

enough to come out—not counting music which will be two hours more, except when we do drawing instead—then she will give us a tour abroad to get a good accent, and she will let us have a real lively London season, and will let us enjoy our fun as much as we like—”

“Yes; and I know now that Regina likes fun herself, and she said she should like taking us about, but that she would not do it for two lazy, empty-headed girls who had idled away their time for the past two years, and were not fit to take their place in society. So you see it partly depends on ourselves, and I mean to try very hard not to be silly and empty-headed; for I think it's nice to be able to talk as Regina does about things that are going on, sensibly and amusingly, like anybody who understands and has thought and read. Minnie always looked silly if anybody said anything to her, and I know she said very silly things in reply, though I didn't know any better myself. Raby and I are quite determined not to be like Minnie when we grow up. I only wish we could learn to be like Regina.”

Norah was exceedingly glad to hear this piece of news, and was very much amused by the finale to Minnie's visit. That she should have ended by so dis-

gusting her two admirers as to throw them back into Regina's arms (so to speak) was highly entertaining, and Mrs. Devenish openly rejoiced in the change that had come to them.

“It was rather an effort to make up one's mind to a governess in the house, but I know that Regina will be sure to send a suitable person, and the relief it will be to have the children properly taught and looked after will be immense. And if the girls will only study, and I am sure they mean to now, it will give me so much more time to look after things and learn how to manage the house. I find it so difficult to do anything with them floating about the whole morning idling and chattering. It can't be good for them, and now that I really am stronger I feel that it is hindering me from work I ought to do. I shall miss Regina dreadfully; but I suppose she is right in saying that the servants and the children ought to look to me, though I can never help sending them to her when she is with me. At any rate I shall always have her close at hand when I do want advice, and that is the next best thing to having her actually on the spot.”

Norah cordially agreed, but had to hasten back to dinner. In the evening she walked in the garden with Max,

and tried to draw him out about his own affairs.

“I don't see that it will make much difference to me. I am glad the rest of you are pleased.”

“Don't you like the idea, too? I can't understand you, Max. I thought you and Regina were such friends.”

He seemed to make an impatient movement.

“Friends? Oh, yes, I suppose we are all friends in a fashion. But when she marries and settles down there will be an end of that sort of thing. A woman's life always changes when she has new interests come into it.”

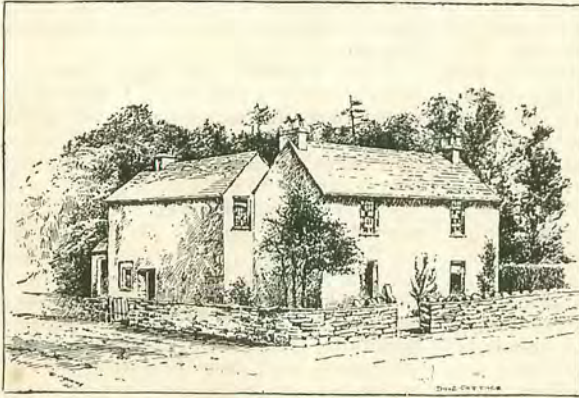
“Married? Regina married! Why, Max, what are you talking about? She is not even engaged!”

“Oh, isn't she! You'll soon see about that! Don't breathe a word of it though, for I only heard it quite by chance, and evidently she wishes it not to be known yet. But she is engaged fast enough, and is to be married very soon. That is why she has bought this property. I suppose she wants something for her husband to do.”

“I don't believe a word of it!” answered Norah, almost indignantly, “and I wonder that you do either.”

(To be continued.)

DOVE COTTAGE, GRASMERE.



DOVE COTTAGE.

It was during a late autumn holiday last year, that I had the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with the calm peaceful beauty of the English lakes.

Fifteen years had passed since I had first been entranced by their loveliness, and during that interval I had looked upon grand scenes in Switzerland and Italy, had stood upon lofty mountain summits amid the glories of the rising and setting sun; had gazed with delight upon far-reaching panoramas of lakeland and mountain; and, when contemplating the prospect of a few days amongst the English lakes, I wondered whether the sweet influences of that lovely district would still have the same power over me as in days gone by.

Some minds have a natural shrinking from revisiting any spot which has greatly fascinated them; a fear of disturbing “memory's shallow moonshine,” and “the dreamlight clear,” with which they invest the scenes of former enjoyment, haunts them, and they sympathetically re-echo Wordsworth's lines:

“The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, win-
some marrow;
For when we're there,
although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yar-
row.”

However, finding myself at Windermere, I proposed to devote one day to Grasmere, where for many peaceful, uneventful years, the poet Wordsworth lived. I arrived there about midday and betook myself first to that hallowed spot, dear to the hearts of many—Grasmere churchyard, where the poet and his loved ones lie sleeping their last sleep.

Fitting resting-place! Surrounded by the encircling mountains he loved so well, with the murmuring Rothay flowing by, and the humble graves of the dalesmen clustering around—he lies, the poet of nature—the one who looked into the very heart of things, and interpreted them to us as no other has done.

The calm beauty of his secluded life, and the restfulness and peace of his teaching, seemed to flow into my soul as I stood musing beside his grave, beneath the shadow of the yew-trees which his own hand had planted; and then I slowly wended my way to the little church, so rich in memories of him and his. I thought of the lines from the “Excursion” in which he describes this sacred building:

“Not framed to nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy, for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters, intricately cross'd,
Like leafless underboughs in some thick grove,
All wither'd by the depth of shade above.”

The church was decorated for harvest thanksgiving, and the rich abundance of flowers and fruit—God's gifts—seemed singularly appropriate to the building in which the nature poet was wont to worship.

Having spent half-an-hour in meditation, I proceeded towards Dove Cottage, Wordsworth's home from 1799 to 1808. It stands a little back from the highroad, just out of the bustle of the traffic, which is constantly passing. Originally a wayside inn, with the sign of the Dove, Olive Bough, in what was then a remote and isolated hamlet, it was destined—modest and unpretending as it is—to possess a wondrous power of *fascination and attraction* for all who have felt the magic touch of Wordsworth's poetry, and who enter heart and soul into the sacred memories that cluster around and within its cottage walls. It is a great satisfaction to feel that Dove Cottage has been rescued from the decay and neglect into which it had fallen. Thanks to the wise and persevering efforts of the Rev. Stopford Brooke, to whose little work on “Dove Cottage” I am indebted for many of the facts of this paper, it has been secured as a memorial of Wordsworth in perpetuity; and though it has passed through many vicissitudes since his day, yet we may rejoice in the fact that it remains to all intents substantially the same as when he inhabited it.

Preceded by the caretaker I passed through the little wooden gate, up the narrow garden path, and entered the tiny dwelling hallowed by the seven years' occupancy of William, Dorothy and Mary Wordsworth.

You pass directly through the small vestibule into what is the living-room of the cottage, a small, oblong, stone-paved room with latticed window, and walls wainscotted in dark oak.

Opening out of this room is Dorothy's bedroom, also paved with stone; but the charm of its late owner's individuality seems to cling to it still, and we think of the many hours spent by that gracious and gifted spirit within those

four walls which are so endeared to us by the memories of what has been. Her first waking thoughts in this tiny chamber were those of beauty—as we see from her diary—but alas! the view she so delighted in is now obscured by intercepting buildings.

"In the morning when I arose the mists were hanging over the opposite hills, and the tops of the highest hills were covered with snow. There was a most lovely combination at the head of the vale, of the yellow autumnal mists wrapped in sunshine, and overhung with partial mists; the green and yellow trees, and the distant snowtopped mountains. It was a most heavenly morning."

But with all her poetic feeling, Dorothy was far from being a mere visionary. She was an intensely practical woman. She occupied herself about household matters; she did not hesitate to wash her own and her brother's clothes, to make pies, puddings, and in fact to attend generally to household affairs; thus, in these and other ways making her brother's home so dear to his heart, that he spoke of his home-life as "the blessed life that we lead here."

Mounting the stairs, I then proceeded to the little drawing-room above, the birthplace of many of Wordsworth's best poems, where, to a most sympathetic and appreciative audience, he would read them aloud as they flowed spontaneously from his brain. Here his small library of choice volumes had its place in a little recess by the fire. There, we are told, the poet was wont to sit when the poetic inspiration was upon him, engaged in working at the "Excursion" and other poems. This room, we feel, is the shrine of the temple where all is of hallowed interest. When one takes into consideration the fact that four children had arrived during Wordsworth's occupancy of this tiny dwelling, and that indoors there could practically be no escape from their prattling voices and pattering feet, one is inclined to wonder how he was able to work uninterruptedly, producing the grand thoughts which are destined to live as long as the English tongue endures. One has been wont to associate irritability of nerve, sensitiveness to noise, and absolute need of quiet with the poetic temperament; but one can hardly imagine Wordsworth to have been thus afflicted; his nature seemed too full of joy and sympathy with life around him for children's voices to jar upon his ear. "I cannot but admire the fortitude," writes Dorothy the year before they moved, "and wonder at the success with which he has laboured in that one room, common to all the family, to all visitors, and where the children frequently play beside him." He was the most affectionate father, and took deep delight in his children; his capacity for suffering when bereaved of his two little ones was in inverse proportion to the joy that had possessed him in their bright and sunny existence.

Adjoining this sitting-room is Wordsworth's bed-room, and close by are the tiny guest-chambers, occupied at different periods by several whose names are sacred in English literature. Coleridge, De Quincy, Clarkson, Sir Humphrey Davey, and Sir Walter Scott were among those whom love of literature and beauty attracted to this secluded spot, to share the "high thinking and plain living" which this simple cottage home afforded. Could these walls but speak, what a record would they give us of bright and sparkling intercourse between kindred minds; of high and noble thoughts expressed in language worthy of their greatness, and of peaceful home scenes also, when, gathered round the blazing log fire, one of the group read Chaucer or Spenser aloud, and all was peace and contentment.

And here I may fittingly give an extract from a letter written by Dorothy in 1800, in

which she describes her home. "We are daily more delighted with Grasmere and its neighbourhood. Our walks are perpetually varied, and we are more fond of the mountains as our acquaintance with them increases. We have a boat upon the lake, and a small orchard and smaller garden, which, as it is the work of our own hands, we regard with pride and partiality. Our cottage is quite large enough for us, though very small, and we have made it neat and comfortable within doors, and it looks very nice on the outside for, though the roses and honeysuckles which we have planted against it are only this year's growth, yet it is covered all over with green leaves and scarlet flowers, for we have trained scarlet beans upon threads, which are not only exceedingly beautiful, but very useful, as their produce is immense. We have made a lodging-room of the parlour below-stairs, which has a stone floor, and therefore we have covered it all over with matting. We sit in a room above-stairs, and we have one lodging-room with two single beds, a sort of lumber-room, and a small low unceiled room, which I have papered with newspapers, and in which we have put a small bed." To this I add the description which De Quincy gives of Dove Cottage; he himself occupied it in Nov. 1809, after Wordsworth removed, and remained there for a period of twenty-seven years.

"Cottage immortal in my remembrance!" he exclaims, "as well it might be, for this cottage I retained through just seven and twenty years. This was the scene of struggles, the most tempestuous and bitter, within my own mind; this the scene of my despondency and unhappiness; this the scene of my happiness—a happiness which justified the faith of man's earthly lot, as upon the whole, a dowry from heaven. It was in its exterior not so much a picturesque cottage—for its outlines and proportions, its windows and its chimneys, were not sufficiently marked and effective for the picturesque—as it was lovely. One gable end was indeed most gorgeously apparelled in ivy, and so far picturesque; but the principal side, or what might be called the front, as it presented itself to the road and was most illuminated by windows, was embossed, nay, it may be said smothered, in roses of different species, amongst which the moss and the damask prevailed. These, together with as much jasmine and honeysuckle as could find room to flourish, were not only in themselves a most interesting garniture for a humble cottage-wall, but they also performed the acceptable service of breaking the unpleasant glare that would else have wounded the eye from the whitewash—a glare, which having been renewed amongst the general preparations against my coming to inhabit the house, could not be sufficiently subdued in tone for the artist's eye until the storms of several winters had weather-stained and tamed down its brilliancy. . . . My cottage wanting this primary feature of elegance in the constituent of Westmoreland architecture—the peculiar chimney—and wanting also another very interesting feature of the older architecture, annually becoming more and more rare, *i.e.*, the outside gallery (which is sometimes merely made of wood, but is much more striking when provided for in the original construction of the house, and completely *enfonce* in the masonry), could not rank high among the picturesque houses of the country—those at least which are such by virtue of their architectural form. It was, however, very irregular in its outline to the rear, by the aid of one little projecting room, and also of a stable and little barn in immediate contact with the dwelling-house. It had besides the great advantage of a varying height, two sides being about fifteen or sixteen feet high from the exposure of both storeys, whereas the other

two, being swathed about by a little orchard that rose rapidly and unequally towards the vast mountain range in the rear, exposed only the upper storey; and consequently, on those sides the elevation rarely rose beyond seven or eight feet.

The little upland garden which rises at the back of the house is also to us a scene of vivid interest. Behind, "a vast and seemingly never-ending series of ascents rise above it to the height of more than 3000 feet." There are the rocky steps cut by Wordsworth, there is the rock upon which Coleridge so often sat, and which Wordsworth crowned with a coronet of snowdrops; there the little well, fed by its running spring of clear limpid water fresh from the mountain, where the bright gowan and marsh marigold flourished, planted by loving hands. The garden remains very nearly as it was when Wordsworth left the cottage. This "little nook of mountain ground" was especially dear to the hearts of the poet and his sister. With their own hands had they toiled in making it what it now appears, and it still bears the impress of the tender love with which they regarded it. In their long rambles together over the lovely hills, they were wont to bring back choice spoils of fern and flower which they planted here and tended with loving care.

"Dear spot! which we have watched with tender heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains—flower and weed
Which thou hast taken to thee as thine own,
Making all kindness registered and known;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child indeed
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need."

If Dove Cottage is rich in memories of noble minds, none the less is this little garden haunted by ghosts of the past. Not only so, but the interest with which we regard it is intensified by the thought that here Wordsworth was wont to murmur forth his first conception of many of his most beautiful poems, and the echo of his voice, travelling down the century, seems to fall upon our ear as memory brings to our recollection such poems as "The Green Linnet," "To a Butterfly," "The Kitten and Falling Leaves," and many another composed in this garden.

Often on nights when the moon was lighting up the surrounding scenery, did Wordsworth and Dorothy pace to and fro here, holding high communion with each other and the works of God around them. What an untold blessing this devoted sister was to the poet! Her sensitive insight into Nature, her delicate perception of all that was lovely, and her intuition as to the subjects most suited to the mind and genius of Wordsworth, are gratefully dwelt upon by him in those well-known lines on "The Sparrow's Nest"—

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

Truly may we feel thankful that Dove Cottage, with all its hallowed memories, has been preserved as a place of pilgrimage for all who have been penetrated by Wordsworth's teaching, and have felt its power; and thankful may we also be to hand down to posterity this simple cottage home, rich with all the tender and delightful memories connected with the poet and his family.

MILWARD WOOD.