

[Our British lakes are not important from their size or commercial capabilities, but their peculiar beauties have endeared them to artist and poet.

In England, the Lake District includes the south of Cumberland and the north of Westmoreland ; a region of limited area, but abounding in the most diversified and romantic landscapes. The Cumbrian lakes are Bassenthwaite, Buttermere, Crummock Water, Derwentwater, Ellerdale, Thirlmere, and Wast Water. Those of Westmoreland are Grasmere and Windermere. Ulleswater is partly in Cumberland and partly in Westmoreland.

Derwentwater is justly famous for its picturesque loveliness. It is 3 miles long, 1½ miles broad, 72 feet deep, and 222 feet above the sea. Rocky mountains closely encircle it, as if it were Diana's bathing-pool, which they would fain protect from the curious eye. Its surface is diversified by several richly-wooded islands.

Grasmere is also fenced round by lofty mountains. It is oval in form, like a cameo, and measures upwards of a mile in length and half a mile in breadth. At the head of the lake is the fair village of Grasmere, with its gray old church, in whose quiet "God's Acre" repose the remains of Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge, and some members of Wordsworth's family.

It is almost impossible to name or think of this fairy ring of waters, without recalling the fine sonnet in which the great poet of the Lakes has done homage to its charms :—

" Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the gray west ; and lo ! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars ;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror?—or the nether sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires?—But list ! a voice is near ;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds.
' Be thankful, thou ; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here ! ' " *

The Queen of the English Lakes, however, is *Windermere* (or *Winandermere*), which is partly in the county of Lancaster, and partly separates that county from Westmoreland. Its length is 11 miles, its extreme breadth 1 mile ; it is fed by the united waters of the Brathay and Rothay, as well as by numerous rippling and flashing rills and brooklets ; its surplus waters flow off through the channel of the Leven into Morecambe Bay. Its greatest depth is 240 feet.† Many of the isles which gem its liquid bosom are of a beauty which poets dream of in their dreams, and its finely-wooded shores open up at every step a landscape of Arcadian richness in form and colour. At the north end the gentle loveliness of its scenery gives place to an air of rugged and almost gloomy majesty ; and the heights of Bowfell, Scafell,

* [Wordsworth, "Poems of the Imagination," sonnet vii.]

† [The deepest of the English lakes is Wast Water, 270 feet.]