



WILLIAM NEWTON. (1750-1830).
From a drawing by Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A.

William Newton, "the Minstrel of the Peak."

By the REV. J. M. J. FLETCHER, M.A.



LOSE to the picturesque sundial, the steps of which, some centuries ago, presumably formed the base of the old cross in Tideswell churchyard, stands the tomb of William Newton, "the Minstrel of the Peak."

George Newton, his father, came from Lincolnshire. His mother was Mary Bagshawe of Abney Grange, in the parish of Hope. There is a tradition in the family that she was related to William Bagshawe, "the Apostle of the Peak," a man who, in his day, was of considerable renown in the Peak of Derbyshire.

The future poet was born at Cockey Farm, in the township of Abney, in the year 1750, and his baptism is thus recorded in the Hope register:—

"1750, Dec. 25, Baptised Willm, son of Geor. and Mary Newton, Cockey."

George Newton was a carpenter,¹ and, apparently, as is frequently the case with people in the same district at the present time, he combined with his trade the occupation of a farmer in a small way. William was one of a large family, and, as his father was neither able to instruct him himself, nor had the means to give him much of an education, he had to get his learning as best he could. The rudiments he picked up at a dame's school; for the rest, he was almost entirely self-taught. When old enough, he followed his father's trade, and we are told that he "early became so ingenious, skilful, and industrious as to be employed by a

¹ More correctly, a spinning-wheel maker. The Abney people at this period were employed as weavers as well as farmers.—EDITOR.

few families in the neighbourhood. On these occasions, it is said, he used to examine books accidentally left in the apartments where he worked. They awakened into sensibility and expansion the internal fires of his spirit. Every species of fine writing engaged his attention, but poetry enchanted him. From that moment all the earnings of his mechanic industry which he could prudently spare were expended in purchasing books."¹

Whilst still young he married Helen Cooke, a young woman three years his junior. His early married life was spent for the most part at Bradwell and at Tideswell. The famous Crescent at Buxton was erected in 1780, at the cost of the fifth Duke of Devonshire, who is said to have expended £120,000 upon the work. Newton was one of the more skilled workmen who were employed in building it. And he was engaged in other works upon the Duke's estates. He soon gained the reputation of being a clever mechanic, and was in great request as a repairer of looms, etc. But his ingenuity and skill were such that he was able to construct machines as well as to repair them. It is possible that he may have employed some of his neighbours to work at the machines which he had made. Report says that he had a cotton mill at Brough, near Bradwell. But many cottagers then had their own looms, and the "working a mill" need not imply more than that he had constructed some frames, and had one or two assistants to help him work them.

He associated but little with other young men, nor did he take any part in their amusements. He had a passion for reading, and his leisure time was taken up with the study of poetry, of history, and of philosophy.

From the study of poetry, William Newton was led on to the making of verses himself, and it was this which brought him to the notice, about the year 1780, of the Rev. Peter Cunninghame, the literary curate who was in charge of the adjoining village of Eyam. The rector of Eyam at this time

¹ *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward*. Edited by (Sir) Walter Scott, Edinburgh. Ballantyne, 1810; vol. ii., p. 320 (note).

was the Rev. William Seward, an author of some repute, and still more celebrated as being the father of Anna Seward, "The Swan of Lichfield," a poetess and litterateur who is now forgotten, but who one hundred and twenty years ago was held in very high esteem. Mr. Seward was also one of the residentiary canons of Lichfield, and resided for three parts of the year in the cathedral city, returning to Eyam merely for a short time in the summer. It was during the summer of 1783, whilst the Sewards were staying at the rectory at Eyam, that Mr. Cunninghame interested Miss Seward in the poetic carpenter. He told her of Newton's library—of the number of well-chosen books which he had on religious, philosophical, historical, and poetical subjects. He enlarged upon his powers of versification, and, by Anna Seward's desire, he introduced him to her as the minstrel of her native mountains.

Thus was commenced a friendship which was only severed by her death in 1809. The following is her description of him: "Mr. Newton is not ill-looking, but has nothing in his appearance beyond the decent and the clean, till conversation on ingenious subjects lights up his countenance. When the first embarrassments were past, which arose from a modest consciousness that he had not the manners of polished life, he conversed, though in the accent of his county, on various themes with perspicuity and taste, and in perfectly good language, upon the books he had read, the striking scenery of the few countries he had seen, and the nature of his own destiny, perceptions, and acquirements. The ease and elegance of his epistolary style are most extraordinary, his birth and uneducated youth considered. . . . To have found, in the compositions of a laborious villager, some bright sparks of genius amid the dross of prosaic vulgarity had been pleasing, though perhaps not wonderful; but the elegance and harmony of Newton's writings, both in prose and verse, are miraculous, when it is remembered that, till Mr. Cunninghame distinguished him, he had associated only with the unlettered vulgar." ¹

¹ *Seward's Poetical Works*, vol. ii., p. 321 (note).

Newton's friendship with Cunninghame, and still more that with which Anna Seward favoured him, added a new interest to his life. At this time he was living in Tideswell, and, from his home there, he was in the habit of walking the three miles over the bleak and hilly road which stretches between that town and Monsal Dale, where the mill was situated at which he was employed. In the winter time the journey, both there and homewards, would be made in the dark, and not infrequently for weeks together it would be through the snow.

The following stanzas were composed in the severe winter of 1785, during his walks from Tideswell to Monsal Dale :

" Scarce through the sod my cot aspires,
 Scarce sheltered from the weltering storm,
 Yet here the Muses ring their lyres,
 When pealing rains the night deform.

" Far from that cot, each social friend,
 And every dear domestic tie,
 My pensive hours I'm doom'd to spend,
 And oft to heave the bitter sigh.

" For me pale Slander taints the gale,
 Suspicion spreads her murky snares,
 Disease's dreaded shaft assails,
 And her dark chalice Hate prepares.

" Lurking beneath a fair disguise,
 Her zone with daggers planted round,
 Ingratitude, with changing eyes,
 Strives Sensibility to wound.

" Ye sisters Nine, again inspire
 The joys my better moments knew,
 When fairy Hope, and young Desire,
 On light wing, round my temples flew.

" Yet here, on Tideswell's wintry moor,
 While drifted snows my steps ensnare,
 And through the nights the tempests roar,
 And fiercely whirl my frozen hair ;

"As, straggling, towards my home I wend,
Sweet fancy cheers the dreary way,
On my chill'd heart her fires descend,
Bright as the star that leads the day;

"And, basking in her cordial beams,
The foster'd JULIA'S form appears;
The Goddess deck'd her tuneful themes,
Soft warbling through revolving years.

"Me Julia's friendship cheers each morn;
Truth whispers it shall ever last;
Then let me present evils scorn,
And bravely triumph o'er the past."¹

Miss Seward contributed an account of William Newton to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1785 (pages 169, 170); and in the same volume are to be found (on page 212) a poem by William Newton, inscribed to the Rev. Mr. Cunninghame, author of "Britannia's Naval Tribute," etc.; and (on page 213) some verses which Miss Seward had written on the blank leaves of a copy of her own poems, which she presented to Newton.

On receipt of this present, the following letter of thanks was sent by Newton to the distinguished authoress:—

"All that your pensive, your lonely friend can return for this unmerited kindness, are the warm effusions of a grateful heart. My walk along the vale of life has not been through a wilderness of sweets. Your having scattered in my path flowers of so agreeable an odour, culled from the bowers of the muses, will lighten, in many an irksome hour, the weight of manual labour. Since I received this testimony of your regard, hope and joy have aided the hands of the mechanic. Sublime and beautiful objects, which I used to view with melancholy languor, have now acquired the most animating charms in my sight. As a warm sunbeam dispels the heavy dews, and raises the head of the drooping field flower, so has your kind attention dispersed the clouds, which were cast about me by adverse fortune. I have lately added to my

¹ *Seward's Poetical Works*, vol. ii., pp. 323-325 (note).

little collection of poetry the works of that sublime bard, and learned and ingenious critic, Mr. Hayley; and I now live in the midst of charming Monsal Dale, whose graces you have so faithfully described in the poem, which you have been so good as to address to me. Last week, Mr. Cunningham found me in this lovely valley, surrounded by wheels, springs, and other mechanical implements. To his imagination they appeared as the effect of magic, and he called me Prospero."¹

The poem alluded to, which Miss Seward sent with the volume of her works, is also published in Sir Walter Scott's edition of her poetical works.² It is entitled "Independent Industry True Virtue." In the third volume of her poems is another epistle to "Mr. Newton, the Derbyshire Minstrel,"³ which she wrote on receiving from him a description in verse of an autumnal scene near Eyam, September, 1791.

The following (hitherto unpublished) letter had been written a few months earlier:—

"TIDESWELL, Oct. 24th, 1784.

"TO MISS SEWARD,—

"That you, dear Madam, embowered in Paradisaical groves, midst the melody of the boldest and sweetest songsters, should spare one thought for a feeble and far distant Brother of the Choir, is a matter of very agreeable surprise to your humble servant. Expect not from me, my affectionate friend, either elegant prose or verses, who am confined fourteen hours each day to Mechanical drudgery in a—Cotton Mill; and for months together enjoy not the conversation of one man of Letters or Taste; and, by some neglect of the person who serves me with the monthly review, I know nothing that happens in the Literary World.

"In this delightful, this soothing rural sequestration, I might perhaps woo,—perhaps find propitious some wood nymph, or Sylvan Muse; but at present I cannot enjoy the least portion

¹ *Poetical Works of Anna Seward*, vol. ii., p. 322 (note).

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 320-329.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., pp. 20-22. Cf. also *A Swan and her friends*, by E. V. Lucas. London: Methuen, 1907. Pp. 148-154.

of Poetic ease: I however try to form my desires with those of the Bard who sung—

“ ‘ O let me with simple nature live,
My lowly field-flowers on her Altar lay,
Enjoy the blessing that she meant to give,
And calmly waste my inoffensive day.’ ”

“ I humbly thank you for the charming description of the beautiful various scenic objects by which you are surrounded. I greatly apprehend you have out coloured Nature; however I never felt with more energy the force and beauty of these two lines of my favourite poet Mr. Pope—

“ ‘ The Groves of Eden vanish'd now so long,
Live in description, and look green in Song.’ ”

“ To the soft recesses of those sylvan haunts where your last letter informed me you at present abide, I send you my verses to Mr. Cunninghame, in the same cover with this. I copied them for you immediately after you were pleased to ask me for them, and sent them to be covered with French Marble Paper, and to my very great mortification received them in the awkward and tasteless manner in which I am forced to send them to you. I trust your goodness will excuse every fault of their covering, and of the Poet; who, whatever he may want of Genius, has it very largely made up to him in a warm and glowing heart, and whose Fire and Enthusiasm of Friendship burns with steady and unabating ardor; and though I want powers and opportunity of raising the ‘ lofty song,’ I not less admire those who can; but amongst all the legitimate children of Phœbus none possesses a higher place in my affection,—in my heart,—teach me a warmer term,—than her who—

“ ‘ Wrapt the felon cord that stop't his¹ breath
In flaming Glory's Amaranthine wreath.’ ”

“ (My quotations are from Memory.) ”

“ Madam,

“ I am your sincere friend and humble servant,

“ W. NEWTON.”

¹ Andre's.

(Lieutenant Andre, who was hanged as a spy in the American War of Independence, was a friend of Miss Seward's, and, in company with her, paid a visit to Wm. Newton shortly before he sailed for America.)

About this time Newton entered upon a seven years' engagement, with a salary of £50 a year, as machinery carpenter in the cotton mill which then stood in Monsal Dale. But when only two years of his engagement had run, the mill was burnt down, and it was with difficulty that he escaped himself from the midnight conflagration. His tools were all destroyed. They had been purchased by degrees, and had cost him £30. With his wife and two little children, he had to begin the world again. Miss Seward came to his rescue. She collected a few guineas for their present needs. "His known ingenuity in mechanics, his industry and fair moral character, induced some monied people who were going to erect a cotton mill in that neighbourhood to offer to admit him to a third partnership if he would undertake to construct the machinery, keep it in order, and could advance £200 to the common stock. An old godmother of his, who had boarded with his wife for some years, and experienced from him the kindness of filial attention, sold some houses, which were her sole support, which produced £150."¹ Miss Seward lent him the other £50 needed, "and he re-embarked in business in the respectable station of cotton manufacturer. The mill to which he belongs," wrote Miss Seward, on December 9th, 1795, "stood amidst the commercial wreck of so many great houses in Manchester about two years ago. All the Peak mills supply that town. A little before that dangerous crisis, he wrote to me that he had realised £1,000 in the concern—a great sum for the short time he had been engaged in it." And thus were commenced the Cressbrook mills.

To her various literary friends, Miss Seward often spoke of Newton in the most eulogistic terms. To William Hayley, the poet, she wrote, on August 17th, 1787: "My poetic

¹ *Letters of Anna Seward*. Edinburgh: Constable, 1811; vol. iv., p. 134. (Letter to Lady Elizabeth Butler, Dec. 9th, 1795.)

carpenter comes to see me soon. I had the pleasure of assisting him to raise a sufficient sum to acquire his admission into a partnership with an opulent cotton spinner. He tells me he never made more than £50 per annum by his former business, and that his profits of the share in the mill were last year £150. This Being has great merit in never having suffered the day dreams of his imagination to lure him from the path of manual industry, &c. I shall rejoice his honest, modest heart by showing him the high praise with which your last letter honours that poem of his that I enclosed." ¹

This "high praise" seems to refer to a sentence in a letter of Hayley's to Miss Seward, in answer to one of hers in which she had asked for his opinion of Burns. His reply was: "I admire the Scotch peasant, but do not think him superior to your poetical carpenter." ²

Six months later Newton spent a week with her. Writing to Hayley, in April, 1787, she says: "That ingenious Being whom the Muses condescended to visit in a saw pit, the sometime carpenter, now joint master of a cotton mill, passed a week here lately; the mornings of which we devoted to poetic studies, the evenings to the sublime music of Handel, through the energetic tones of Giovanni and the melting notes of his daughter." ³

In 1793, whilst Miss Seward was staying at Buxton, which had then become a most fashionable watering place, she invited Newton to stay the day with her. It was one thing to talk over congenial subjects with him when alone; it was quite a different thing to accept him as her guest at the public table in a fashionable hotel. "The Swan of Lichfield" was evidently somewhat nervous as to what would be thought of her humble guest, and as to how her own friendship with him would be regarded. Writing to Mr. Savile, she says: "That being of true integrity, that prodigy of self-cultivated genius, Newton, the minstrel of my native mountains, walks

¹ *Letters of Anna Seward*, vol. i., p. 316.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 326.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 98.

over them from Tideswell, his humble home, to pass the day with me to-morrow. To preclude wonder and comments upon my attentions to such an apparent rustic at the public table, I have shown two charming little poems of his, which are deservedly admired by everybody here."¹

Everything passed off as well as she could possibly have hoped. "The wintry storms of Sunday morning detained my minstrel at home in deceived hopes of the fairer hour, so that he did not arrive until one. Nothing could be more flattering to me or to him than the reception which he met with from the company at St. Anne's. They were generous enough not to suffer his plain appearance, his unpowdered and drenched locks, and provincial accent to chill the civilities and respect which they showed him. When I took him to the public table at the hotel, I particularly presented him to Sir John and Lady Clerk, the Baron, &c. They conversed with him; they praised his verses. Lady Clerk desired Mr. Newton and myself would drink tea in her parlour. We had previously engaged ourselves to Mrs. Sedley; but we went to Sir John and his lady at seven, and staid with them till the supper bell rung; when, contrary to all our entreaties, he would not stay till next morning. Business obliged him to encounter a walk of such fatiguing length. The storms still roared and swept beneath the mantle of night; but he is used to these wintry walks. Sir John and he talked much of mechanics; and Lady Clerk conversed with him about Sterne's writings, of which she is an admirer; and he recalled to her recollection a number of those fine characteristic life strokes, which delineate dear uncle Toby and the sub-acid philosopher, his brother. Everybody was pleased with the mingled genius and modesty with which he delivered his requested sentiments and opinions."

If classical authors are to be described as those who, in the purity of their language, have expressed thoughts which have stood the test of time, then neither Newton, nor, for the matter of that, Anna Seward (great as her reputation was in her lifetime)

¹ *Letters of Anna Seward*, vol. iii., pp. 262-264.

can be described by that term, and Hayley's comparison of Newton and of Robert Burns before quoted is a false one. Newton was evidently an ardent admirer of Pope, and, in a lesser degree, of Milton. Of Pope, indeed, he is a pedantic imitator, and he follows his master in his copious use of adjectives for the purpose of filling up his lines. But the insight into nature exhibited in his poems is remarkable. We can trace in him the consciousness of his superiority to his daily drudgery; and we can see, too, his consciousness of his power to stand firm in that drudgery in spite of the longing for poetic ease and leisure. So far as is known, no collection of William Newton's poems has been published. Some number of them were printed in the *Sheffield Iris* and other ephemeral publications. In addition to the before mentioned verses to be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, one of his sonnets addressed to Anna Seward appeared in the same periodical¹ four years later, and a sonnet is printed in an early number of the *Reliquary*.² Others of his poems have been privately printed, one of which, "The Gibbet," in reference to the punishment inflicted on one Anthony Lingard for murder committed at Litton, is frequently met with. The writer of this memoir has a manuscript collection of his poems, some of which are given at the end of this article.

He lived in the days before photography was invented, but his likeness exists, from a sketch made by Sir Francis Chantrey, R.A., under the following circumstances:—

"During a ramble," said Sir Francis, "in my own beautiful county (which has scenery I never saw surpassed in any), and descending into Monsal Dale, I overtook a peasant, as I believed, for he wore the ordinary dress of one, and that was tufted with locks of cotton-wool adhering to it. I asked some question respecting the road and its neighbourhood, and was cheerfully and civilly answered. Our way lay in the same direction, and we continued our talk; very soon I found

¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1789, part i., p. 71.

² *Reliquary*, edited by Llewellynn Jewitt, vol. i., p. 196. In this volume is an appreciation of Wm. Newton, written by Miss Sterndale, with Chantrey's portrait of him, a copy of which is given with this article.

myself in glowing contact with a mind awakened to all the touching beauties of the scenery, to poetic expression, and to such an appreciation of the fine arts as astonished and delighted me. The Dale was, or seemed to be, very short; at its termination we approached a cluster of buildings for the manufacture of cotton, a small house, which seemed to grow out of the rock, standing a little apart; into it I was cordially invited, and there I learnt my companion was Mr. Newton, the manager of the concern, also the director, master, and friend of 300 children, which the then existing law of our land permitted to be selected from the Orphan Asylums and Charity Hospitals of our large towns. Here I stayed for the remainder of the day, interested, surprised, and charmed in various ways. I took a sketch of my host, and left it with his family,—a slight but expressive token of my gratified feelings.”¹

Newton lived in times which were different from our own. The recent inventions of Hargreaves, of Arkwright, and of Crompton, had done much to improve machinery. The riots which followed the introduction of machinery were over, and manufacturers were able to work their mills without fear of the machines being destroyed through the frenzied violence of the mob. But in many places the labour was little better than slave labour. Young children of both sexes, sometimes when only eight years of age, were brought to the mills from orphanages and “pauper” institutions in various parts of the country, and though nominally apprenticed to their masters, the benefits of the apprenticeship were very onesided ones. There was no system of inspection. The children were frequently compelled to work, under the lash of brutal overlookers, for twelve and fourteen hours a day. They were badly fed, badly clothed, and badly cared for. They were treated as machines, from which the greatest possible amount of work was to be extracted, at the least possible cost, for their masters’ benefit.

¹ *Letters of Anna Seward*, pp. 193-194.

But the lot of the Cressbrook children was a far happier one. Rhodes,¹ Chantrey, and Mrs. Sterndale² all testify to their happiness, and to the kindness and consideration with which they were treated by William Newton and others who were in authority over them. There is a marked difference between the picture which they draw of the condition of the apprentices at Cressbrook Mill a century ago, and that painted by Robert Blincoe³ in the description which he gives of the barbarous cruelty with which the children were treated at Litton Mills, a little higher up the river Wye, and in the same parish of Tideswell. Mrs. Sterndale tells us of the "judicious regulations" which were in force at Cressbrook, of the cleanliness which was required, of the abundance of food "of the best quality," of the eight hours of uninterrupted sleep which the children were able to enjoy in comfortable beds and airy rooms, of the hours of work and "necessary relaxation so kindly and judiciously arranged," the former never exceeding what ought to be exacted from those in their station of life and of their tender age. Whilst the boys were separated from the girls, if there were brothers and sisters amongst them, they were allowed freely to intermingle. Relatives of the children were welcomed to the house and hospitably entertained. On certain festivals, when the weather was fine, the children were taken to Tideswell Church, three miles distant. At other times, and throughout the winter, the Church service was said in the mill rooms, and a Sunday school was held there. Small plots of ground, measuring twelve feet by eight, were allotted to them by the banks of the Wye, in the vicinity of the mill, and these were "bordered with the silver-edged thyme, and crowded with pinks, wallflowers, and sweet-williams." "The girls," continues our authoress, "sit upon the banks, working at will with their needles, or wander within their boundaries in the dale; and as they only wear their bonnets at church,

¹ Rhodes' *Peak Scenery*, vol. ii., pp. 43-47. London: Longman, 1818-1819.

² Mrs. Sterndale's *Vignettes of Derbyshire*, pp. 38-50.

³ Memoir of Robert Blincoe.

they gather the large water-dock leaf, that, supported by its long stem, forms a verdant parasol, shading many a pleasant, youthful, and happy face, and presenting a picture, novel as it is pleasing." Practical instruction in music was given to every boy who had voice or ear, and their songs and hymns were accompanied "by the rich notes of the viol." When Mrs. Sterndale wrote, the mill, in its then form, had been going on for twelve years; for, before that time, she continues, "I remember the original house, around which all the buildings have sprung, and which is yet the habitation of Mr. Newton, 'a lone and lowly dwelling 'mid the hills by a grey mountain stream.' The penates of the household are Mrs. and Miss Newton, with a most active coadjutor, to whom exertion, order, and subordination are familiar, having accompanied her husband through the whole of the Peninsular War, and who, like every other great commander, rules with a steady, firm, but gentle rein. Amidst the domestic deities of the place there is one whom it would be sacrilege to omit,—the sister of Mrs. Newton, Aunt Nancy; aunt to every individual who either resides in or visits Cressbrook, if aunt means one who, without actually being a mother, possesses all the endearing attributes, and performs all the duties of one; who passes all the day, and day after day, in providing for, and anticipating the wants of others; who is all kindness, compassion, gentleness; who . . . may not call to order, yet is the general moderator. Such is Aunt Nancy of Cressbrook. . . . I make no apology for peopling Cressbrook Dale with its actual inhabitants; for adding an existing figure even to the scanty boundaries of a vignette. The contemplation of such an establishment is most honourable to those who are its proprietors, and to those who preside over its prosperity and its comforts; whilst it may confirm the belief that all cotton mills are not the scenes of unnatural labour or harsh severity."

William Newton and his wife died in 1830, within a few days of each other, and Aunt Nancy followed them less than four years later. The following is the inscription on their tomb in Tideswell churchyard:—

"In Memory of William Newton of Cressbrook, 'The Minstrel of the Peak,' who died Nov. 3, 1830. Aged 80 years.

"Also Hellen, his Wife, who died Nov. 11, 1830. Aged 77 years.

"Also of her Sister, Ann Cook, who was buried July 27, 1834. Aged 80 years."

Successful in business, and consequently in easy circumstances, he lived to a good old age. In his eightieth year his figure was bent and his step had lost something of its old elasticity, but his memory was unimpaired, and "his spirit, his urbanity, his hospitality, and politeness never failed." Mrs. Sterndale, in an obituary notice in the *Sheffield Iris* (which was then edited by James Montgomery, the poet) for November 9th, 1830, thus sums up his character:—

"Mr. Newton's manners were polished by a gentle nature and a benevolent heart, the radical source of true politeness; his powers of conversation were various and intelligent, and when animated by the presence of those he fondly esteemed, those who met his feelings and ideas, entered into his enthusiasms, and drew out the rich stores of poetical recollection that his early and matured reading had impressed upon his singularly tenacious memory, his society was an intellectual banquet. The wild sublimity of his native mountains, the deep seclusion of their fertile valleys, with all their lucid streams and shadowy rocks, were then reverted to with a spirit and a feeling they could alone inspire. He knew them and their attractions well; he was familiar with all their changes; the stars of midnight had been his companions; the winter winds his deep-toned instruments; the rippling waters his gentle harmonies; and to hear him describe their distinguishing appearances and effects, by their local, familiar, and identifying names, was almost to stand upon the summits of Mam Tor and all her children; by the side of all the wanderings of the Wye and Derwent; to feel 'the gales that from them blew,' and breathe the very air of Derbyshire. Music, with which he was scientifically acquainted, was to him a spell of

wondrous power and exquisite delight, and nothing less than Handel could satisfy a mind and ear thus constructed. . . . Through his long life he ranked amongst his friends names distinguished by virtue and by fame. . . . He died as he had lived,—in peace and charity with all good men, beloved and mourned by his family, and respected and regretted by his friends. In Derbyshire, that witnessed his natal and his mortal hours, and in the very heart of the country he loved, his body rests in peace, and his spirit returned to Him who gave it."¹

The following are a selection from William Newton's unpublished verses:—

I.

ON HIS ELDEST SON'S BIRTHDAY.

(Undated.)

“WHILE, round the cheerful gleaming fire,
 Thy little Brothers, Will,² conspire
 To send their tokens of Affection
 And prove Fraternal recollection.
 While sportive Sam, and thoughtless Ned,
 And James, with Tully's phiz and head,
 And pensive George,—O Heaven bestow it
 That he may never be a Poet.
 While each essays to give thee pleasure
 According to his tiny treasure,
 I, who have all the Parent's heart,
 With such occasion loth to part,
 In humble Rhymes of Nature's dressing
 Send thee a Father's ardent blessing.
 In Rhymes my best affections live,
 For Verse is all I have to give.
 Still, to the Poet 'tis decreed
 That Wealth shall never be his meed;
 To him the frenzied eye is given
 That darts o'er earth and mounts to Heaven.
 To him is given the heart to glow,
 The tear to drop for others' woe.
 To him the mind above control,
 The high, the independent soul;

¹ *Reliquary*, vol. i., pp. 195, 196.

² Against the north wall of the chancel at Tideswell is a monument to the Memory of *William Newton*, who died July 9th, 1851, aged 66 years. Consequently he would be born about the year 1785.

To him the boon of warm desire,
The unquenched Patriotic fire,
The Breast illum'd by Honour's flame,
And built on Virtue all his fame.

"Such the true Poet. May thy Sire,
Who strikes a long-forgotten Lyre,
Ne'er quit the path by honour trod
For all beneath Peruvia's sod,
For all that deck'd Imperial Rome,
For all the gold of Montezume.
No.—May I prize the unsullied breast
Beyond what Carthage e'er possest.

"And thou, my son, to whom I write,
Keep Honour ever full in sight;
Keep Virtue ever in thine eye,
Howe'er the shafts of Fortune fly.
Mark and pursue the perfect plan,
On love of God graft love of Man.

"Ne'er grasp at wealth, ne'er aim at power,
The Pageants of a restless hour.
With honest heart and humble mind,
In every scene of Life resign'd,
Not grovelling low, nor yet too high,
Live with esteem, with honour die."

II.

TO THE FRENCH.

"WHILE nations invade you, resolv'd to destroy
The Scion of Freedom, their malice despise;
In vain all their wrath the sweet plant to annoy,
Which, the more it is trodden, the stronger will rise.
As well quench the Sun, or dry up the Sea,
As conquer a people resolv'd to be free.

"In Liberty's cause you need only unite,
No chains then can hold you, no fetters can bind;
Against Freedom in vain the leagu'd Despots may fight,
No Despots can conquer the freedom of Mind.
As well quench the Sun, or dry up the Sea,
As conquer a people resolv'd to be free.

"Unite and be free—how simple the plan.
'Tis yours to pursue it, and dread no alarms;
Let one Soul inform all, Boy, Woman, and Man,
And defy all the force of all Europe in arms.
As well quench the Sun, or dry up the Sea,
As conquer a people resolv'd to be free.

"Feb. 8th, 1794."

"W. N.

III.

TO MY WIFE, ON VALENTINE'S DAY.

"AND shall this day, which brings such joy
 To every vagrant Girl and Boy,
 Which brings to toying little Misses
 Such reams of paper, gloves and kisses,
 Shall such a day to Mirth devoted
 Pass by me dully and unnoted?
 While others scrawl unmeaning rhymes
 Composed by Hodge and other mimes,
 And handed down like songs in Erse,
 Guiltless of Prose, and eke of Verse;
 Shall I, who can command the Quill,
 In such a season, say, be still?
 When Laugh, and Jest, and Fun prevail,
 Torture my harmless Finger nail?
 No, while my Soul's best powers are free,
 I write, my Helen, and to thee.

"No quaint form'd knot, no lying wreath,
 Where neither Love nor Honour breathe;
 No flattering Tinsel framed by Youth,
 At once devoid of Sense and Truth;
 But honest Rhymes, disclaiming Art,
 The effusions of an Husband's heart;
 The splendid Gift my lot denies,
 The Diamond's blaze that mocks the skies,
 The sparkling zone that binds the breast,
 The nodding Plume and brilliant Crest,¹
 Esteem sincere and Love I send
 To thee, who art my bosom's friend.

"Full many a year has o'er us past
 And many a bitter adverse blast,
 Since first, in smiling vernal weather,
 We trod the path of Life together.
 For Death, for Life, for Ill, for Good,
 Two chance Adventurers we stood;
 The same our hopes, Our views the same,
 To gain and keep a spotless name;
 Our first ambition to excel
 In all the arts of acting well.

¹ The Nodding Plume, &c. There has been made up, intended as a present from the Princes of Wales to the Princess Elect, when she arrives, a most magnificent Cap Head-dress, on which is a Plume—in imitation of his Highness' Crest, studded with brilliants, which play backwards and forwards as feathers, and have a beautiful effect.—*Courant*.

"Yes many a Sun has o'er us roll'd,
 And many a 'Summer friend grown cold,'
 And,—O my heart,—ne'er to return,
 Our loves' first pledges fill their Urn.
 Yet have we felt Affection grow
 When Fate has dealt his hardest blow;
 Resigned to Heaven we journey on,
 And let the Eternal's will be done.

"Thus years have flown, and left us still
 The source of comfort,—kind good will,
 Unspotted Truth, and Love sincere,
 The fault it cannot mend, to bear.
 Yes, Love is ours, no chance that fears,
 That blooms with age, and grows with years:
 Unchecked by sorrow springs sublime,
 And mocks the Glass and Scythe of Time.

"As to myself, My faults I know;—
 Perfection claims no man below;
 But let that pass,—I have an heart
 In all thy woes that bears a part;
 That mounts to bliss when bliss is thine,
 And feels a joy almost divine
 When I thy bosom-grief can cheer,
 And from thine eye-lids wipe the tear,
 Pour consolation on thy breast
 And hush thy every care to rest.

"What now remains within our power
 Is to enjoy the present hour;
 To pace in fond review the past,
 And live prepar'd to meet the last.

"WILLIAM NEWTON.

"February 14th, 1795."

IV.

SONNET.

"I LOVE to wander on the Mountain's brow,
 Amid the terrors of the howling year,
 When neither Moon nor twinkling Stars appear,
 But deepest darkness hides the scenes below,
 When Winter's fierce conflicting Tempests blow,
 And all the arrowy winds aloud career.
 More grandly awful than the radiance clear
 Of summer evening, when in richest glow

Far in the west the day's bright orb retires.
 Congenial to my soul the Tempest's roar
 Which lifts the mind above this earthly sod;
 Humbles the proud, aspiring, vain desires,
 Calls all my powers obedient to adore
 The Cause of Nature,—for that Cause is God.

"W. N.

"Feb. 26th, 1797."

V.

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY, 1797.

(Set to Music by Mr. Samuel Slack.)

"ON the radiant wings of Morn
 Love and Grace divine are borne,
 The Spheres celestial ring,
 Golden Harps from all the sky
 Speak the great Messiah nigh,
 And Heavenly voices sing,
 'From Man to Man let Love increase,
 To God be Glory, and on Earth be Peace.'

"Shall not Man, Creation's Lord,
 To his blissful state restored,
 The mighty Chorus raise.
 Let him hymn the Great Supreme—
 Rapture kindles at the theme
 And every note is Praise.
 'From Man to Man let Love increase,
 To God be Glory, and on Earth be Peace.'

"Hark, the great Redeemer calls.
 Vanquished death before Him falls,
 Obedient to His sway:
 Comes the high omniscient Power,
 Joyful makes our present hour,
 Leads us to endless day.
 'From Man to Man let Love increase,
 To God be Glory, and on Earth be Peace.'

"W. NEWTON."