

THE LITERARY KINGDOM

BY M. M. KILPATRICK.

At the unveiling of the memorial drinking-fountain erected to the memory of William and Dorothy Wordsworth in the public park at Cockermouth, the poet's birthplace, a letter was received from Mr. Gladstone in which he wrote : " I rejoice in any and every manifestation of honor to Wordsworth. I visited his house when a boy, and when a young man had the honor of entertaining him more than once in the Albany. I revered his genius and delighted in his kindness, and in the grave and stately, but not austere dignity of his manners. Apart from all personal impression, and from all the prerogatives of genius, as such, we owe him a debt of gratitude for having done so much for our literature in the capital points of purity and elevation."

Mr. Bayard, the American Ambassador wrote : " In America our debt to Wordsworth has long been acknowledged, and, happily for us, his gentle influence is steadily increasing, and is more and more a recognized moral and social force."

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AMONG the literary shrines of England few offer greater stimulus to memory and imagination than Wordsworth's one-time home, " Dove Cottage," in the village of Grasmere, Westmoreland. It is a queer, old-fashioned bit of a house, made of rough stones covered with coarse mortar, and was once a little wayside inn, frequented by Westmorland farmers on their way to the mill, and then called the " Dove and Olive Bough." It is two stories high, or one might better say two stories low, since by standing on tip toe one can almost see into the small, mullioned upper windows that with their tiny, leaden-barred bits of glass, open out on hinges like doors.

The entrance is at the side and you go into the simple house that sheltered genius through a little rustic porch that gives into a tiny entry, and then without any intervening door upon the stone-flagged sitting-room, with its black, wainscotted walls, and small fireplace. Off this room opens a door into another apartment, in which the poet's sister, Dorothy, slept. Another door goes into the little kitchen, and in the bit of entry way in the centre of the house a few short stone steps lead by a tiny landing out into the garden, and also to the upstairs rooms. The first of these was Wordsworth's study, drawing-room and his children's play-room, all in one. Here in a niche in the wall are the scanty shelves that held all their books ; here is the fireplace with its hob, at which Wordsworth's Mary, with " eyes like stars of twilight fair," made tea and hushed her babies to sleep. Wordsworth's bedroom still has its red-curtained bed in an alcove, and on a table the fat, cracked jug, and bowl that comprised his simple toilet arrangements. Over the kitchen is the children's room, and behind that is the smallest guest chamber that ever was, no larger than a clothes closet, and here each in his turn, rested Lamb and De Quincey, and Southey, and Humphrey Davy, and Walter Scott. That was a rare little Cottage, and those who lived in its dull little rooms did their plain duties finely and had no time for fashion or regret. Often when William had been busy chopping wood, he would come in flushed with a new poem singing in his brain. Perhaps it was " The Cuckoo," or " The Butterfly," or " Green Linnet," and Dorothy and Mary would put by their work to listen.