

[FOR THE REVIEW.]

English Literature in the Lower Grades.

FIDELITY—ROYAL READER, No. IV., p. 71.

This poem was written by William Wordsworth, one of the very greatest of English poets. He lived from 1770 till 1850, and spent most of his life in what is called the Lake country in the North of England. If you look for Helvellyn on a large map of England, you will see that it is in a very hilly country, and among the hills are many lakes. Wordsworth never tired of this beautiful scenery, and he wrote a great deal about it and so made it very famous. Although he was such a great poet he did not write equally well at all times and on all subjects, and this is not one of his best poems. The fourth verse is left out in this book. It describes the place thus:

Then sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven's croak
In symphony austere.

Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud;
And sunbeams; and the sounding blast;
That, if it could, would hurry past;
But that enormous barrier holds it fast."

This verse helps to make us feel the loneliness of the mountain. Perhaps it was in one of those "mists that spread the flying shroud" that the dog's master had lost his way and so fallen over the precipice.

What are "boding thoughts?"

What does the poet mean by "a lasting monument of words?" Can you recall any other dumb animals that have had such monuments raised to them or deserved to have? On page 93 we have another story of a faithful dog. Which do you like best?

What do you remember about the Poet Cowper who wrote the "Loss of the Royal George?"

The other poems of his that we have here are very different from that and from each other, and show how he could write well in various ways. Everyone who reads English poetry at all has laughed over "The Diverting History of John Gilpin, showing how he went farther than he intended, and came safe home again." For this is the full title. Cowper has told us how he came to write it. He had a very pleasant lively friend, Lady Austen, who used often to cheer him when he was ill and sad. One evening she noticed that he seemed very melancholy, and to amuse him she told this funny story that she had heard about a man being run away with and losing his hat and wig. The poet was so delighted that before he went to bed that night he turned the story into verse, and read it to his

friends next the morning at breakfast, to their surprise and amusement.

It was Lady Austen who persuaded Cowper to write a greater poem, "The Task," so called because it was a piece of work set for him by his friend. He said he had nothing to write about, and she told him to write about the sofa on which she was sitting. So the first part of the work is called "The Sofa;" it begins by telling how we came to have sofas, and then goes on to describe the walks that he liked to take when he was a boy, before he was old enough to be easily tired. He tells us about the country in winter and brings it all before us in simple and beautiful words. "The Task" has many lines that are often quoted, such as—

"The cups that cheer but not inebriate."

"Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free,"

and

"God made the country, but Man made the town."

Cowper wrote fine prose as well as good poetry. His letters are delightful reading, and by his writings he has given pleasure and comfort to many people, though his own life was dull and sad.

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A Rare Postage Stamp.

BY GEORGE STEWART, D. C. L.

To the Province of New Brunswick belongs the distinction of having produced one of the rarest postage stamps in the world. This was the famous "Connell" stamp. In 1861, decimal currency was introduced into the province, and the uncouth pence issue of postage labels were replaced by a set of graceful stamps representing cents. A locomotive adorned the one cent issue, while the Queen's head, a portrait of the Prince of Wales, and a steamship supplied the designs used on the ten cents, twelve and a half cents, and seventeen cents stamps. The Hon. Charles Connell was Postmaster General at the time. Without consulting his colleagues, he ordered his own effigy to be engraved on the five cent stamps, and they were duly printed in brown and issued to the public. The stamp aroused the utmost indignation. Mr. Connell's associates in the cabinet were furious, while the members of the opposition ridiculed the Postmaster General and the government to their hearts' content. The stamp was immediately withdrawn from circulation and destroyed. The plates were broken up, and Mr. Connell was forced to resign his post. This he very promptly did, and for a year or two he remained in private life. The stamps were used for one day and a sheet or two of them found their way into the hands of collectors. A short time afterwards