

years, and his authority was already a thing of the past. Gray died the year after Wordsworth was born. Although Wordsworth has been called the High Priest of Nature, he was not the first to herald the return from the artificiality of the age of Queen Anne. Cowper, born forty years earlier, and Burns, eleven, had both contributed powerfully to the restoration of more natural forms of thought and expression. We shall presently have to notice the influence of Coleridge also.

As a child, according to his own statement, Wordsworth was "of a stiff, moody, violent temper," and his mother, while declaring that his future life would be remarkable for good or evil, also said that he was the only one of her five children about whose future she was anxious. She died when William was only eight years of age; and he was sent to school at the small market town of Hawkshead in the north-eastern corner of Lancashire, only a few miles from Ambleside. We learn from the "Prelude" that even in these early days he had begun to feel the power of nature:

"Ye mountains and ye lakes  
And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds  
That dwell among the hills where I was born,  
If in my youth I have been pure in heart,  
If, mingling with the world, I am content  
With my own modest pleasures, and have lived  
With God and Nature communing, removed  
From little enmities and low desires—  
The gift is yours."

No words could better describe the spirit and manner of the poet's life or the influences by which he was moulded. When he was fourteen, his father died, and from that time his education became the care of his two uncles, by whom he was sent to St. John's Col-