



## In the Lake District Beauty, Bliss and Solitude

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It was a hundred and fifty mile journey by car from Loch Lomond in Scotland to Lake Windermere in Cumbria, England. After we drove through the highway beside urban areas, the last thirty miles was through winding and narrow tree covered country roads, with smaller lakes and hills dotting the landscape. It was a beautiful and romantic journey, which you wished would not end. We did not have to wonder any more why many poets and artists found the area so inspiring. In the evening, we arrived at the doorstep of a hundred year old stone cottage, which was the guesthouse we had selected to stay.

The Lake District provides a wonderful panorama of water and mountain. The Lake District National Park encompasses about 900 square miles of the most diverse scenery in Britain. Bustling market towns contrast with the solitude of the lonely mountains and ancient forests. Placid lakes are overshadowed by majestic mountains, which rise sheer from the waterside, while racing streams thread the landscape. Many famous literary figures made their homes in the Lake District including Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin and poets -- Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley. Windermere, the largest lake in England and Wordsworth's house at Grasmere were only a few miles from where we stayed. These were our main attractions.

We were served an enormous hot breakfast next morning. Brian, the owner of the house made it clear to us that we were having a full "English Breakfast" (as opposed to Scottish), for which the English were well known! Since we were walking around and the clean and fresh air gave us a good appetite, we were able to eat a lunch but a very small one. We walked down to the promenade and the steamer piers at Bowness Bay. The scene was like a fine impressionistic painting on a giant canvas, composed of the calm lake in front, the mountain on the other side, flowers all over, ducks floating playfully in water and a good number of boats with many colourful sails. The small shops selling souvenirs and handicrafts were an inevitable attraction to our wives. Windermere, a ten-mile long lake, lies in a valley. It was formed by glaciers during the Ice Age. We went to Ambleside by a steamer filled with the tourists in the high summer season. The distinctive peaks of the Langdale Pikes stood out dramatically across the water, dominating the landscape. At Ambleside, a restored steam train on a steeply graded railway took us through picturesque Lakeland scenery and wild flowers for a 3.5 miles ride. We returned by steamer to Bowness after feasting our eyes with the quiet beauty of the lake. It was indeed an unforgettable experience.

The next morning we visited the village of Grasmere,