PETER BELL, A TALE IN VERSE

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Peter Bell, A Tale in Verse by William Wordsworth

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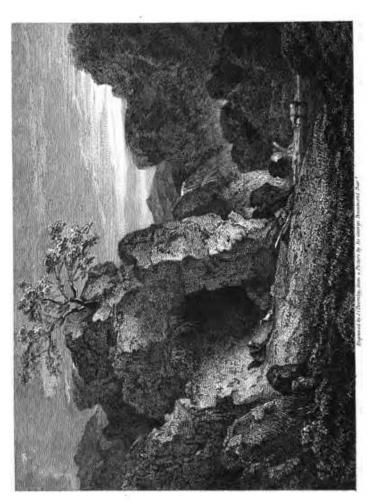
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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

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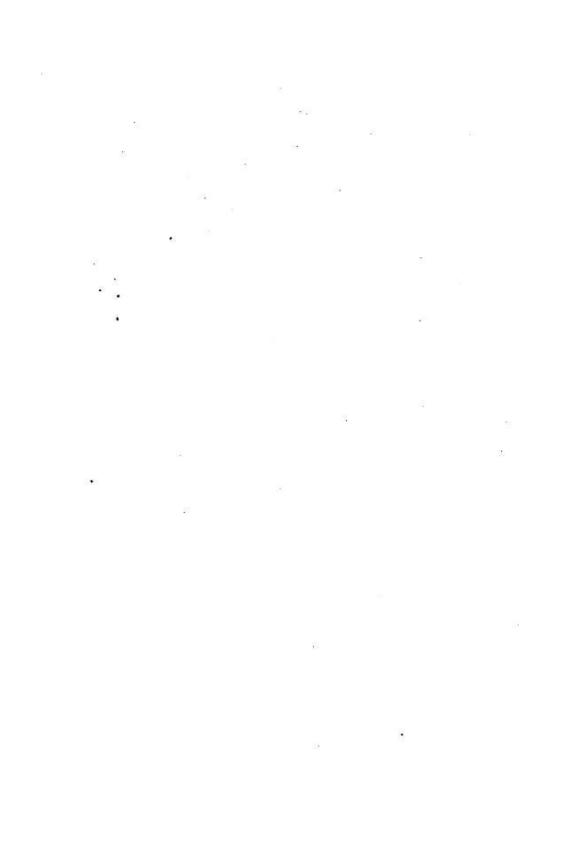
Cale in Merge,

BY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

LONDON:

Printed by Strahan and Spottiswoode, Printers-Street:
FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1819.



ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq. P.L.

фс. фс.

MY DEAR PRIEND,

THE Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has, in its Manuscript state, nearly survived its minority; — for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favourable reception; or, rather, to fit it for filling permanently a station, however humble, in the Literature of my Country. This has, indeed,

been the aim of all my endeavours in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached; and that the attainment of excellence in it, may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulses.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will shew, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents, within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, you have exhibited most

splendid effects of judicious daring, in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledgment make my peace with the lovers of the supernatural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted, that to you as a Master in that province of the art, the following Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is a not unappropriate offering. Accept it then as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name your's has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully your's,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount, April 7. 1819. ¥ 30 40 . #2 35 *0 6 5