

HOME & SCHOOL.

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William Cowper.

WILLIAM COWPER the Christian poet, was born at Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, England, on the 15th of November, 1731. His father was a minister of the Church of England, and one of George II's chaplains. When only six years of age he lost his mother whom he deeply loved, and continued as long as he lived to cherish her memory with a deep affection. The boy's disposition was very timid, and this shrinking sensitiveness continued to be a source of pain to him as long as he lived. At school he was tyrannised over by his cruel and unfeeling schoolmates, who probably did not know the severity of the torture their thoughtless barbarity inflicted on the delicate and sensitive child. All they knew was that young Cowper did not defend himself, and these boys, being cowards, made him the victim of their cruelty.

When he was eighteen years of age he began to study law. But he was not a diligent student. He disliked the profession and was inattentive to its duties. It is not surprising that he was a failure as a lawyer. He did not, however, altogether waste his time, for he read much during these years, and gave evidence that he possessed poetic gifts.

Through the efforts of influential relatives, William Cowper was appointed to a clerkship in the House of Lords; but so great was his shyness that he was frightened at the prospect and declined the appointment. Another clerkship, one more suited to his disposition, was obtained for him, but he became so alarmed at the thought of having to pass an examination to test his fitness for the office that his reason was impaired, and he attempted to take his own life.

For a time Cowper was an inmate of an asylum at St Albans. Afterwards he removed to Huntingdon, where he became acquainted with a family of the name of Unwin, who showed a kindly interest in him and took him under their care. A life-long friendship arose between them. After the death of Mr. Unwin, his widow, Cowper accompanying her, went to live at Olney, where that remarkable man the Rev. John Newton lived. Here Cowper took up his abode, and spent

the best and most useful years of his life.

His first volume of poems was prepared at Olney, and published when he was fifty years of age. Most of our readers have been delighted and amused with "the diverting story of John Gilpin." Lady Austen, a warm friend of the poet, told the story to him when he was in a particularly gloomy mood. It took his fancy, and next morning he read to his friends the poem that

was devout and reverential, and he was a firm believer in the truths of God's Word. His works are well worth reading still for the great pleasure they give, the beauty and life-likeness of his natural descriptions, and for the precious truths they so powerfully enforce. His published letters show that he was also a delightful correspondent.

He was very fond of pets. He kept tame hares, and pets and poet were on the very best of terms. He had also

Norfolkshire, on April 15, 1800. After the rude buffetings of his troubled and stormy life, he found in the Saviour he loved and trusted that eternal shelter where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

The Kind of Boy Wanted.

ONE thing that is told us about Jesus' boyhood is that he was obedient to his mother. I once saw in the papers an advertisement printed in this way: "Wanted for a shop, a boy that obeys his mother." The man who kept that shop knew that if a boy did not mind his mother at home he would not obey his master in a shop, or be so likely to obey the laws of the country against stealing and all other wrongs, and the laws of God. The world does not want in business or anywhere else boys who do not mind their mothers. Home is a little school of obedience. If we do not learn to obey the laws of home, we shall be very likely to break the laws of the country and get into prison at last.

Alcoholic Liquors,

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION.

SENATOR BLAIR, from the Committee on Education and Labour, submitted a favourable report from the majority of the committee on a joint resolution proposing that an amendment to the constitution in relation to alcoholic liquors and other poisonous beverages be submitted to the Legislature of the States for ratification. The amendment provides that after the year 1900 the manufacture and sale and importation of distilled alcoholic intoxicating liquors, except for medicinal, mechanical, chemical, and scientific purposes, and for use in the arts, shall cease. The report which accompanies the proposed amendment says the committee

does not deem it necessary to discuss the evils of the use of alcohol, but believe the people have a right to decide what measures shall be taken for the regulation or extirpation of this traffic.

"SEEST thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." —Prov. xxii. 29.



WILLIAM COWPER.

first brought him into general public notice.

The success attending his literary efforts induced him to persevere in the exercise of his poetic gifts. At Lady Austen's suggestion he began his greatest poem "The Task," which he was able successfully to finish. Several of the hymns now sung in our churches were from Cowper's pen. His spirit

a great liking for flowers, and spent much time in their cultivation. There was one of the most beautiful of all flowers he was fond of cultivating—Charity. He was a great friend to the poor, and was diligent in his efforts to promote their bodily and spiritual welfare. After the death of his friends he felt very lonely, and did not long survive them. He died at East Dereham,