

OUR TABLE.

We found upon our table the other day, "the Scarlet Letter," by Hawthorne, an American author, a work of much power and beauty, which gives a thrilling portraiture of the inner man, shewing the resistless force of uncurbed passion, and the might and certainty of the retribution, which follows its indulgence. So strikingly is the great moral developed in the story, that all who read must involuntarily ask themselves if they are living a life of hypocrisy, or if the great and divine law of Truth is the guide and safeguard of their hearts.

The style of the book is quaint but fascinating, sparkling with graphic descriptions of nature, rich in depth and beauty of thought, and with an under current of pure and holy feeling which constantly gushes up to charm and refresh us. So deep an interest hangs over every page, that it is not easy when once commenced to lay it aside, as many can testify who have opened only to satisfy their curiosity, by solving the mystery of its singular title. This is indeed not understood except by those who have some knowledge of the early Puritan settlers of New England, and the severity of their laws and judgments. In order to express their deep detestation of all sin, the unfortunate whose weakness in yielding to any form of temptation became known to them, was compelled to wear the initial letter of his, or her, crime, emblazoned on his breast, and thus the reader of Mr. Hawthorne's book, will shortly find the full significance of the "Scarlet Letter," A.

We cannot leave our Table before chronicling the pleasure we have derived from a series of little books, little in form, diminutive in outward manifestation, but simply and beautifully embodying high and important truths as ever were breathed from the lips of the most eloquent divine. "A Trap to catch a Sunbeam," is in itself a sunbeam, lighting darkened hearts, and teaching the way by which to secure the brightness and beauty of this life.—"Old Joliffe," the best old soul in the world, diffusing happiness and joy wherever his round cheerful face is seen;—and "Only," a small word but pregnant with meaning and instruction;—these are the separate titles of three small tales, which contain the germ of rich treasures, and if read in a right spirit will reveal truer riches than the magic of "Aladdin's Lamp;" or the "Wishing Cap of Fortunatus."

They are written by a young and pretty English girl, and this knowledge, may perhaps invest them with an additional charm, at least for our bachelor friends. We believe they may be found, and also, the work above noticed, at the principal bookstores in the city.

We have been reading with much interest, "Midsummer Eve, A Fairy Tale of Love," by Mrs. S. C. Hall, and would commend it particularly to the attention of our female readers. It abounds in the usual fine tact, and delicate discrimination of character which marks all the productions of that popular authoress, and the story, though simple, is beautifully narrated and replete with genuine pathos, and healthy sentiment. The fairy machinery of the tale is fancifully got up, and hangs round it like a graceful drapery through which we have glimpses of an ideal world, that without startling our credulity seems to blend in perfect harmony with the events of actual life. The "little people" who are supposed to sway the destinies of Eva Raymond, the heroine, are resolved into the pure affections and moral principles, which are in fact the good angels of every woman's life, and on the proper cultivation of which, her true happiness entirely depends. Never were these affections and principles more beautifully exemplified than in the heart trials of Eva Raymond, and the charm of a pure, unselfish, loving character, is most exquisitely wrought out, and perfectly sustained.

The trials of the artist and his young wife are touched with a graphic pen; the simple faith, the loving, hopeful heart of Eva, always cheerful, never desponding, sustaining the less buoyant spirit of her husband by her own brightness, which filled their humble apartment with a charm, that almost banished the terrors of want, and subdued the agony of disappointment. Mrs. Hall has also been true to nature in her delineation of Sidney's character. With the heroism of a martyr, the noble principles of an honorable man, and the true affection of a devoted husband, he has not the endurance, the strong faith, the bright hope which shone so clearly in the darkest hours of Eva's trial, and which gave her power to endure and conquer. "Loving and being beloved," was the fairy gift at her birth: it is a gift which every woman receives, and we are sure that all who read this pleasant story must feel that it is the highest glory of her sex, to use it through life generously, for her own happiness and the happiness of others.

We are not writing a critique but merely a simple notice of a book, which seems to us to possess a singular charm in its simplicity and truthfulness to nature. The winding up of the tale would have pleased us better, had the artist life been carried out till genius and perseverance had won their own high reward. But *chaacun à son gout*; an elaborate story is of little consequence if a book of fiction can be made interesting despite of it, from the charm of description and the beauty and justness of sentiment it contains.

Several articles received for this number, are necessarily delayed till next month.