



# Literary

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

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[First Prize Article.]

William Wordsworth was born in 1770, and died in 1850. The triumphant struggle of the American colonists for freedom, the terrific outburst of the French revolution, the general breaking away from old conventions and wonderful awakening of ideas in England, combined to make these eighty years one of the most remarkable periods of modern history. "Living in that dawn when it was bliss to be alive, but to be young was very heaven," the emotions that stirred the earnest and sympathetic nature of Wordsworth could not find adequate expression in prose, but in the language of poetry his great heart found utterance, and there came from his sylvan retreat the most inspiring song.

Always enthusiastic in the cause of liberty, he at first warmly espoused the side of the French revolutionists; for in it he thought that he could see the dawn of a universal awakening and the regeneration of society. In his vivid imagination he could see "France standing on the top of golden hours, and human nature seeming born again." But the atrocious crimes committed in the name of liberty soon blasted his high hopes and produced in him a conservatism that remained with him throughout his life and exercised a wholesome influence on his work. Though his disappointment was bitter, he did not lose his faith in humanity, or cease to

take an active interest in its progress and welfare.

After taking his degree at Cambridge and making a tour through France and other countries of Europe, Wordsworth took up his abode at Grasmere, a small hamlet in what is commonly called the "Lake Country," whose woodland scenery and rustic life were to furnish the material and inspiration of those poems which have proved such a blessing to mankind.

In the year 1802 his domestic happiness was made complete by his marriage to one of the most accomplished and lovable women in all England. His whole domestic life was, in marked contrast to that of most other men of great genius, ideal.

After his marriage Wordsworth led a very secluded existence, taking long walks in the morning, reading his verses to his wife and his sister in the evening, retiring and rising with the birds; such was the simple routine of his daily life, yet no man could have been more truly happy than he. No desire for what is commonly called popularity ever entered his mind. The failure of his contemporaries to regard his work with favor did not in the least dishearten him, but with an imperturbable calmness and sweetness of spirit, he pursued with increasing devotion his high calling; for full well he knew that genius must create the taste