

which were great rarities in these parts, and it behooved her to get them delivered: but she would then be quite free to accompany me to all the walks in which she had seen Squire Cowper a hundred and a hundred times, — to the “Peasant’s Nest,” and the “alcove,” and the “avenue,” and the “rustic bridge,” and the “Wilderness,” and “Yardley oak,” and, in short, anywhere or everywhere. I could not have been more in luck: my delightful old woman had a great deal to say: she would have been equally garrulous, I doubt not, had Cowper been a mere country squire, and Mrs. Unwin his housekeeper; but as he chanced to be a great poet, and as his nearer friends had, like the planets of a central sun, become distinctly visible, from their proximity, by the light which he cast, and were evidently to remain so, her gossip about him and them I found vastly agreeable. The good Squire Cowper! she said, — well did she remember him, in his white cap, and his suit of green turned up with black. She knew the Lady Hesketh too. A kindly lady was the Lady Hesketh; there are few such ladies now-a-days: she used to put coppers into her little velvet bag every time she went out, to make the children she met happy; and both she and Mrs. Unwin were remarkably kind to the poor. The road to Weston-Underwood looks down upon the valley of the Ouse. “Were there not water-lilies in the river in their season?” I asked; “and did not Cowper sometimes walk out along its banks?” — “O yes,” she replied; “and I remember the dog Beau, too, who brought the lily ashore to him. Beau was a smart, petted little creature, with silken ears, and had a good deal of red about him.”

My guide brought me to Cowper’s Weston residence, a handsome, though, like the Olney domicile, old-fashioned house, still in a state of good repair, with a whitened many-windowed front, and tall steep roof flagged with stone; and I whiled