

**DOVE COTTAGE,
WORDSWORTH'S
HOME FROM 1800-1808**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649400324

Dove Cottage, Wordsworth's Home from 1800-1808 by Stopford A. Brooke

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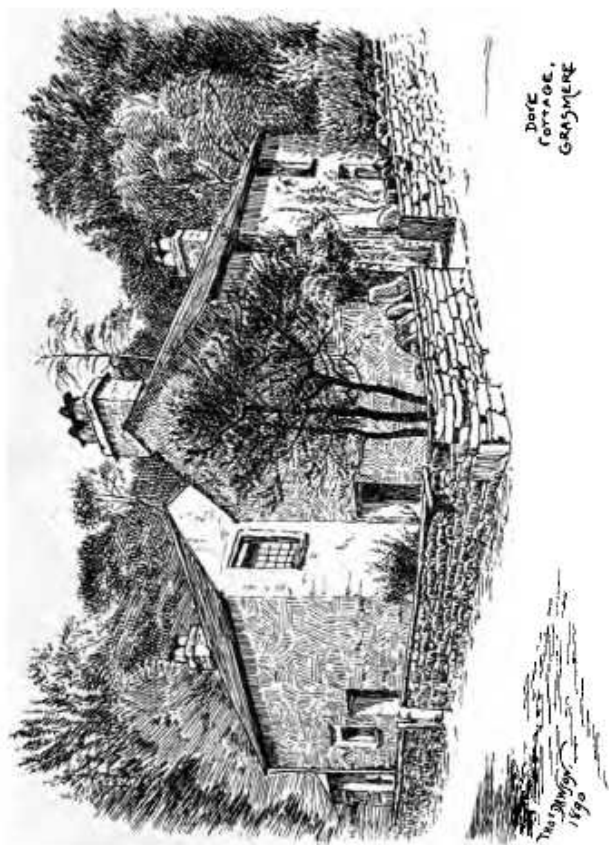
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STOPFORD A. BROOKE

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WORDSWORTH'S
HOME FROM 1800-1808**



Doré
COTTAGE.
GRASMERE

W. P. Wood
1890

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DOVE COTTAGE

WORDSWORTH'S HOME FROM 1800—1808

DECEMBER 21, 1799

TO

MAY —, 1808

BY
Annotation
STOPFORD A. BROOKE

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1894

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COLLEGE
MAR 7 1898
BRARY.

Prof. T. W. Fawcett

RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON AND BUNGAY.

*First Edition May 1890.
Reprinted October 1890, 1892, 1894.*

DOVE COTTAGE

WHEN I was staying last year at Grasmere I went with my brother to see Dove Cottage, Wordsworth's home from Dec. 1799 to May 1808; the little house which also received the name of "Town End" from its being the outlier of the cluster of buildings which made up, in the Wordsworths' time, the hamlet of Grasmere. We had walked up to Easdale Tarn in the morning and the whole of that lovely and joyous piece of poetry in which Wordsworth describes the delightful goings on of the Easdale stream on that "April morning" was in our ears as we stood by the wooden gate which opens on to the low-roofed porch. It seemed that he and his sister Dorothy were standing with us and that we heard him say to her, "Come in: I will dictate to you the verses I made to-day in Easdale." And in our mind's eye we saw

the place as it was in his time. There were no houses then between the gate and the lake; green fields stretched down to its greener waters, and a winding path led across the fields to the fringe of stones and reeds which, bordering the lake, defines the little point among the copse-wood that Wordsworth called Point Rash-Judgment. Beyond the shore and sleeping quietly on the water lay the island with its tall pines and solitary barn, and on the other side the hill rose abruptly, red with autumn fern and grey with rocks. The ridge of Loughrigg crowned it, and across it ran the terrace where Wordsworth walked at eventide. To the right was Silverhow, and the white wedge of Easdale Fall among the tumbled hills, and Helm-crag where sat the Ancient Woman and the Astrologer; while in the valley underneath the white cottages of Grasmere village, plunged in trees, stood around the low grey tower of the church like sheep around the shepherd. Then we saw the road to Dunmailraise run straight up the hill, past "The Swan," and coming down to meet it the last slope of the spur of Fairfield, and the huge shoulder of Seat Sandal, and the gorge of Greenhead Ghyll.

Towering above the cottage was the jutting rock of Arthur's Chair and the dark summit of Great Rigg, and then, stretching away to Rydal, the descending ridge of Nab Scar—a lovely land, scarcely a rock, or slope of grass, or sheep-fed nook of which had not heard Wordsworth murmuring his poems. Nor was the road on which we stood less full of sentiment and recollection. It was then the only road between Grasmere and Ambleside. It went straight up the hill to the pool where Wordsworth met the Leechgatherer. White-Moss, a tossed and broken height of knolls of rock and grass and pools, jutted out from the top of this hill between the lakes of Grasmere and Rydal. Up the road, and to the highest point of the Moss, was a favourite stroll of Wordsworth and his sister when the sun was setting, for thence they saw both the lakes, the mountain ranges above Windermere, and, beyond Grasmere, all the secret place over Easdale, where Nature, in her wild alchemy, made the mountain rains, and whence she sent forth her storms. In no place is there a greater business of the elements.

But the ridges of the Moss had yet more human associations, for lying underneath there was the

pine grove where John Wordsworth paced to and fro, remembering his ship at sea, and made the path among the trees, of which his brother wrote the poem. There, evening after evening, Dorothy rested and William built his verse. There is not a line of all the poems made on his brother's fate which is not linked by sentiment to this quiet piece of woodland, the very thrushes of which were dear to him.

It was down this road, down the hill, that the "Waggoner" came, and regretted that the cottage of the Wordsworths' was no longer the wayside inn it had been, whose sign of the "Dove and Olive Bough" gave the name of Dove Cottage to the poet's home. The famous horses stopped almost of their own accord before the gate at which now we stood. We lifted the latch, passed underneath the porch still covered with wild flowers, regretted the loss of the elder tree which once hung all its flowers over the wall, and stepped into "the little semi-vestibule which prefaced the entrance into what might be considered the principal room of the cottage."¹ It was an oblong square, not above eight

¹ This is De Quincey's description of the house as he saw it when in 1807 he visited the Wordsworths for the first time. In 1806 he