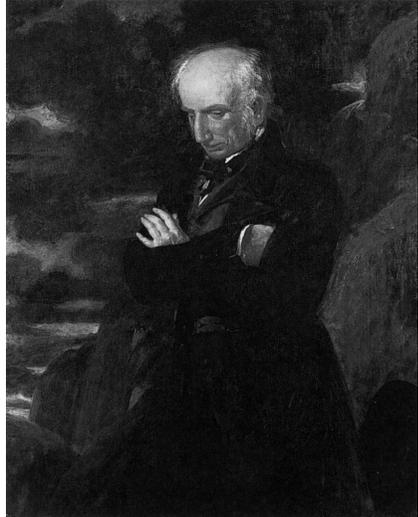


WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

William
Wordsworth
... was born

at Cockermouth in Cumberland in 1770. He was the second son of John Wordsworth, a lawyer, and law agent for the Earl of Lonsdale. William's mother died when he was still a very small boy, and he remembered little about her. He remembered dimly that one day as he was going to church, she pinned some flowers into his coat. He remembered seeing her once lying in an easy chair when she was ill, and that was nearly all.



Before Wordsworth lost his mother he had a happy out-door childhood. He spent long days playing about in garden and orchard, or on the banks of the Derwent, with his friends and brothers and his sister Dorothy. In one of his long poems called *The Prelude*, which is a history of his own young life, he tells of these happy childish hours. In other of his poems he tells of the love and comradeship that there was between himself and his sister, though she was two years younger—

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
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 bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.¹

Together they spied out the sparrows' nests and watched the tiny nestlings as they grew, the big rough boy learning much from his tender-hearted, gentle sister. In after years he said—

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.²

When the mother died these happy days for brother and sister together were done, for Willie went to school at Hawkshead with his brothers, and Dorothy was sent to live with her grandfather at Penrith.

But Wordsworth's school-time was happy too. Hawkshead was among the beautiful lake and mountain scenery that he loved. He had a great deal of freedom, and out of school hours could take long rambles, day and night too. When moon and stars were shining he would wander

¹ William Wordsworth, "To A Butterfly"

² William Wordsworth, "The Sparrow's Nest"