

Among the Lanes and Moors of Devonshire.

By G. U. HAY.

We had long wished to visit England in the time of primroses, cowslips and daffodils, to listen to the song of the lark and the nightingale, and to see an English spring open. So in early April we took steamer at St. John, N. B., and after an uneventful voyage of about ten days arrived at Liverpool. The trip through Wales and the west of England included a brief stay at the ancient City of Chester, with its old Roman walls and cathedral, and Bristol, from which Cabot set sail in 1497 on his voyage which resulted in the discovery of Canada. A noble monument to the discoverer stands on a height overlooking Bristol channel and the broad Atlantic. As one looks at this testimonial of the citizens of Bristol he thinks of the pittance of a few pounds with which that niggardly monarch, Henry VII, rewarded the brave mariner who gave to England a continent!

Our wish is not to tarry in cities, with their rush and din, but to hie away to some secluded spot, if such there be in this populous England. Hastening through Somerset and Devon, where countless herds of sheep and cattle are feeding upon the downs, we arrive at Barnstaple, and take a narrow-gauge railway (very narrow it is—scarcely two feet between the rails) and winding up through a succession of coombes and tors (narrow valleys and rounded, bare hills) we reach a height of 1,000 feet above the sea, and descend about 300 feet, where our miniature railway ends. We climb *down* to the village of Lynton, occupying a cove-like niche in the hills, the centre of England's "Switzerland." And a grand and beautiful spot it is, embowered with hills, many of which rise over a thousand feet above the sea, with intersecting coombes or gorges, through which descend brawling and impetuous streams, and among scenery that is probably not surpassed in the British Islands. Here we have lingered for two weeks, and are tempted to stay longer, enjoying its bracing air, fragrant with gorse and primrose and wallflower, amid enchanting views and walks.

We are among the scenes of Blackmore's romance of "Lorna Doone," a novel that has pictured the people and scenes of portions of Devon and Somerset, as Sir Walter Scott has done in his poems and novels for Scotland. A tolerably faithful picture it is of the country, too, although Blackmore did not profess to write a historical novel. There are farmers of bulk and substance here who still bear the name of Ridd, descendants, no doubt, of the "girt Jan Ridd," and who still talk to you, in the

quaint Devonshire dialect, of mutton and bacon and butter (but not of that famous dainty, Devonshire cream); there is a Nicholas Snow, Esq., who resides on the ancestral estate, and who scents in every tourist the possible author of "another book of lies," which will bring other swarms of inquisitive people "to overrun the country;" there is the quaint Oare church, through a window of which Carver Doone shot Lorna as she stood up to wed John Ridd; there is the huge ash tree near by, whose giant limbs are said to have been bent by the strength of the redoubtable John as he sought a weapon while in pursuit of the would-be murderer; there is the famous Doone retreat among the Exmoor hills, from which flows the Badgeworthy (pr. Badgery)



A View of Exmoor and the Badgeworthy Waters.

stream; there are the lonely moors, where sheep and ponies still abound, and still wild enough to be peopled by elves and witches; and there is a "Mother Meldrum's Cave" lying amid the Valley of Rocks, with abundance of bracken to feed the fires of the witch's caldron.

And there are the Devonshire lanes! What a charm a walk through them gives. Grassy banks are on either side of you built up with stone and



A Devonshire Lane.

earth, surmounted with a hedge of thorn or May, blossoming in spring or early summer, or yellow in places with the flowers of the gorse or furze, which