the year Dorothy had written in her journal of a walk she and William took which seems to have some connection with "Peter Bell." They had started out two hours before dinner, but the wind was so strong and cold they were obliged to seek shelter in the woods.

The sun shone clear, but all at once a heavy blackness hung over the sea. The trees almost roared, and the ground seemed in motion with the multitudes of dancing leaves . . . Still the asses pastured in quietness under the hollies, undisturbed by these forerunners of the storm. 18

William has a line in the prologue to *Peter Bell,* 19 which may have been suggested by Dorothy's entry in the journal:

The woods, my Friends, are round you roaring, Rocking and roaring like a sea.

DeSelincourt, in his biography of Dorothy, says that the asses which she notes "pasturing in quietness under the hollies" had their part in the inspiration of "Peter Bell." 19 According to William, the poem was founded on an incident about which he read in a newspaper, of an ass being found standing in a wretched posture with its head hanging over the canal. He also said that he took great delight in noticing the habits, tricks, and physiognomy of asses which he found in the woods of Alfoxden. 20

17 *Journals, I, 16.*  
18 *Ibid., p. 6.*  
19 *DeSelincourt, op. cit., p. 81.*  
20 *Poetical Works, notes to "Peter Bell," p. 96.*
About the middle of September, 1798, Dorothy, William, and Coleridge left England for Germany. Dorothy recorded the incidents of their life there in her "Journal of Visit to Hamburgh and of Journey from Hamburgh to Goslar."

During his sojourn in Germany, Wordsworth produced a number of poems, many of them concerning recollections of his days at Hawkshead, but five of them were the beautiful love poems about Lucy. Although no one knows where Wordsworth found the original Lucy, some critics believe there was no such person, but that she was a creation of Wordsworth's imagination inspired by his association with Dorothy. DeSelincourt says that much of the deep feeling of these little poems sprang from William's passionate devotion to Dorothy at that time, and that Dorothy could not fail to recognize the fact. 21 Catherine MacLean is even more definite in saying that these poems were all based on moods, emotions, and states of feeling which were part of the poet's life with his sister and which could not have been part of his life with any other woman. 22

In December, 1798, or January, 1799, William and Dorothy wrote to Coleridge, who had gone to Ratzeburg. Dorothy copied some of the poems which William had been writing and sent them along with the letter. Among these were some of the Lucy

21 DeSelincourt, op. cit., p. 102.
22 MacLean, op. cit., p. 56.
poems and portions of The Prelude. She also sent the poem
"Nutting," which has in the closing lines a reference to
her. 23

Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades
In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

Another poem of this period is "Lucy Gray." In his notes
to the poem, William recounts that it was founded on a cir-
cumstance told him by his sister of a little girl who, not
far from Halifax in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snowstorm.
William, however, endeavored to spiritualize the character of
Lucy and to give to the entire poem an imaginative quality
which Dorothy's account of the incident did not have.

The last of the poems written in Germany was given this
title: "Written in Germany on One of the Coldest Days of
the Century." Wordsworth says in his notes to the poem that
it was a bitter winter when he composed these verses at the
side of his sister in their lodgings at a draper's house in
Goslar. He describes the actions of a fly which the heat of
the stove has caused to come out from its winter retreat. The
poor creature is half frozen by the frost and cold of the room.
In sympathy William says:

No brother, no mate has he near him—while I
Can draw warmth from the cheek of my Love;
As blest and as glad, in this desolate gloom,
As if green summer grass were the floor of my room,
And woodbines were hanging above.

"My Love* quoted in the line above refers to Dorothy.

Wordsworth's statement that her presence can make the cold and gloom of the room as pleasant as a grove in summer is a beautiful tribute to her.

In February, 1799, William and Dorothy started on their return to England. By May they were at Stockburn, where they spent most of the remainder of the year with the Hutchinsons. The following September William, his brother John, and Coleridge made a tour of the Lake district, during which they found and rented Dove Cottage. On December 19, 1799, William and Dorothy set out on a three-day journey to their new home. The beauty of snow and ice, their turning aside to see the frozen waterfalls and the ever-changing cloud and shadow brought forth the poem "Bleak Season Was It, Turbulent and Wild," in which he describes their journey. Throughout the poem, in referring to himself and Dorothy, he uses the personal pronoun "we." This poem later was incorporated in "The Recluse," of which the first book was given the title "Home at Grasmere.*

The next poem to be considered, "On Nature's Invitation Do I Come," also relates to the Wordsworths' settlement at Grasmere, and it also later became a part of "The Recluse." In this fragment of the long poem, William pours out his gratitude and love for Dorothy. He has realized how great a help she is to him, and he gives thanks to God for her presence.

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24 A. J. George, notes to Poetical Works, p. 832.
Entrenched, say rather peacefully empowered,
Under yon orchard, in yon humble cot,
A younger Orphan of a home extinct,
The only Daughter of my Parents dwells.

... Mine eyes did ne'er
Fix on a lovely object, nor my mind
Take pleasure in the midst of happy thoughts,
But either She whom now I have, who now
Divides with me this loved abode, was there
Or not far off. Where'er my footsteps turned,
Her voice was like a hidden Bird that sang.
The thought of her was like a flash of light,
Or an unseen companionship, a breath
Of fragrance independent of the Wind.25

William and Dorothy soon learned to love the Vale of
Grasmere, and William was aware that their love was returned.
He says that the temper of their minds was tested by two
months of severe winter, but they remained cheerful and
happy and were not overcome by the gloom. He describes the
two milk-white swans which he had seen each day on the lake
during the severe winter. He compares them to Dorothy and
himself: they were a solitary pair just as he and Dorothy
were; they had the whole world to choose from, but they chose
this lonely valley just as he and Dorothy had done; they were
inseparable just as he and Dorothy were, and lived a quiet
life. Since he had not seen the swans for several days, he
was fearful that something had happened to them, and he says:

Shall we behold them consecrated friends,
Faithful companions, yet another year
Surviving, they for us, and we for them,
And neither pair be broken?26

26 Ibid., ll. 261-264.
When he has learned more about the valley and the people there, he realizes that he and Dorothy are not so solitary as he at first believed. He learns that the people at Grasmere have a reverence for Nature the same as he and his sister do; therefore, they are not alone and desolate as he thought. He speaks of his lovely home, of his happiness there, of his brother John, who is with them, of Coleridge, and of others who will come. He says, however, that life is not meant to be just a matter of delight and enjoyment, but there must be a duty to perform. William has realized his duty:

... but yet to me I feel
That an internal brightness is vouchsafed
That must not die, that must not pass away.
Why does this inward lustre fondly seek
And gladly blend with outward fellowship?
Why do they shine around me whom I love?
Why do they teach me, whom I thus revere?

Possessions have I that are solely mine,
Something within which yet is shared by none,
Not even the nearest to me and most dear. 27

During the next two years Dorothy makes frequent notations in her journal that William is composing and she often mentions that she has been copying poems. For instance, in her entry for July 27, 1800, she says that in the afternoon she wrote out "Ruth," a poem which William had written the preceding winter while they were in Germany. The following day William went into the wood and altered his poems. She spent the morning of July 31 in copying poems. On August 1

27Ibid., II. 674-680, 686-688.
she copied "The Brothers" while Coleridge and William went down to the lake. When they returned, they all went to Mary Point, where they sat in the breeze and the shade, and read William's poems. They altered "The Whirlblast." It is impossible to determine how much Dorothy helped in the alteration, but it is significant that she considered she had a part in revising the poems.

Dorothy's entry for October 11, 1800, is especially interesting.

A fine October morning. . . . William composing. . . . After dinner we walked up Greenhead Gill in search of a sheepfold. . . . The colours of the mountains soft and rich, with orange fern; the cattle pasturing upon the hill-tops; kites sailing in the sky above our heads; sheep bleating and in lines and chains and patterns scattered over the mountains. . . . The sheepfold is falling away. It is built nearly in the form of a heart unequally divided.

William's poem "Michael" was written about this sheepfold. His description of the spot is closely related to Dorothy's.

The mountains have all opened out themselves, And made a hidden valley of their own. No habitation can be seen; but they Who journey thither find themselves alone With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites That overhead are sailing in the sky.

This poem must have given William a great deal of trouble, for Dorothy has a number of notations concerning it during the following weeks. On October 15 she says that he again composed on "The Sheepfold," and on October 21 he was

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28 Journals, I, 53.  
29 Ibid., pp. 65-66.
unsuccessful in the morning with "The Sheepfold." For the next four days he was unsuccessful, but on October 26 inspiration came to him and Dorothy says he "composed a good deal in the morning."\(^{30}\) The next day, however, he could not compose much and fatigued himself with revising. On November 11 he was again at "The Sheepfold." William's state of health and his ability to compose were closely related. When his composition went well, as it did on November 26, he felt very well, but when he labored unsuccessfully, as he did on December 6, he was often tired and sick. At last, on December 9, the poem was finished. Although Dorothy merely states that the poem was done, it must have been an occasion of importance, as the completion of all of William's poems seemed to be.

In the latter part of 1800 Wordsworth wrote a series of poems which he called "Poems on the Naming of Places." During this year a number of close friends had come to visit with him and Dorothy. Together with the friends they had toured the surrounding country. Many places had become significant to William because of some incident or experience which had occurred when he was in the company of these friends at a particular place. He says in the note to his poems that names had been given to places by the author and some of his friends, and these poems were written in consequence. The first of the poems is about the brook which runs through

\(^{30}\) Journals, I, 69.
Easedale. On the bank of the brook was a favorite spot of William's, especially when he was in a mood for composition. He called it Emma's Dale. Emma is a name which he sometimes gave to Dorothy.

I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said, "Our thoughts at least are ours; and this wild nook, My Emma, I will dedicate to thee."
---Soon did the spot become my other home, My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
When they have call to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of Emma's Dell. 31

The third poem of the series is about the hill Stone-Arthur. This poem has a loving allusion to Dorothy.

And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
With such communion, that no place on earth
Can ever be a solitude to me,
Rath to this lonely Summit given my Name. 32

On October 10 Dorothy wrote in her journal that William sat up later than she, writing "Point Rash-Judgment," which is the fourth poem of this series. William, in his notes to the poem, says that the friends spoken of were Coleridge and Dorothy, and the "facts occurred strictly as recorded." The three friends, taking a walk one September day, saw a peasant, the sight of whose face gave them such a shock that they named the spot Point Rash-Judgment. On the 13th of October Dorothy copied the "Poems on the Naming of Places."

Of all the poems in which William refers to Dorothy, the

32 Ibid., III, 249.
one entitled "'Tis Said That Some Have Died for Love" has the most subtle feeling. William tells in the poem about a man who has loved a pretty girl. The girl, however, dies, and the man, in his grief, is worried by things which formerly gave him pleasure. The song of birds frets him; the sound of the brook haunts him; the flowers nodding in the breeze give him pain. Wordsworth ends the poem in this way:

Ah gentle Love! if ever thought was thine To store up kindred hours for me, thy face Turn from me, gentle Love! nor let me walk Within the sound of Emma's voice, nor know Such happiness as I have known today.

As has already been said, the year 1801 was barren of poetic production. The only poem written at this time which has any connection with Dorothy is "The Sparrow's Nest," in which Wordsworth goes back to his early childhood and tells of the birds' nests which he and Dorothy found in the privet and rose bushes in their father's garden. In the last verse of this poem are the oft-quoted lines in which William describes Dorothy as "a little Prattler among men," and "The Blessing of my later years." He says also that she gave him eyes and ears to see and hear the finer things of Nature.

Mary Hutchinson spent the latter part of 1801 with the Wordsworths. On January 23, 1802, however, William and Dorothy were again left in seclusion, and William began a new period of composition. Dorothy kept a complete record in her journal of the composition of these poems in 1802. 33

Under date of March 13, Dorothy wrote: "In the evening after tea William wrote Alice Fell—he went to bed tired, with a wakeful mind and a weary body." 34 Almost a month before this entry, however, she had written a full account of the incident on which "Alice Fell" was based. William had been to see Mary Hutchinson and had come back with the story. As usual, Dorothy wrote it out immediately.

Mr. Graham said he wished Wm. had been with him the other day—he was riding in a post-chaise and he heard a strange cry that he could not understand, the sound continued, and he called to the chaise driver to stop. It was a little girl that was crying as if her heart would burst. She had got up behind the chaise, and her cloak had been caught by the wheel, and was jammed in, and it hung there. She was crying after it. Poor thing. Mr. Graham took her into the chaise, and the cloak was released from the wheel, but the child's misery did not cease, for her cloak was torn to rags; it had been a miserable cloak before, but she had no other, and it was the greatest sorrow that could befall her. Her name was Alice Fell. She had no parents, and belonged to the next town. At the next town, Mr. G. left money with some respectable people in the town, to buy her a new cloak. 35

Rhyme is the main difference in William's poem "Alice Fell" and this account of Dorothy's.

Immediately upon finishing "Alice Fell," Wordsworth began the poem called "Beggars," which was based on an account Dorothy had written out nearly two years before of some vagrants she had seen. On May 27, 1800, a very tall woman, wearing a long, brown cloak and a very white cap, and having an exceedingly brown complexion, called at the door to beg. Later in the day, on her way to Ambleside, Dorothy saw the

other members of the woman's family. There were two boys, one about ten years old and the other eight; at play chasing a butterfly. They were barefooted, and, although they were not very ragged, they were wild figures; "the hat of the elder was wreathed round with yellow flowers, the younger whose hat was only a rimless crown, had stuck it round with laurel leaves."\textsuperscript{36} As Dorothy came up, they approached her to beg, but when she would give them nothing, they ran away.

William used Dorothy's description of the woman and the two children almost literally. The conversations as he records them are almost the words Dorothy used. Both William and Dorothy realized this, however, for Dorothy, in her entry for March 13, 1802, tells of the trouble William had in trying to get away from her words. She says that she sat with him at intervals all the morning, taking down his stanzas. After tea she read to him the account she had written two years before, which was an unfortunate thing, for "he could not escape from those very words, and so he could not write the poem. He left it unfinished, and went tired to bed."\textsuperscript{37}

The poem "To a Butterfly," which has been quoted in this thesis in connection with the childhood of William and Dorothy, can definitely be attributed to Dorothy. On Sunday morning, March 14, William, with his breakfast untouched before him, wrote out the little poem. The idea for the poem came to him

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., p. 47. \hfill \textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 123.
when, in discussing the pleasures they always felt at the sight of a butterfly, Dorothy said that she used to chase them a little but she never caught them, for fear she would brush the dust from their wings. These words form the closing lines of the poem. Composition seemed never to be an easy task for William. Even "To a Butterfly" caused him to sleep badly. He tried to alter the poem and tired himself.

The poem "Among All Lovely Things My Love Had Been" Wordsworth, in a letter to Coleridge, attributes to an incident which took place about seven years before between Dorothy and himself. This poem is similar to the Lucy poems in thought and feeling, and Wordsworth even says in the closing lines that he led his Lucy to the spot where he had placed the glowworm. Since William himself said the incident took place between Dorothy and himself, the Lucy of this poem must be Dorothy.

The title "Written in March" seems to be a misleading one for the little poem which Dorothy says was composed on Good Friday, April 16, 1802, as she and William went from Ullswater over Kirkstone Pass. Under this entry in her journal Dorothy gives a description of the beautiful morning after days of rain. Leaving William sitting on the bridge over Goldrill Beck, she went along a path through the woods.

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38 Ibid., p. 123.  
When she returned, William was composing a poem *descriptive of the sights and sounds we saw and heard.*

\[40\]

Dorothy then goes more into detail in her description of the things about them and the details are almost identical with the ones given in William's poem. Dorothy speaks of a flat pasture with forty-two cattle feeding, whereas William says there are forty feeding like one. She has noted, as William has done, the cocks crowing, the birds twittering, the snow in patches at the top of the highest hills, but it seems that William was ahead of her this time, for she says that he finished his poem before they reached the foot of Kirkstone.

Dorothy has this small sentence at the close of her entry under date of April 17, 1802: *"I saw a robin chasing a scarlet butterfly this morning."*

\[41\]

The next day she recorded that William wrote a poem on the robin and the butterfly. She went to Luff's that evening to drink tea. On her return, William met her with the conclusion of "The Redbreast Chasing the Butterfly," which she read to him in bed. Evidently reading the poem together disclosed some defects in it, for she says, "We left out some lines."*

\[42\]

Earlier in the year William had written the poem "To a Butterfly," in which he says that his sister did not like to catch butterflies for fear of brushing the dust from their wings. On April 20 Dorothy wrote that William was writing a conclusion to the poem. The conclusion was also called "To

\[40\] Journals, I, 133.  \[41\] Ibid., p. 134.  \[42\] Ibid., p. 135.
a Butterfly." In this poem William invites the butterfly to their orchard to lodge as in a sanctuary. He says:

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers;

Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

One Wednesday morning, April 28, 1802, William was in the orchard, where he had worked at composing until he was ill and tired. Dorothy went to him, and while she was there, she happened to say that when she was a child, she would not have pulled a strawberry blossom. She left him then to return to her work of copying poems. At dinner William came in with the poem which is now called "Foresight," but which Dorothy called "Children Gathering Flowers." 43 Three months before this time Dorothy had written in her journal:

I found a strawberry blossom in a rock. . . . I uprooted it rashly, and I felt as if I had been committing an outrage, so I planted it again. It will have but a stormy life of it, but let it live if it can. 44

William's poem has a moral: The strawberry blossoms should be spared so berries can be produced. Whether Dorothy was looking at the matter with this practical viewpoint or whether she thought the beauty of the blossom was excuse enough for being is not clear. In the poem William has reversed things so that it is he who admonishes his "sister Anne," another of his

43 Journals, I, 139.
44 Ibid., p. 105.
names for Dorothy, not to pull the strawberry blossom, but
to spare it so there will be berries later on.

On April 30, according to Dorothy, William began to
write the poem of the celandine, which is the common pile-
wort. Neither William nor Dorothy was familiar with this
flower. Dorothy says that on April 15, as they started out
from Eusemere, they saw a "few primroses by the roadside--
woodsorrel flower, the anemone, scentless violets, straw-
berries, and that starry, yellow flower which Mrs. C. calls
pilewot." In the second poem to the celandine, which was
written May 1, William says that the first time he saw the
flower was the preceding February.

Sometimes it seems that Wordsworth will not give credit
where credit is due. His notes to "Resolution and Independ-
ence" record that he met the old leech-gatherer a few hundred
yards from his cottage and that the account of the old man
was taken from his own mouth. Nothing is given in the notes
to indicate that Dorothy was present when the old leech-gath-
erer was seen, that she wrote an account of the meeting, and
that the incident took place nearly two years before the writ-
ing of the poem.

When William and I returned from accompanying Jones,
we met an old man almost double. 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. . . . He was of Scotch parents, but had been
born in the army. . . . His trade was to gather leeches,
but now leeches are 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. . . . He had been hurt in driving a cart, his leg broke, his body driven over, his skull fractured. 46

William's old man is bent double as though some pain or sickness in days long past had drawn him permanently. Perhaps this idea of pain or sickness was inspired by the man's account of his accident and injury. Wordsworth does not give a description of the leech-gatherer's clothes as Dorothy does, but he does mention the "sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes." Dorothy's leech-gatherer was born of Scotch parents; William's speaks in a stately manner "Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use." Both old men found leeches scarce and difficult to find. Dorothy's leech-gatherer found them so difficult to obtain that he had given up hunting for them and had turned to begging for a living. There was nothing resolute or independent about him. 47 William's old man was patient, kind, philosophical, resolute and independent.

On May 29, 1802, Dorothy says that William finished his poem on going for Mary, which is "A Farewell." For some time William, Mary, and Dorothy had been making plans for William and Mary's wedding. The words of this poem are not the happy,


passionate words of a prospective bridegroom. Instead, he seems to feel regret that he must be away from his beloved home for two months. There is tenderness in his words, however, when he says that on his return there will be with him a "gentle maid" who will love all these things just as he and Dorothy have loved them. On June 17 Dorothy came home to find William at work attempting to alter a stanza in the poem. She convinced him that it did not need altering.48

William and Dorothy set out from Grasmere July 9 to go to Gallow Hill and arrived there July 15. They spent only one day with the Hutchinsons before going on to London. Early in the morning of July 31 they mounted the Dover Coach at Charing Cross. Dorothy wrote:

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.49

Wordsworth has not used Dorothy's words so much in the poem he wrote on this occasion as in some of his other poems. Perhaps his thoughts in connection with the scene do not go deeper than Dorothy's, but he has a slightly different conception of the prospect. He speaks of the city wearing, like a garment, the beauty of the morning; he sees ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lying open to the sky,

48 Journals, I, 159. 49 Ibid., pp. 172-173.
"All bright and glittering in the smokeless air." He is struck by the silence and calm of the city.

... the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.50

Dorothy, however, thinking of the city in terms of nature, compares it to a mountain, a lake, or some other object of nature.

At four o'clock on Sunday, August 1, Dorothy wrote in her journal:

We walked by the seashore almost every evening with Annette and Caroline, or Wm. and I alone. ... we had delightful walks after the heat of the day was passed away—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. ... Now came in view, as the evening star sank down, and the colours of the west faded away, the two lights of England, lighted up by Englishmen in our country, to warn vessels off rocks or sands. These we used to see from the pier, when we could see no other distant objects but the clouds, the sky, and the sea itself; All was dark behind. The town of Calais seemed deserted of the light of heaven, but there was always light and life and joy upon the sea. One night, though, I shall never forget ... The sea was gloomy ... Near us the waves roared and broke against the pier ... The more distant sea always black and gloomy. ... Caroline was delighted.51

This beautiful entry has a definite connection with two of the sonnets Wordsworth composed at this time. The first of these poems, "Composed by the Sea-side, near Calais, August, 1802," is about the evening star, which he and Dorothy had

51 Journals, I, 174-175.
seen hovering over England. The first line of the poem, "Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west," is very similar to Dorothy's "the evening star and the glory of the sky;" also, the lines "that dusky spot Beneath thee, that is England" are very like her phrase "the coast of England like a cloud." The second sonnet, "It Is a Beauteous Evening Calm and Free," tells of his walk along the beach with his little daughter, Caroline. He speaks of the broad sun sinking down in tranquillity and the gentleness of heaven brooding over the sea, but the sea itself was awake and, with its eternal motion, made "A sound like thunder--everlastingly." All of these things Dorothy has said in the portion of her journal quoted above.

On August 29 Dorothy and William left France to return to England. William composed a sonnet on their landing in Dover. He expresses his joy at being again in England, having at last fully realized his love for his own country. The last line of the poem contains a reference to Dorothy, in which he names her the "dear Companion at my side."

Dorothy says they both bathed, and sat upon the Dover cliffs, and looked upon France with many a melancholy and tender thought. They could see the shores of France "almost as plain as if it were but an English lake," William's sonnet "Near Dover, September, 1802" seems to have been inspired by these melancholy thoughts.

52Ibid., p. 175.
Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk; for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair.

Immediately after William and Mary's wedding, they departed for Grasmere. As they crossed Hambledon Hill and reached the point overlooking Yorkshire, however, dark had come, but Dorothy says they had not wanted fair prospects before them, for in the western sky they saw "shapes of castles, ruins among groves, a great spreading wood, rocks, and single trees, a minster with its tower unusually distinct, minarets in another quarter, and a round Grecian Temple also; the colours of the sky of a bright grey, and the forms of a sober grey, with a dome."53 The next day, as they were waiting for a change in horses, William composed a sonnet on this sunset and view. His lines are remarkably like Dorothy's.

Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed ... 54

The journal which Dorothy wrote of the tour which she and William and Coleridge made in Scotland the year following William's marriage is called her masterpiece. Unlike her other writings, this journal was not jotted down from day to day but was written after her return home while the events

53 Journals, I, 178-179.
were still fresh in her memory. In many instances in describing a particular spot or recounting some incident of the trip, she has named or quoted the poem which the occasion inspired William to write. For this reason, it is difficult to determine just how much William was indebted to her. A. J. George, however, in the notes to "Thoughts Suggested the Day Following, on the Banks of Nith, near the Poet's Residence" has quoted these words from Wordsworth: "The following is extracted from the journal of my fellow-traveller, to which, as persons acquainted with my poems will know, I have been obliged on other occasions." The extract to which Wordsworth was referring is the account Dorothy gave of their visit to Robert Burns's home and his grave. William, in the Fenwick notes to "At the Grave of Burns," says that the poem suggested on the Banks of Nith, "though felt at the time, was not composed till many years after." It is evident then that, although Dorothy quoted some of William's poems in her journal of the Scottish tour, he also used much of her material from the journal in his poems.

In the poem "At the Grave of Burns" William says that Skiddaw can be seen from the home of Burns, which causes him to realize that he and Robert Burns were neighbors and could have been friends. The thought of what could have been fills

55 DeSelincourt, in the preface to The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, p. vii.
him with regret. According to Dorothy, this thought was discussed between them at the time of their visit.\textsuperscript{56}

Sunday, August 28, Dorothy and William were going towards Loch Lomond when they overtook two girls. Dorothy immediately fell in love with the girls, especially the elder one. On reading Dorothy's vivid description of the girls and their hospitality to her and William as they waited in the ferry house for the return of the boat, it is not difficult to imagine the girls in grey plaids falling to their feet, their sweet Gaelic voices, the grace of their movements, the innocent look of wonder with which they stared at their visitors, their merriment and eagerness to be of service. Dorothy was so impressed that she felt she not only should never forget the girls but also the whole image of that romantic spot would be before her when she thought of them. At the close of her account of the Highland girls, Dorothy mentions that William wrote his poem "To a Highland Girl" not long after their return from Scotland.\textsuperscript{57} In his poem Wordsworth has described the elder girl very much as Dorothy has. He speaks of her graceful figure and beautiful face with its intelligence and innocence, her direct look with no hint of shyness, her courtesy and kindness. He too is certain that he will never forget her but will think of her, not as a person detached from her surroundings, but as a part of the cabin, the lake, the

\textsuperscript{56}Journals, I, 201-202. \textsuperscript{57}Ibid., pp. 279-283.
bay, and the waterfall. In his notes to this poem Wordsworth has written:

This delightful creature and her demeanour are particularly described in my Sister's Journal. . . . She is alluded to in the Poem of "The Three Cottage Girls" among my Continental Memorials. In illustration of this class of poems I have scarcely anything to say beyond what is anticipated in my Sister's faithful and admirable Journal.  

In the early part of September the Wordsworths had reached Dunkeld, where they were undecided which road to take. After some inquiry, they decided to go to Callander in order to see the Narrow Glen. The road led down the glen, which became exceedingly narrow. The hills on both sides were heathy and rocky, the rocks not being single or overhanging or scooped into caverns, but were steep and continuous. There were no trees, no houses, no traces of cultivation, no sounding of torrents. Even the brook was quiet. Everything was simple and undisturbed, and the "whole place was shady, cool, clear, and solemn."  

Dorothy says that "Glen-Almain" was written by William on hearing of a tradition relating to the Narrow Glen, which they did not know when they were there. In his poem Wordsworth shows that he too was impressed with the silence and tranquillity of the glen.

A convent, even a hermit's cell,
Would break the silence of this Dell:
It is not quiet, is not ease;
But something deeper far than these.

Dorothy says that William wrote the poem "Stepping

58 Poetical Works, notes to "To a Highland Girl," p. 297.
59 Journals, I, 360-361.
Westward" in remembrance of his feelings and hers at a remark made by a woman one evening on the shore of Loch Ketterine.

The sun had been set for some time, when, being within a quarter of a mile of the ferryman's hut, our path having led us close to the shore of the calm lake, we met two neatly dressed women, without hats, who had probably been taking their Sunday evening's walk. One of them said to us in a friendly, soft tone of voice, "What! you are stepping westward?" I cannot describe how affecting this simple expression was in that remote place, with the western sky in front, yet glowing with the departed sun. 60

The last verse of the poem follows the description given in the journal and expresses the same feeling.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake;
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy;
Its power was felt; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice enwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

In the latter part of August, as the Wordsworth's were on their way from Inverary to Dalmally, they came upon a scene which became the subject for William's poem "Address to Kilchurn Castle upon Loch Awe."

When we had ascended half-way up the hill . . . I took a nearer footpath, and at the top came in view of a most impressive scene, a ruined castle on an island almost in the middle of the last compartment of the lake, backed by a mountain cove, down which came a roaring stream. The castle occupied every foot of the island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out of the water; mists rested upon the mountainside, with spots of sunshine between; there was a mild desolation in the

60 Journals, I, 367.
low grounds, a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the castle was wild, yet stately, not dismantled of its turrets, nor the walls broken down, though completely in ruin. . . a decayed palace rising out of the plain of water.61

Dorothy quotes the three lines which William, in his notes, says were composed at the moment he saw the castle. The rest of the poem was added many years after. Although there is no great similarity between William's lines and Dorothy's, the same feeling is present in both.

How, while a farewell gleam of evening light
Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,
Do thou, in turn, be paramount; and rule
Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods, unite
To pay thee homage; and with these are joined,
In willing admiration and respect,
Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be called Youthful as Spring.

The "Two Hearts" were he and Dorothy. William's line "Yon foaming flood seems motionless as ice" might be compared to Dorothy's "a decayed palace rising out of the plain of waters."

At this time, when the Wordsworths were near the head of Loch Ketterine, the natives told them that Rob Roy was buried on an adjoining farm. Some two weeks later when they returned to this area, they visited the spot where he supposedly was buried. Dorothy tells in her journal how the eyes of the people glistened when she and William mentioned Rob Roy. William, too, in his poem says:

The proud heart flashing through the eyes,

61 Journals, I, 304.
At sound of Rob Roy's name, 62

While Dorothy says, "Having an arm much longer than other men, he had a greater command with his sword," 63 William expresses it this way:

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart
And wondrous length and strength of arm.

In her second entry about Rob Roy, Dorothy quotes the whole of William's poem, which she says the visit to the grave inspired.

On September 18 they were at Clovenford, and Dorothy worte:

At Clovenford, being so near to the Yarrow, we could not but think of the possibility of going thither, but came to the conclusion of reserving the pleasure for some future time, in consequence of which, after our return, Wm. wrote the poem which I shall here transcribe. 64

The poem is "Yarrow Unvisited." William gives a slightly different aspect to their reason for not seeing the Yarrow.

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it;
We have a vision of our own;
Ahl why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!

"Winsome Marrow" is another term which Wordsworth has used in referring to Dorothy.

Under date of September 20 Dorothy tells of their visit

63 Journals, I, 268.
64 Ibid., 391.
to Jedburgh, where, William says, they went into private lodgings for a few days. The woman of the house interested them so that Wm., long afterwards, thought it worth while to express in verse the sensations which she had excited.65 Both Dorothy, in her journal, and William, in his poem, give a clear picture of the woman and her husband. According to Dorothy’s description, the woman, though above seventy years old, moved about as quickly as a girl, running up the stairs when she was called, and having a joyousness in all her motions. She had been in ill-health and subject to fits of dejection, which Dorothy believed were caused by the state of her husband’s health. He was deaf and infirm, being scarcely able to move.66 William has not written so differently of the couple.

A Matron dwells who, though she bears
The weight of more than seventy years,
Lives in the light of youthful glee,
And she will dance and sing with thee.

Him who is rooted to his chair!

With legs that move not, if they can,
And useless arms, a trunk of man,
He sits, and with a vacant eye;
A sight to make a stranger sigh!
Deaf, drooping, that is now his doom.67

Among the thirteen poems credited to the year 1804 are three of Wordsworth’s most famous ones. These poems are "To a Cuckoo," "She Was a Phantom of Delight," and "I Wandered

65 Journals, I, 399.  66 Ibid., pp. 398-399.

Lonely as a Cloud." Two of these titles show evidence of Dorothy's influence. It is probable that Wordsworth wrote "To a Cuckoo" in 1802, for in her entry of May 14, 1802, Dorothy says that William teased himself with seeking an epithet for the cuckoo.68 Two weeks before this date, she and William had gone to a favorite resting-place under a holly. Later, when the sun was low, they went to a rock shade. Written in large letters vertically across the page of this entry is this sentence: "Heard the Cuckoo, this first of May."69 William calls the bird a "Blithe New-comer," and says:

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear.

In the middle of April, 1802, Dorothy and William had walked home from Eusémere by way of Kirkstone Pass. It was during this walk that they saw the vision of the daffodils of which Dorothy, in her journal, first gave expression, and of which, almost two years later, William composed the poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." Undoubtedly, William referred to Dorothy's work, since some of her phrasing is incorporated in the poem. For this reason, some critics recommend that this entry in the journal be read before the poem.70

68 Journals, I, 147.
69 Deselincourt, notes to the Journals, I, 142.
When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. We fancied that the lake 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 about 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 a few yards higher up; but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity, unity, and life of that one busy highway.71

Instead of a "long Belt" of the flowers along the shore, William says they are a "never-ending line along the margin of a bay." He makes his daffodils flutter and dance and toss in the breeze, but Dorothy's toss and reel and dance. William has changed Dorothy's metaphor of a "busy highway" to the "milky way." Dorothy's busy, golden highway, however, is to be preferred, especially in this poem, to the cold, unemotional milky way.72

The last poem of the 1804 group to show definite influence from Dorothy is "Repentance." On November 24, 1801, Dorothy called on Peggy Ashburner, who was ill. She talked to Dorothy about Thomas Ashburner's having sold his land, and was sorrowful about it, recalling how they had worked early and late to be able to pay the taxes and the interest.

71 Journals, I, 131-132.

Remembering the pleasure she had in the cattle and sheep, she said, "O how pleased I used to be when they fetched them down, and when I had been a bit poorly I would gang out upon a hill and look ower 't fields and see them, and it used to do me so much good you cannot think." The idea for the poem seems to have come from this writing of Dorothy's. In the poem the fields were lost through some neglect or fault of the owners. If this is so in Dorothy's account, it is not made clear. There is, however, in both the poem and the journal the same regret over loss of the land. One verse of the poem is especially like the sentence quoted above from the journal.

And in sickness, if night has been sparing of sleep,
How cheerful, at sunrise, the hill where I stood,
Looking down on the kine, and our treasure of sheep
That besprinkled the field; 't was like youth in my blood!

73 *Journals,* I, 83.
CHAPTER III

EVIDENCE OF INFLUENCE ON THE LATER
POEMS (1805-1847)

The year 1805 saw the completion of a part of Wordsworth's most ambitious work. This part was The Prelude. Early in his poetical career Wordsworth began planning a major work, which was to be called The Recluse and was to contain three parts: "The Prelude," "The Excursion," and the third part, which was planned only. A small portion of The Prelude was written as early as 1796, but the main part was begun in the autumn of 1798 or the early part of 1799, and was finished in the summer of 1805. Early in 1804 Dorothy wrote to Catherine Clarkson of her great satisfaction over the way William's poem was progressing. She said that he walked out every morning, generally alone, and brought them in a large treat almost every time he went. As the weather had been very wet, William took his umbrella, and Dorothy was sure he stood stock-still under it during many a rainy half-hour in the middle of road or field.¹ On June 3, 1805, William wrote to Sir George Beaumont of the completion of the poem two weeks before. He had looked forward to the day as a most happy one, but it was not a happy day for him. He was

¹Early Letters, p. 361.
dejected, because he felt that the poem was far below what he was capable of executing.\footnote{Ibid., p. 497.}

In The Prelude Wordsworth recalls at length his own life among the cottagers of the lake district. Some of the scenes or incidents related in this poem were subjects for short poems written previous to the completion of The Prelude, such as "Influence of Natural Objects" and "There Was a Boy."\footnote{The first of these poems is found in The Prelude, I, ll. 401-463; the second is V, ll. 364-397.} "Nutting" also was intended to be a part of The Prelude, but, for some reason, was left out.

Occasionally in The Prelude a line is found which is suggestive of Dorothy's writing. As one instance, on February 3, 1798, she wrote, "The ridges of the hills fringed with wood, showing the sea through them like the white sky, and still beyond the dim horizon of the distant hills, hanging as it were in one undetermined line between sea and sky."\footnote{Journals, I, 8.} In the second book of The Prelude are found these lines:

A grove, with gleams of water through the trees
And over the tree-tops.\footnote{Poetical Works, The Prelude, II, ll. 158-159.}

On January 31, 1798, Dorothy had written, "The road to the village of Holford glittered like another stream."\footnote{Journals, I, 5.} The following lines must have been influenced by her:

My homeward course led up a long ascent,
Where the road's watery surface, to the top
Of that sharp rising, glittered to the moon
And bore the semblance of another stream.

Much of The Prelude deals with childhood. Wordsworth recognized and respected the individuality of the period of childhood and was not "concerned with making a man of the child as soon as possible." According to Babenroth, during these years when The Prelude was being written, moral tales and systems of education, both native and imported, were still in vogue. Wordsworth was opposed to systems in which the child is made to conform to the system and is not allowed freedom. He believed in a minimum of interference, restraint, and guidance. This same philosophy of education had been expressed by Dorothy in regard to Basil Montagu. Perhaps both Dorothy and William had acquired these ideas of the training and education of children from their mother, who had a wholesome and effective way with her own boys.

The Prelude is important for the passages in which Wordsworth gives credit to his sister for her love and understanding.

9 Ibid., p. 348.
11 Early Letters, pp. 164-165.
and her influence. One of these passages, which has been quoted in chapter I, is found in Book VI, in which he tells of his rambles with Dorothy during his vacation. Together they explored the Penrith countryside, followed the banks of the Emont, and climbed about Brougham Castle. At this time he seemed first to realize the importance of his sister to him.

On April 29, 1802, Dorothy had written in her journal:

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.13

This passage is very similar to the following passage of William's:

By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes
Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,
In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,
His sheep like Greenland bears; or, as he stepped
Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,
His form hath flashed upon me, glorified
By the deep radiance of the setting sun.14

In the eleventh book of The Prelude are found the lines which critics and biographers have quoted in giving credit to Dorothy for helping William back to poetry after his depression caused by the failure of the French Revolution.

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

13 Journals, I, 140.

That did but cross a lonely road, and now
Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,
Companion never lost through many a league—
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self; for, though bedimmed and
changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded and a waning moon;
She whispered still that brightness would
return;
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth.16

This passage seems to substantiate Bradford Torrey's state-
ment that Wordsworth was always a poet and knew himself to
be a poet and that Dorothy only helped recall him to him-
self.16

The following lines could apply to either Dorothy or
Mary, or perhaps Wordsworth was merely speaking in general-
ities, but since the first part of this book and the lines
immediately preceding this passage deal with Wordsworth's re-
nouncement of the philosophy of Godwin and his return to Na-
ture, it appears that he had Dorothy in mind when he wrote:

Oh! next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed,
Alas! to few in this untoward world,
The bliss of walking daily in life's prime
Through field or forest with the maid we love,
While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe
Nothing but happiness, in some lone nook,
Deep vale, or anywhere, the home of both,
From which it would be misery to stir.17

One of the most remarkable passages in which Wordsworth
acknowledges his obligation to Dorothy is found in the four-
teenth book of The Prelude. He had realized that his view of

16 Ibid., XI, ll. 334-348. 16 Torrey, op. cit., p. 411.
17 Poetical Works, The Prelude, XIII, ll. 120-127.
Nature had been too austere, that he had looked exclusively for the "sterner, more severe, and even terrible aspects of the physical world," but he had also realized his debt to Dorothy for help in being able to appreciate the softer and more peaceful character of Nature. Through her help he attained a "refined and spiritual conception of Nature, which characterizes his maturest views."  

Child of my parents! Sister of my soul!  
Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere  
Poured out for all the early tenderness  
Which I from thee imbibed; and 'tis most true  
That later seasons owed to thee no less;  
For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch  
Of kindred hands that opened out the springs  
Of genial thought in childhood, and in spite  
Of all that unassisted I had marked  
In life or nature of those charms minute  

I too exclusively esteemed that love,  
And sought that beauty, which, as Milton sings,  
Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down  
This over- sternness; but for thee, dear Friend!  
My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood  
In her original self too confident,  
Retained too long a countenance severe;  
A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds  
Familiar, and a favorite of the stars;  
But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,  
Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,  
And teach the little birds to build their nests  
And warble in its chambers.  

... thy breath,  

Dear Sister! was a kind of gentler spring  
That went before my steps.  

As has been said already, the year 1805 brought grief to the household at Grasmere. On February 5 John Wordsworth  

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18. Sneath, op. cit., p. 75.  
19. Ibid., p. 75.  
was shipwrecked and drowned. William wrote to Richard Wordsworth on February 11 that both Mary and Dorothy were ill, especially Dorothy, on whom the loss of her brother was a severe blow. 21 In a letter of this same date to Sir George Beaumont, William wrote, "I can say nothing higher of my ever dear Brother than than that he was worthy of his sister, who is now weeping beside me ..." 22 Two months later Dorothy wrote to Lady Beaumont that William had resumed work on "The Recluse" but he could not accomplish much on it until he had unburdened his heart of the loss of his brother. For that reason, he was writing a poem about John. This poem was to become a part of "The Recluse." 23 Of the poem William wrote, "I began to give vent to my feelings, with this view, but I was overpowered by my subject and could not proceed. I composed much, but it is all lost except a few lines, as it came from me in such a torrent that I was unable to remember it; I could not hold the pen myself, and the subject was such that I could not employ Mrs. W. or my Sister as my amanuensis." 24

Two of Wordsworth's poem, "When to the Attractions of the Busy World" and "Elegiac Verses in Memory of My Brother, John Wordsworth," refer to John Wordsworth, but the "Elegiac Verses" must be the poem of which William wrote the comment above. There is some doubt as to when the poem "When to the Attractions of the Busy World" was composed. John was with William and

Dorothy at Grasmere several months during the year 1800. On August 29, 1800, Dorothy wrote that they walked over the hill by the fir grove, and that she and John left William to compose an inscription.25 September 1 she wrote that William read the "Firgrove" to Coleridge.26 According to DeSelincourt, the inscription and the "Firgrove" probably both refer to an early draft of lines one to eighty-three of "When to the Attraction of the Busy World."27 The fir grove was a favorite walk of Dorothy and William and later became sacred to the memory of John. On September 29, 1800, Dorothy wrote of John's leaving. She and William walked a short way with him and parted from him in sight of Ullswater. As usual, Dorothy was saddened by the parting, but she consoled herself that he was only going to Penrith and they should see him again.28 After John's death, William wrote of the parting:

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.

That was indeed a parting! oh,
Glad am I, glad that it is past;
For there were some on whom it cast
Unutterable woe.29

Under date of October 11, 1802, there is an entry in the journal in which Dorothy says they walked to the Easedale

25 *Journals*, I, 57.  
27 DeSelincourt, footnote to the *Journals*, I, 58.  
28 *Journals*, I, 62.  
29 *Poetical Works*, I, 183.
Hills to hunt waterfalls, a passage which may be compared to the last line of Wordsworth's poem "Louisa," in which he says Louisa winds along the brook "To hunt the waterfalls." "Louisa" is a character sketch of Dorothy. Wordsworth says that the poem which follows "Louisa," "To a Young Lady, Who Had Been Reproached for Taking Long Walks in the Country," was composed "at the same time and on the same view" as "Louisa," and the two were meant to make one piece. Although the title of "To a Young Lady" applies to Dorothy, the contents of the poem seem rather to describe Mary Wordsworth. Dorothy was not a wife and mother, and, by this time, surely it was settled that she had no intention of becoming one. The prediction of an "old age serene and bright" certainly was not fulfilled for Dorothy, but it was for Mary. Of course, the poet could not know as early as 1805 that Dorothy's old age would be other than serene and bright.

Wordsworth's preface to the poem "Yes, It Was the Mountain Echo," written in 1806, gives credit to Dorothy for the poem.

The echo came from Nab-shar, when I was walking on the opposite side of Rydal Water. I will here mention, for my dear Sister's sake, that, while she was sitting alone one day high up on this part of Loughrigg Fell, she was so affected by the voice of the Cuckoo heard from the crags at some distance that she could not suppress a wish to have a stone inscribed with her name among the rocks from which the sound proceeded.

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30 *Journals*, I, 183.

31 *Poetical Works*, notes to "To a Young Lady," p. 327.
As has been stated earlier in this thesis, Dorothy often read to William in the evening to soothe him when he was tired and tense from working at his poetry. On one occasion, at least, the reading gave Wordsworth new inspiration. His preface to the sonnet "Mans Fret Not at Their Convent's Narrow Room" bears testimony to this fact. This preface, however, has no particular connection with the poem which follows it. According to William, one afternoon in 1801, Dorothy read to him the sonnets of Milton. He had long been acquainted with them. He took fire and produced three sonnets the same afternoon, the first he ever wrote, except one at school. One of these was never written down, one was "I grieved for Buonaparte!" and the third he could not recall.

The four sonnets which are grouped together to form the poem "Personal Talk" were a result of Wordsworth's happy home life, of which Dorothy formed no small part. No other poet was ever given more sympathetic understanding and encouragement by all members of his family.

In 1807 "The White Doe of Rylstone" was begun, but it was not completed for a number of years. The composition of the poem seemed to give Wordsworth some trouble. Harper wonders if the poem did not grow in part from his long brooding over the fate and office of women. Wordsworth knew that, in a sense, the lives of his sister and of Sara Hutchinson seemed to have been sacrificed in that they could not look forward to the
fulfillment of their destinies as wives and mothers. Early in January, 1808, Dorothy wrote to Lady Beaumont of the poem. She was sure it would be finished in three or four days, for William had written about 1200 lines. She described it as being in irregular eight-syllable verse, would be called a tale, and was very different from any other poem her brother had written. She was certain that Lady Beaumont would be pleased with it. In fact, she could "hardly conceive how any feeling heart" could be otherwise. On March 31, 1808, Dorothy, on hearing that William was reluctant to publish the poem, wrote, encouraging him to defy the criticism which had been leveled against him and to go forward with publishing it. She asked him what else would matter if he had the hundred guineas in his pocket. She reminded him of the new house, new furniture, and household help which they needed but could not afford if he failed to publish the poem. She assured him that it was their belief and that of all who had read the poem that it would sell. DeSelincourt says that although Wordsworth leaned on Dorothy for sympathy and understanding, he knew that "Coleridge was right both as to the prospects of his poem and Dorothy's inability to gauge them." The flaws which Coleridge could see in the poem did not exist for her. On May 1, 1809, Dorothy wrote to De Quincey that William had

32 Harper, op. cit., II, 156.
33 Letters: Middle Years, I, 166-167.
34 Ibid., pp. 184-185. 35 DeSelincourt, op. cit., p. 222.
begun to correct and add to the poem. He intended to finish it before he began any other work, and, if he could satisfy himself with the corrections, he intended to publish it the following winter. She said that, in order to make money, he had made a resolution to write for the newspapers upon topics of public affairs. The idea of writing for the newspapers was not approved by either Dorothy or Coleridge. Dorothy had at last come to the realization that it was never intended that William "should make a trade out of his faculties." 36

Little evidence of Dorothy's influence is manifest in the next few years. In a poem of 1811, "Epistle to Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart.," are two lines which have some similarity to a passage of the Grasmere Journal. Dorothy says, "The moon shone like herrings in the water;" 37 while William reverses the simile:

Soon as the herring-shoals at distance shine
Like beds of moonlight shifting on the brine.

Dorothy's letter to Catherine Clarkson, written December 30, 1810, states that William had written fifteen fine political sonnets, which she and Mary would be glad to have him send to The Courier, both in order that the poems might be read and that he and his family might have a little profit from his industry. She says, however, that he was so disgusted with critics, newspapers, readers, and the talking public that she and Mary could not prevail. 38

36 Letters: Middle Years, I, 294. 37 Journals, I, 70.
38 Letters: Middle Years, I, 419.
In 1807 the Wordsworths moved from Grasmere to Allan Bank. The greater part of "The Excursion" was composed here. Many of the entries in Dorothy's journal for 1802 mention William's work on "The Pedlar," as the poem was called. Often she says William is at work on his "long poem," the "poem of his own life," "The Pedlar," or "The Recluse." Since these titles were used rather indiscriminately, it is difficult at times to determine which of the three parts of the major work was meant. One Sunday early in February, 1802, Dorothy wrote, "We sate by the fire, and did not walk, but read The Pedlar, thinking it done; but lo! though William could find fault with no one part of it, it was uninteresting, and must be altered. Poor Wm." On February 12 she states that she almost finished "The Pedlar," but William wore himself and her out with labor. "The Pedlar," of course, meant "The Excursion," but when she wrote to Lady Beaumont on February 28, 1810, that she hoped William would soon have three books of "The Recluse" finished, she must again have been thinking of "The Excursion." At this time, she says that he seldom wrote less than fifty lines every day. Dorothy's letter to Catherine Clarkson, August 14, 1811, states that William's poem had been at a stand ever since he made his visit to Water-Millock. She says, "It is very unfortunate that any interruption stops him. Perhaps he may be inspired by the murmuring ocean." At last, in April, 1814,

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40 Ibid., p. 112.  
41 Letters: Middle Years, I, 359.  
42 Ibid., II, 463.
Dorothy wrote again to Catherine Clarkson that at that time above all other times she wished to be at home, for William was actually printing nine books of "The Excursion." Fourteen years later Wordsworth, writing to Barron Field of some revisions made in "The Excursion," said, "My sister objected so strongly to this alteration at the time, that--her judgment being confirmed by yours--the old reading may be restored." Later he wrote, "I am much pleased that you think the alterations of The Excursion improvements. My sister thinks them so invariably." Sneath, writing of the detailed description given in "The Ruined Cottage" portion of "The Excursion," has the following comment:

It is somewhat remarkable that this detailed description should be so frequently met with in Wordsworth, for he was deeply interested either in the larger and more majestic aspects of Nature, or in her inner life and meaning, and her intimate relations to Man as teacher, comforter, and guide. This, however, did not render him insensible to her particularity--to the more modest and detailed forms of her manifestation. This was doubtless due to a native and trained organic sensitiveness, and to the influence of his sister Dorothy in leading him to a more minute observation of things, as well as to a more tender regard for the less austere aspects of the physical world.

In Dorothy's Grasmere journal for September 3, 1800, is an account of a funeral, which Gordon G. Wordsworth has said William drew upon for passages in "The Excursion." Dorothy

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43 Ibid., pp. 589-590.  
44Letters: Later Years, I, 309.  
46Sneath, op. cit., p. 262.  
47Deselincourt, footnote to the Journals, I, 59.
had gone to the funeral of a woman, fifty-six years of age, who, being without children or kindred of any kind, was buried by the parish. The ten men and four women who were present talked sensibly and cheerfully about common things. Bread, cheese, and ale were served. The coffin, painted black and neatly lettered, was covered with a cloth. The corpse was set down at the door; and, while they stood within the threshold, the men, with their hats off and with decent and solemn countenances, sang a verse of a funeral psalm. The corpse was then carried down the hill, the men singing until they had passed Town-End. As they left the dark house and walked into the brightness of the sunshine and saw the green fields, neighbors of the churchyard, spread before them, Dorothy thought the prospect looked more divinely beautiful than she had ever before seen it, more sacred and yet more allied to human life. When they came to the bridge, they began to sing again, but stopped during four lines before they entered the churchyard. 48

Wordsworth, in the preface to "The Excursion," bemoans the passing of the funeral customs of Grasmere. He expresses a wish that his own body be carried to Grasmere Church in the manner which he describes in the poem, "namely on the shoulders of neighbors, no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants."

... when from out the heart
Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,

48 Journals, I, 59-60.
Or several voices in one solemn sound,
Was heard ascending, mournful, deep, and slow
The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge!

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band
Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
They shaped their course along the sloping side
Of that small valley, singing as they moved;
A sober company and few, the men
Bare-headed, and all decently attired!
Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
Ended . . .

We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
Heard anywhere; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! Many precious rites
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
Will last for ever. Oft on my way have I
Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
So much I felt the awfulness of life,
In that one moment when the corpse is lifted
In silence, with a hush of decency;
Then from the threshold moves with song of peace,
And confidential yearnings, towards its home,
It's final home on earth.43

Wordsworth's account of the funeral is long, gives more details
than Dorothy's does, and has philosophical musings and another
narrative interspersed with the details of the funeral.

The story told by Wordsworth of the old man who was sent
on the mountain to gather peats was taken from Dorothy's jour-
nal of an excursion on the banks of Ullswater in 1805. Luff
had led her and William to the ruins of a chapel. Nothing
was left of it but loose stones, which could not be distin-
guished from a common sheepfold except that the shape of the
chapel was oblong and stood east and west. Dorothy says of it:

43 Poetical Works, "The Excursion," II, 11. 372-376; 385-
394; 548-559.
Whether it was ever consecrated ground or not I do not know; but the place may be kept holy in the memory of some now living in Patterdale; for it was the means of preserving the life of a poor old man last summer, who, having gone up the mountain to gather peats, had been overtaken by a storm, and could not find his way down again. He happened to be near the remains of the old Chapel, and, in a corner of it, he contrived, by laying turf and ling and stones from one wall to the other, to make a shelter from the wind, and there he sate all night. The woman who had sent him on his errand began to grow uneasy towards night, and the neighbours went out to seek him. At that time the old man had housed himself in his nest, and he heard the voices of the men, but could not make himself heard, the wind being so loud, and he was afraid to leave the spot lest he should not be able to find it again, so he remained there all night; and they returned to their houses, giving him up for lost; but the next morning the same persons discovered him huddled up in the sheltered nook. He was at first stupefied and unable to move; yet after he had eaten and drank, and recollected himself a little, he walked down the mountain, and did not afterwards seem to have suffered. 50

Wordsworth's account of the story is hardly different. He gives a full description of the old man, making of him a real character. He also goes more into detail in telling of the housewife who rather heartlessly sent the old man up on the mountain to gather peats.

All night the storm endured; and, soon as help
Had been collected from the neighbouring vales,
With morning we renewed our quest; the wind
Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist;
And long and hopelessly we sought in vain;
Till chancing on that lofty ridge to pass
A heap of ruin—almost without walls
And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
The peasants of these lonely valleys used
To meet for worship on that central height)—
We there espied the object of our search,

50 Journals, I, 417-418.
Lying full three parts buried among tufts
Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
To baffle, as he might, the watery storm;
And there we found him breathing peaceably,
Snug as a child that hides itself in sport,
'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
At our entreaty; less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts. 51

Wordsworth's story, however, ends more tragically than
Dorothy's, for Wordsworth's old man dies three weeks after his
unhappy experience.

The following entry from Dorothy's journal of the tour
in Scotland may have prompted Wordsworth to write one of the
passages in "The Excursion." They were climbing to a certain
point in the Scottish Highlands when, being very tired and
about to give up accomplishing their aim, they saw a glorious
sight on the mountain before them.

A slight shower had come on, its skirts falling upon
us, and half the opposite side of the mountain was wrapped
up in rainbow light; covered as by a veil with one dilated
rainbow: so it continued for some minutes; and the shower
and rainy clouds passed away as suddenly as they had come,
and the sun shone again upon the tops of all the hills. 52

A rainbow shone upon the mountain where the Solitary and the
Wonderer were.

And, over all, in that ethereal vault,
Is the mute company of changeful clouds;
Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
The rainbow smiling on the faded storm;
The mild assemblage of the starry heavens;
And the great sun, earth's universal lord! 53

A comparison of the following passages, one from the Grasmere journal and one from "The Excursion," shows a definite relation. Dorothy wrote:

We heard a strange sound in the Bainriggs wood, as we were floating on the water; it seemed in the wood, but it must have been above it, for presently we saw a raven very high above us. It called out, and the dome of the sky seemed to echo the sound. It called again and again as it flew onwards, and the mountains gave back the sound, seeming as if from their center; a musical bell-like answering to the bird's hoarse voice. We heard both the call of the bird, and the echo, after we could see him no longer. 54

From this entry Wordsworth composed the following passage:

... and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
An iron knell! with echoes from afar
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered! 55

One of the most important portions of "The Excursion" is the part which Dorothy called "The Ruined Cottage." It must have been written in 1797 and 1798, for on March 5, 1798, Dorothy wrote to Mary Hutchinson, who had asked that the poem be sent to her, that it was impossible to send a copy of "The Ruined Cottage," for it had grown to the length of 900 lines. 56

54 Journals, I, 52.
56 Early Letters, p. 176.
On February 23, 1802, Dorothy wrote that the dear thrush was singing upon the topmost of the smooth branches of the ash tree at the top of the orchard. All day long its song had been heard. In the sixth book of "The Excursion" William has used this entry.

--Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening from that naked perch.

Although William had already used in one poem the account in Dorothy's journal of June 10, 1800, of the tall woman with the little child who stopped to beg, he used a part of the story again in "The Excursion." Later in the day, on her way to Ambleside, Dorothy saw the woman driving her asses. Two little children were in one of the panniers. The mother chided and threatened the children with a stick which she used to drive on her ass, but the children "hung in wantonness over the pannier's edge." Two older boys had wreaths of flowers and laurel leaves around their hats. William has combined the characters of the four children, for he has only two children, who nod drowsily in their baskets, their bonnets wreathed with flowers.

--Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass
Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
Each in his basket nodding drowsily;

57 Journals, I, 116.
Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,
Which told it was the pleasant month of June.60

Four poems were the product of the tour which William,
Mary, and Sara Hutchinson made to Scotland in 1814. Among
these poems was one entitled "Effusion." In the preface of
the poem William has quoted an extract from Dorothy's jour-
nal of the tour in Scotland in 1803. They had gone to see a
waterfall. The gardener, however, wished them to enter a
small apartment to look at a picture of Ossian. While he was
telling the history of the artist who did the work, he opened
another apartment, which was "almost dizzy and alive with
waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions." This effect had
been produced by mirrors.61

... a painted Thrall,
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall;
To serve—an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen;
And, when the moment comes, to part
And vanish by mysterious art;
Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder;
A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing;
One loud cascade in front, and lo!
A thousand like it, white as snow—

As the years passed, Wordsworth's poetry changed. He wrote
fewer poems about his home and the common people of his neigh-
borhood. Classical, political, and religious subjects composed
the bulk of his writings. In 1820, however, there is one

60 Poetical Works, "The Excursion," VII, 11. 72-76.
61 Journals, I, 358-359.
small poem, a sonnet, "There Is a Little Unpretending Rill," in which the author recalls a walk he and his sister took from Kendal to Grasmere in the spring of 1794. They stopped to rest by the side of a lake where a small stream ran into it. Wordsworth says the sonnet was written some years after, "in recollection of that happy ramble, that most happy day and hour." There is a touch of sadness in the poem as the poet looks backward in time. He refers to Dorothy as "Emma," just as he had done in the poems of his young manhood.

Months perish with their moons; year treads on year! But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst say That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear, And flies their memory fast almost as they; The immortal Spirit of one happy day Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

Of the tour in Europe in 1820 Harper says there is more abundance of detail than of any other portion of Wordsworth's life, for he was accompanied by a full staff of reporters. Harper also says that Wordsworth requested Dorothy to make careful jottings of the details of the journey, with the intention of later expanding them into a narrative for Wordsworth's daughter, Dora. Mary also kept a journal. After their return to England, Wordsworth composed thirty-seven poems on subjects suggested during the tour. According to Harper, "The genesis of nearly all these poems can be found in the two journals. Since the very words are often the same, we may infer that the ladies sometimes were influenced in what they wrote by the
thoughts he expressed on the spot. There was certainly a partnership in ideas and language."

In January, 1822, Dorothy wrote to Catherine Clarkson that William had written some beautiful poems in remembrance of their tour. She says he began, as in connection with her "Reollections of a Tour in Scotland," by saying, "I will write some Poems for your journal," and she thankfully received two or three of them as a tribute to the journal, which she was making from notes and memoranda taken in their last summer's journey. His work, however, had grown to such importance that she had long ceased to consider it in connection with her journal. Henry Crabb Robinson held the opinion that William's poems on the tour of the Continent would have sold better if the journal had been published with the poems as the "gems of the crown." 

Both Dorothy and Mary were struck by the excessive ugliness of the fish-women of Calais. Dorothy wrote about their white nightcaps, their brown and puckered faces and bright eyes. Wordsworth took this defect of ugliness as the theme for his poem "Fish-Women--On Landing At Calais." He uses "withered, grotesque, immeasurably old" to describe them.

Dorothy gives a description of Brugè as they saw it in the light of a setting sun and again the following morning in

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63 Letters: Later Years, I, 62.
64 Robinson, op. cit., I, 180.
the full light of day. She was impressed by the unchanging atmosphere of the city, the town hall with its noble tower, the ancient, lofty houses, the quietness and pensive quality, the "figure, gait, and motions of the women in harmony with the collegiate air of the streets, and the processions and solemnities of Catholic worship." In the two sonnets entitled "Brugès" William has captured the quietness, the antiquity, and the religious atmosphere of the city. Of the women whom Dorothy had described William wrote:

Forms

Of nun-like females, with soft motions, glide!

The party visited the field of Waterloo, where Dorothy was deeply touched by the prospect before her and by her own thoughts and feelings on the subject. She feared that soon even all traces of the monuments erected to the memory of the soldiers fallen in battle would be erased from the scene, and that no one would remember the men who had given their lives.

... there was no other visible record of slaughter; the wide fields were covered with luxuriant crops, just as they had been before the battles, except that now the corn was nearly ripe, and then it was green. We stood upon grass, and corn fields where heaps of our countrymen lay buried beneath our feet. There was little to be seen, but much to be felt;--sorrow and sadness, and even something like horror breathed out of the ground as we stood upon it!

William's poem "After Visiting the Field of Waterloo" expresses

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66 Ibid., II, 17-23.
68 Journals, II, 29.
the same feeling found in the journal, the same fear that
the monuments might disappear. The last line of his poem
is copied from her journal.

Of wind-swept corn that wide around us rolled
In dreary billows...
And monuments that soon must disappear:
... we felt as men should feel
With such vast hoards of hidden carnage near,
And horror breathing from the silent ground!

As they traveled from Namur to Liege, Dorothy noticed
the limestone rocks, which she said resembled abbeys or cas-
tles. 69 Wordsworth, in his "Between Namur and Liege," speaks
of the grey rocks

... clustering in pensive shade—
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise
From the smooth meadow-ground, serene and still!

Of Aix-la-Chapelle, of the cathedral at Cologne, and of
their carriage ride along the banks of the Rhine Dorothy wrote
detailed and colorful descriptions, filled with her own reac-
tions to what she saw. William's poems on these subjects
have nothing specific to be compared with Dorothy's accounts,
except that the tone of each is similar to the feeling Dorothy
has expressed in each case.

Dorothy tells of the custom of the peasant sailors of
praying to an image of Jesus on the cross before they trust
their boats to the rapids that are before them. As they pro-
ceed, they chant an appropriate hymn. She ends her account

by stating that William composed his verses for the "Heidelberg Boatman." 70

The Wordsworth party set off to see the Staub-bach Waterfall. Dorothy went to the foot of the waterfall, where two women suddenly appeared, singing a "shrill and savage air:--the tones were startling, and in connexion with their wild yet quiet figures, strangely combined with the sounds of dashing water and the silent aspect of the huge crag that seemed to reach the sky!" 71 Unlike Dorothy, William heard sweetness and music in the song, but, like Dorothy, he was struck by the wildness of the song combined with the wildness of the surroundings. 72

While the Wordsworths were waiting near the Lake of Brienz, a group of women and girls, returning from work in the fields, came along the path. The women gathered round the Wordsworth party and gazed at them steadily, and presently a girl began to sing. One after another they joined in the singing, their arms gracefully laid over each other's shoulders. Later, the women passed them on the water. They were no longer singing their plaintive songs, but were laughing merrily. Dorothy says, however, that the poet "transported the minstrels in their gentle mood from the cottage door to

70 Journals, II, 65.  
71 Ibid., II, 118.  
the calm Lake." This he has done in his poem "Scene on the Lake of Brienz."

... in order stand
The rustic Maidens, every hand
Upon a Sister's shoulder laid,—
To chant, as glides the boat along,
A simple, but a touching, song.

Dorothy recounts the legend of Engelberg, in which angels sang songs of approval while holy men laid the foundation of the abbey, and she concludes by saying that it is no wonder that such traditions are believed, for the pinnacle is a spot for happy spirits. As they first beheld it, gilded with the beams of the declining sun, light clouds," as white as snow, yet melting into the thinnest substance, and tinged with heavenly light, were floating around and below its summit." Dorothy says, "Our recollections of that moment cannot be effaced; and some time afterwards my brother expressed his feelings in the following little poem." The little poem is "Engelberg, The Hill of Angels."

When first mine eyes beheld that famous Hill,
The sacred Engelberg, celestial Banks,
With intermingling motions soft and still,
Hung round its top, on wings that changed their hues at will.

When they were descending the mountain to the village of Rigi and the chapel of Our Lady of the Snow, Dorothy says the sky was lowering, but, soon after, the sun appeared and "how delicious was the descent over the velvet turf, towards the

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73 Journals, II, 115. 74 Ibid., pp. 144-145.
chapel. The last verse of William's poem "Our Lady of
the Snow" is patterned after these lines.

. . . a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies;
Clear shines the glorious sun above.

Earlier in her journal Dorothy had written of the dai-
sies and other flowers which, "like gems, enamel the turf." This expression is very like William's "flower-enamelled
glade" used in the above poem.

At Altorf the inn in which the Wordsworths stayed was
opposite to the Tower of the Arsenal, which was built upon
the spot where William Tell's son was reported bound to the
linden tree. Dorothy says the tower was spared by a fire
which consumed an adjoining building, "happily spared, if
only for the sake of the rude paintings on its walls." These paintings were of William Tell's son. Wordsworth's
poem "Effusion, in Presence of the Painted Tower of Tell, at
Altorf" has lines similar to the above.

What though the Italian pencil wrought not here,
Nor such fine skill as did the meed bestow
On Marathonian valour, yet the tear
Springs forth in presence of this gaudy show.

The following lines of this same poem must have come from an
account Dorothy wrote of hearing a little stream, suddenly
flooded with snow and ice, roaring down the mountain. Dorothy
thought the sound was caused by an avalanche, but the guide

\[75\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 163.} \quad 76\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 127.} \quad 77\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 174.}\]
pointed to the little stream, which gradually settled until all noise was gone and perfect silence succeeded.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 120-121.}

And snow-fed torrents, which the blaze of noon
Roused into fury, murmur a soft tune
That fosters peace, and gentleness recalls.

In "The Town of Schwytz" is a passage which is almost exactly the lines found in the account in the journal of their entrance into the town of Schwytz. Dorothy wrote, "If Berne, with its spacious survey of Alps, and widely-spreading vales, and magnificent river may be called the head, this town, intrenched among mountains, may be called the heart of Switzerland ..."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 170.}

The following lines are from the poem:

Majestic Berne, high on her guardian steep,
Holding a central station of command;
Might well be styled this noble body's Head;
Thou, lodged 'mid mountainous entrenchments deep,
It's Heart ... 

At Fort Fuentes they went to view the ruins. As they were descending from the site, they discovered a statue half-buried on the hillside.

... a fair white cherub uninjured by the explosion which had driven it a great way down the hill. It lay bedded like an infant in its cradle among low green bushes. W. said to us "could we but carry this pretty Image to our moss summer house at Rydal Mount!" Yet it seemed as if it would have been a pity that anyone should remove it from its couch in the wilderness, which may be its own for hundreds of years.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 245.}

\textit{William's poem "Fort Fuentes" is largely about this statue of the child.}
Dread hour! when, upheaved by war's sulphurous blast,
This sweet-visaged Cherub of Parian stone
So far from the holy enclosure was cast,
To couch in this thicket of brambles alone.

Dorothy tells of going to the convent of Maria Della Grazia to see the painting of "The Last Supper." She describes the condition of the picture, how the mark of a musket ball was still to be seen in one part of the painting and how damp was injuring the figures, but even in that condition, the picture affected her greatly.81 William's poem "The Last Supper" expresses the same feeling. Even though damp and other things had marred the picture, it continued to affect the beholder.

One verse of the poem "The Eclipse of the Sun" is so much like Dorothy's account of the eclipse that there must have been some collaboration. It is difficult to determine who was influencing whom. Dorothy, however, says that it was impossible for her to describe the beautiful spectacle; therefore, she was copying a sketch in verse composed from her brother's recollection of the view.82 The poem was written before William knew that the eclipse was not visible in England. The journal, however, records that the day in England was cloudy and the members of the family there were unable to see the eclipse. The passage in the journal and the verse of the poem are as follows:

The mountains (their natural hue being green)

81 Ibid., pp. 237-238. 82 Ibid., p. 234.
appeared as if covered with a pale green light—a mean proportional between day and moon light, moon-light without shadows. 83

Or something night and day between,
Like moonshine—but the hue was green;
Still moonshine, without shadow . . .

As they were nearing their destination one day, the guide went on before them to rouse the house dog into giving them a welcoming bark, which "echoed round the mountain like the tunable voices of a full pack of hounds." 84 Dorothy says that William would not suffer the echoes to die. The poem "Echo, upon the Gemmi" was the result.

A solitary Wolf-dog, ranging on
Through the bleak concave, wakes this wondrous chime
Of aëry voices locked in unison,—
Faint—far-off—near—deep—solemn and sublime!—

The procession seen in the vale of Chamouny must indeed have been a moving spectacle. According to Dorothy, the females, being covered from head to foot with one piece of white cloth, resembled the small pyramids of the glaciers which were before them, and it was impossible to "look at one and the other without fancifully connecting them together." 85 William expresses the scene in the following words:

From a long train—in hooded vestments fair
Enwrapt—and winding, between Alpine trees
Spiry and dark . . .

Still, with those white-robed Shapes—a living Stream,
The glacier Pillars join in solemn guise
For the same service, by mysterious ties. 86

83 Ibid., p. 248. 84 Ibid., p. 276. 85 Ibid., p. 291.
86 Poetical Works, "Processions," ll. 42-44; 48-50
When Dorothy says, "The Females composed a moving girdle round the church," William says, "While they the church engird with motion slow."

When the Wordsworths returned to England, they were impressed anew by the peace and beauty of their own country. Both Dorothy and William wrote of their landing at Dover. Dorothy says, "The day was pleasant, and every English sight delightful—the fields sprinkled with cattle—the hedgerows—the snug small cottages—the pretty country-houses." 87 In his poem on the subject William has written some similar lines.

Peace greets us;—rambling on without an aim
We mark majestic herds of cattle, free
To ruminate, couched on the grassy lea. 88

In William's "Desultory Stanzas" are two lines which seem to come from Dorothy's entry, which has already been mentioned, of the day on the mountain when they thought they heard an avalanche, but the guide answered their question by pointing to a little rill which was roaring with its load of ice and snow. As the rill died away, "perfect silence succeeded, silence more awful even than the noise which had preceded it." 89 A few days later, when they were at grindelwald and climbed up the mountain, they "wished for the sound of avalanches, and

87 Journals, II, 335.
89 Journals, II, 121.
listened for them; but there were none.\textsuperscript{90} The lines from
the poem follow:

\begin{quote}
But list! the avalanche—\h\dash the hush profound
That follows—\h\dash yet more awful than that awful sound!
\end{quote}

Among the River Duddon sonnets, which Wordsworth published after his Continental tour, is one which seems to indi-
cicate that Dorothy is the "One" for whom his heart will ever
beat with tenderest love. He wishes for her to be present
with him to enjoy the beauty spread before him. He says his
ways have been too rough and long for her companionship. As
he thinks of her not being there to participate in the enjoy-
ment, his pleasure in the flowers, the water, and all the
other things about him is dampened.\textsuperscript{91}

As Harper says, after the publication of the Duddon son-
nets, Wordsworth strove "through his remaining years, to be
more objective in his work . . . henceforth his best poems,
with here and there a notable exception . . . were to deal
with public and historical subjects."\textsuperscript{92} Only occasionally is
there a poem in which Dorothy or other members of the family
figure. In 1827 two poems entitled "To--" are questionable
as to the person addressed. It is possible that both were
written about Dorothy. Dowden, however, thinks the first of

\textsuperscript{90}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 125.

\textsuperscript{91}\textit{Poetical Works}, "The River Duddon," XXV, p. 599.

\textsuperscript{92}Harper, \textit{op. cit.}, II, 312.
these poems was meant for Mary.\textsuperscript{93} One line of the poem speaks of the person addressed as "chief of Friends,"\textsuperscript{94} which seems to apply to Dorothy more than to Mary. The second poem may have been meant for Wordsworth's daughter, Dora.

One evening in 1802 Dorothy, William, and Coleridge walked to Rydal Mount from Grasmere. On the way they stopped to look at "Glow-worm Rock—a primrose that grew there, and just looked out on the road from its own sheltered bower."\textsuperscript{95} Nearly thirty years later Wordsworth took this little incident and worked it into the poem "The Primrose of the Rock." According to the Fenwick note, the Wordsworths had given the rock the name of Glow-worm Rock from the number of glow-worms they had often seen hanging on it as described in the following lines:

\begin{center}
A Rock there is whose homely front
The passing traveller slight;
Yet there the glow-worms hang their lamps,
Like stars, at various heights;
And one coy Primrose to that Rock
The vernal breeze invites.
\end{center}

In 1831 Wordsworth and Dora went to visit Sir Walter Scott. A number of poems was the result of this tour. For the subject and contents of some of these poems William drew on Dorothy's journal of the tour of Scotland in 1803. In her visit to Roslin Chapel, Dorothy noticed the likeness of the

\textsuperscript{93} quoted by George in notes to \textit{Poetical Works}, p. 898.

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Poetical Works}, "To--" p. 649.

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Journals}, I, 138.
sculptured leaves and flowers of the chapel to the real ones which grew inside the chapel.

The stone both of the roof and walls is sculptured with leaves and flowers, so delicately wrought that I could have admired them for hours, and the whole of their ground-work is stained by time with the softest colours; some of those leaves and flowers were tinged perfectly green, and at one part the effect was most exquisite; three or four leaves of a small fern, resembling that which we call adder's tongue, grew round a cluster of them at the top of a pillar, and the natural product and the artificial were so intermingled that at first it was not easy to distinguish the living plant from the other...)

William's poem "Composed in Roslin Chapel during a Storm" is very like the above.

From what bank
Came those live herbs? By what hand were they sown
Where dew falls not, where rain-drops seem unknown?
Yet in the Temple they a friendly niche
Share with their sculptured fellows, that, green-grown,
Copy their beauty more and more...)

Wordsworth probably referred to Dorothy's description and account of the Trosachs when he was writing his poem of that name. He recalls in the notes to the poem that he first saw the Trosachs when he was in the company of Dorothy and Coleridge. There is little in the poem, however, to suggest anything in the entry of Dorothy.

"The Earl of Breadalbane's Ruined Mansion and Family Burial-Place, near Killin" has only slightly more connection with Dorothy's journal than the poem above. Dorothy tells in 1803 that many workmen were employed in building a large

96 Ibid., pp. 387-388.
mansion close to the old house. William speaks of that "new
Pile, built with curious pains and mausolean pomp" near the
remains of a "once warm Abode." Dorothy tells of the many
walks cut from the river bank, all equally trim. William
mentions the "trim walks and artful bowers."

Dorothy tells of their ascent of a hill near the Vale
of Arrochar one evening just after sunset, of the beautiful
prospect of clouds of a brilliant yellow hue moving all over
the sky and shedding a light like bright moonlight upon the
mountains. The beauty of the sky and the valley below put
them in the proper mood in which to find at the top of the
hill the seat with the inscription "Rest and be thankful."97
Wordsworth's poem "Rest and Be Thankful" asks who can climb
the hill and reach the "wished-for Height" and rest not thank-
ful, whether cheered by talk with a loved friend or by "the
unseen hawk Whistling to clouds." The loved friend could have
been either Dorothy or Dora Wordsworth. E. S. Roscoe says,
"These lines probably embody impressions absorbed on that
beautiful autumn which Dorothy Wordsworth depicts as she and
her brother attained the highest point of the glen, rather
than the thoughts of later years."98 According to Roscoe,
William and Dorothy so resembled each other in mind and


98 E. S. Roscoe, "Johnson and Wordsworth in the Highlands,*
North American Review, CCXIV (November, 1921), 696.
temperament that it is likely she describes as much his as her own impressions of the evening in these mountain solitudes.

Dorothy wrote a detailed and beautiful description of the interior of a Highland hut, which they visited in 1803. Wordsworth’s poem "Highland Hut" is a description of the exterior of such a hut as, he says, is often seen under a morning or evening sunshine. He quotes the long descriptive passage from the journal.99

For his poem "Bothwell Castle" William seemed to rely on Dorothy's relation in her journal of their visit to the castle in 1803. He has stated in the preface to the poem that in his sister's journal is an account of the castle as it appeared to them at that time. During the visit of 1831 he was unable to see the castle because of stormy weather. He says in the poem, however, that once he roamed at large over the steeps and to that day had in mind the landscape as if still in sight. He asks himself why he should repine that now in vain he craves needless renewal of an old delight. It were better to "thank a dear and long-past day" for the joys it brought--joys which are still cherished in his memory and are never to be lost.

Of the many poems Wordsworth composed from 1832 until his last poem in 1847 few have any connection with Dorothy.

His notes which introduce the poem "On the High Part of the Coast of Cumberland," composed in 1833, tell of the time when Dorothy first heard the "voice of the sea" from that point of the coast, and burst into tears as she beheld the scene spread before her. Since she was such a young child, her reactions to the sound of the ocean made a lasting impression on the family, especially on William. He seemed to be recalling the incident as he composed the poem. In it he asks:

Comes that low sound from breezes rustling o'er
The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?
No; 't is the earth-voice of the mighty sea.

In 1828 Dorothy went to the Isle of Man to visit the Hutchinsons. Her last journal is a record of this visit. Under date of July 3, 1828, she wrote that a Sir William Hilary saved a boy's life that day in the harbor. In 1833 Wordsworth also went to the Isle of Man, and a number of poems was the result of this visit. In one of these, "On Entering Douglas Boy, Isle of Man," he prays to the waves to spare a tower which stands in or near the perilous bay. He also prays that the mariner struggling for life may be lifted on the wave and carried to the safety of the tower.

Spare, too, the human helpers! Do they stir
'Mid your fierce shock like man afraid to die?
No; their dread service nerves the heart it warms,
And they are led by noble Hilary.

In 1834, some years after the beginning of Dorothy's

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100 Journals, II, 407.
illness, William composed a poem about the redbreasts which
which frequented the house, especially one which took up its
abode in Dorothy's room and often sang, and fanned her face
with its wings. In this poem Wordsworth has made the first
long reference to Dorothy in a number of years.

But small and fugitive our gain
Compared with here who long hath lain,
With languid limbs and patient head
Reposing on a lone sick-bed;
Where now, she daily hears a strain
That cheers her of too busy cares,
Eases her pain, and helps her prayers.
And who but this dear Bird beguiled
The fever of that pale-faced child;
Now cooling, with his passing wing,
Her forehead, like a breeze of Spring:

* * * * * * * * * * *

Good friends he has to take his part;
One chiefly, who with voice and look
Pleads for him from the chimney-nook,
Where sits the Dame, and wears away
Her long and vacant holiday;
With images about her heart,
Reflected from the years gone by.101

On the April evening in 1802 when Dorothy, William, and
Coleridge had walked together to Rydal Mount and had stood
together to look at Glow-worm Rock, they had observed the
clouds moving across the sky. Dorothy says that William
observed that the clouds moved in one regular body like a
multitude in motion—"a sky all clouds over, not one cloud."
Later, the clouds broke, and a star appeared here and there.
"One appeared but for a moment in a lake of pale blue
sky."102

Forty years after this April evening Wordsworth

102 Journals, I, 138.
composed a poem about the clouds as he saw them that evening with Dorothy and Coleridge. He likens the clouds to a troop of "winged Hosts," to an army, and to an endless flight of birds. As the clouds sped on and left patches of clear sky, William says:

They are gone, and fled,
Buried together in yon gloomy mass
That loads the middle heaven; and clear and bright
And vacant doth the region which they thronged
Appear.103

103 Poetical Works, "To the Clouds," 11. 30-34.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This study of the journals, the letters, and the poetry of Dorothy and William Wordsworth leaves no question in the writer's mind that Dorothy did influence the poetry of William. She was a subject for poems and a source of poetry for him.

As has been shown, especially in the letters and journals, William and Dorothy felt an unusual love for each other. This love was manifest early in their childhood. William thought of Dorothy, included her in his happiness, and wished her to be with him when something gave him special pleasure. Dorothy loved William with such an engrossing love that, in some respects, she became a selfless person: another pair of eyes, another pair of ears for him, and a receptacle for his thoughts. William realized, perhaps not at the time but years later, the softening influence Dorothy exerted on him in their early childhood. Although in his youth he could see beauty in the lowly daisy or in a sparrow's nest of bright blue eggs, or enjoy the song of a thrush on the topmost branch of the bare ash tree, he pushed these delicate pleasures back in his consciousness to give first place to the sounding cataract, the gloomy peak of
Skiddaw looming over him, or other awe-inspiring spectacles. Through her love for common things, both in nature and in people, her powers of observation, her interest in detail, and her delicacy of perception and feeling, Dorothy taught her brother to plant the crevices of the crags with flowers and to see and hear the little birds as they built their nests and warbled in their chambers. Wordsworth has repeatedly given credit in his poems to his sister for this help. He has also given her credit for help in choosing subjects, in developing ideas, in shaping his thoughts, and in revising his lines.

Dorothy rendered William this help through her companionship, her sympathy and understanding, and her journals, in which she recorded for future use the everyday happenings, the stories which they heard, the descriptions of all kinds of people with whom they came in contact, and her own impressions of sights and sounds.

No one could have been a more sympathetic and understanding companion than Dorothy was to William. Her happy disposition and her quick impulsiveness were in contrast to his stolid ruggedness. The sparkle of her personality reflected on him and lightened somewhat the tone of his poetry. Loving him as she did, she was ever ready to forget herself in doing things for him. She took care of his physical comfort, made a home for him, and released him of most of the petty cares in connection with it, but she did not let the
cares of the home engulf her so that she had no time for other interests. Because she read widely, she was able, or nearly so, to keep pace with William intellectually. Above all, however, she liked walking with him. These walks furnished most of the material for her journals, on which William drew heavily for his poetry. She was alive to sound and color, and her writings are full of both. This beauty she set down in clear, simple prose which is near to poetry. Her words apparently came easy. For Wordsworth, however, because he was slower than Dorothy in his reactions, composition was not effortless as it seemed to be for her. Sometimes he was so conscious of passages of her journal and was so bothered by them that he could not compose lines of his own, and was forced to use her words.

One of the greatest services Dorothy rendered her brother came as a result of her understanding of his desire to write poetry. She upheld him, even against the wishes of her relatives, in his resolution not to become a clergyman. She stood faithfully by him when he returned from France, unhappy over his affair with Annette Vallon, and disillusioned and depressed because of the failure of the French Revolution. Through her steadying influence and guidance, she brought him back to nature and to poetry, and convinced him that love still existed in the world.

Dorothy's help as a critic has been questioned. Several instances have been cited when she thought or did not think
lines of the poems should be changed. She herself considered that she had a part in the revision, for she said on a few occasions, "We left out some lines." In the case of "An Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches" she offered some constructive criticism. This kind of criticism, however, she apparently seldom gave. She would tolerate no censure of William's poetry from any source except from Coleridge. Dorothy loved Coleridge with more than an ordinary love, and she must have realized, as William did, his ability to judge her brother's poetry. Nothing has been recorded of her objections to Coleridge's criticism. This was not so in regard to other people's criticism, however. Even Sara Hutchinson could not speak to Dorothy her true opinion of William's poetry. Because she believed that William could write nothing of inferior quality, her judgment was not always to be trusted.

In this research it has been found that such poems as "Alice Fell" and some of the "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent" were written from accounts which William requested Dorothy to record in her journal. Other poems, such as "Lucy Gray," "George and Sarah Green," and "Beggars," were written from stories which Dorothy herself recognized as material for William and recorded for his use. Dorothy figured as the subject of such poems as "To My Sister," "Louisa," and passages in The Prelude. In some of Wordsworth's most beautiful poems,
however, Dorothy is not the subject but a participant in the event celebrated in the poem, such as "Yarrow Unvisited," "There Is a Little Unpretending Rill," "To a Butterfly," "The Sparrow's Nest," "Bleak Season Was It, Turbulent and Wild," "On Nature's Invitation Do I Come," "Foresight," "Among All Lovely Things My Love Had Been," and "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey." "A Night-Piece" and "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" were written about impressions both William and Dorothy received of a particular incident and scene, which Dorothy recorded. When Dorothy wrote of these things which she and William had seen together, in all probability, since they discussed what they saw and heard, she was writing as much his observations as her own. When Wordsworth used such passages for his poetry, it can be said, then, that, to a great extent, he was using his own ideas. When, however, he was using some other impressions or ideas, such as fearing to brush the dust from the butterfly's wings, or refraining from pulling the strawberry blossom so that life would not be destroyed, he was using Dorothy's material and Dorothy's ideas. When he took as subject for his poems such narratives as that of the beggars, he again was using her material, for he had not seen the beggars and knew nothing of them except from Dorothy's account.

It has been found that most critics agree that the best of Wordsworth's poems deal with intimacies of his daily life, especially those happenings with which Dorothy had some
connection. It is significant, also, that, as the family increased and the circle of friends enlarged and required more of their time so that the close association of William and Dorothy was no longer possible, he lost much of his poetic power.

It is the conclusion, therefore, of this writer that Dorothy Wordsworth, through her own bright personality, her love and companionship, her suggestions, and her writings, did exert a powerful and, in most respects, a good influence on the poetry of William Wordsworth.
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