

OUR TABLE.

DIARY IN AMERICA, BY CAPTAIN MARRYAT.

THE facility of intercourse between England and America has, of late years, deluged these countries with rival tourists, whose delight it seems to have been, to pass over all that was in fact worthy of remark, that they might gloat upon the insignificant nothings which so well suited with their own insignificant criticism. Talent, and a species of flippant wit, unfortunately, have sometimes assisted in giving a rather keener edge to their satire than it merited; and these ridiculous tirades have succeeded in keeping alive feelings of irritation between certain classes in the two countries, which it were well to bury among the forgotten relics of the past.

The ungentelemanly and ungenerous meanness which has taken advantage of the confiding hospitality, extended to respectable strangers, both in England and America, has, in many instances, been productive of formality and distrust, frequently neutralizing all attempts at familiar intercourse with those who visit either country, on tours of pleasure, and for the purpose of personally seeing the countries, only. This was to have been expected. They who have had their most domestic scenes laid bare to the hungry gaze of the world, will scarcely be prevailed upon again to admit into the sanctuary of their homes, strangers of the same country, by whom they are in danger of being treated in the same manner. This is a greater evil than at a first glance it seems. America and England are, though separate and distinct in political relationship, bound to each other by ties stronger than those which link together many states which own the same government. Their interests are identified, and thousands in either country are dependent upon the other, not only for the luxuries which they respectively furnish, but for the very means of existence,—their trade furnishing daily sustenance to no (comparatively) mean proportion of their inhabitants. True, England has the power of rendering herself independent of America; and America, when she wills it, may become independent of Britain; but distress and ruin would dog thousands to the grave ere this could be accomplished; and when achieved, neither would, in any respect, be better for the change, whilst new causes begetting new effects, would again render innovation necessary. Besides, there are myriads in America whose most enduring affections are with those they have left behind them in Britain; and there are many in the far-off isles, whose friends and brothers—those with whom they are linked by the endearing recollections of early association—now inhabit the new world. It is unwise to do that which will wrench these links asunder, or fan into life and action the latent seeds of jealousy and distrust which circumstances have left in the breasts of many of the inhabitants of the two countries.

Feeling thus, then, we find it a grateful task to free the gallant author of the work before us from any share of the foible-hunting mania which has recently gone abroad among tourists in general. Not that we feared that Captain Marryat would descend to anything so unlike the gentlemanly character which he bears, but because there are writers in the Union who do not scruple to class him with the Trollopes and Butlers, whose pens have searched out the smallest specks upon the American social character. He has indulged, indeed, occasionally, in a jest; but the subject is generally such that a liberal American can afford to laugh with him—never upon any question involving serious discussion, and seldom having any reference beyond the individual character of some of the more eccentric personages with whom, in the course of his wanderings, the author came into temporary contact.

We rejoice that the gallant author of these excellent volumes has scarcely alluded to any of those traits in the character of our neighbours, of which, nationally, as well as in respect to these Colonies alone, we have lately had so much reason to complain; and this, although, for the bare expression of his praiseworthy British feeling, he drew upon himself no small modicum of abuse. We have said we rejoice at this; for notwithstanding all the melancholy incidents of the last two years, we would not willingly quarrel with our excitable contemporaries; and being politically in amity with them, it should be the aim of all whose opinions may carry weight, to cultivate such a feeling of reciprocal esteem as is best calculated to advance the prosperity of either country, which, united as they are by the commercial character of the people, can scarcely fail, in a corresponding degree, to be shared by the other.

Captain Marryat has divided his work into two parts, the major of which is devoted to his Diary,—the “balance,” under the title of Remarks, taking an enlightened view of those subjects which are supposed most generally to occupy the attention of the English reader. The comparisons with England have been made in a spirit of candour which has hitherto been too much neglected; nor do we feel any envious emotions at finding that, young as she is, America is treading fast upon her parent's heels,—in those matters which in the present matter-of-fact age are deemed the essentials of modern greatness,—it will necessarily require many a century to gather round the American continent the glorious memories which haunt the ocean isles—the pride, pomp, and circumstance which have been woven round them by the undying deeds of the mighty and forgotten dead.

Having no intention of attempting an elaborate criticism of this interesting work, which, we doubt not, will find its way into such general perusal that almost every reader will form his own opinion upon its merits, we will proceed at once to the furnishing