

OUR TABLE.

THE MERCHANT AND THE FRIAR.

THE author of this work, Sir Francis Palgrave, is one instance of the promise of a precocious childhood, being borne out by the fruits of maturer age. When only eight years old, he translated into English the *Datrukyomachiu* of Homer, the long, hard-sounding title of which is a fit emblem of the difficulties it presents, even to the practised Greek scholar. Though still comparatively a young man, he has already published a number of works, displaying profound learning and unwearied antiquarian research, illustrated by an easy and agreeable style. Of these, "The Merchant and the Friar"—a second edition of which is here given us, in Parker's "Collections in Popular Literature"—presents a very favourable specimen.

The scene is laid in England, in the thirteenth century. "The Merchant" is the celebrated traveller, Marco Polo; "the Friar," the no less famous Roger Bacon, whom in the first chapter our author introduces to each other in the refectory of the ancient abbey of Abingdon. In the second, they journey together towards London, and their presence by the way, at a county election, gives occasion for much valuable information on the gradual rise of the representative system. Arriving at the metropolis, Marco visits Guildhall, under the guidance of his companion, the Friar. The third chapter, which narrates this visit, also traces out the origin of the various privileges which the citizens of London have from time to time obtained, and which have almost elevated that city to the dignity of a separate commonwealth. The next section introduces our travellers to the High Court of Parliament, then sitting, and embraces a clear statement of the progress of Parliamentary legislation, with the origin of the Privy Council, and various other parts of our Constitutional Government. The fifth and sixth chapters record and illustrate those foreshadowings, in the mind of Friar Bacon, of future discoveries, which procured him, in the thirteenth century, the reputation of the magician and wizard, but which, carried into practice in the eighteenth, are hailed as the manifest tracks of the gigantic onward strides of science.

This brief sketch may give the reader some notion of the variety of subjects treated of in this excellent work; but it can give him no idea of Sir Francis Palgrave's fascinating style of language, or of the clear and lucid manner in which these somewhat profound matters are dealt with. There are some who prefer a little fiction mixed with history;—their physic must always have a lump of sugar in it. To such lovers of

the *Romance* of History and of Science, we can conscientiously recommend this volume, as one that cannot fail to amuse as well as instruct; and even the more profound student will find, in its pages, many facts in the early history of society and of government, which could only have been ascertained by the most patient antiquarian research.

THE PROMPTER.—BY MRS. FLEMING.

WE gratefully acknowledge the receipt from the clever authoress, of a copy of this valuable book. We have already alluded to it in terms of commendation; and, we are happy to perceive that, since its publication, it has been most favourably noticed—not by the press alone, but by several of our most eminent teachers. We are satisfied that the plan which the authoress recommends, for teaching grammar, is immeasurably superior to the modes hitherto followed; inasmuch as it addresses itself to the reason rather than to the memory. If the suggestions contained in this book be generally adopted, what has, to the risen generation, been the task of years, will be to the rising generation rather a pleasure than a toil. It will also induce a habit of thinking, and of tracing effects to their causes, which must be highly serviceable to the pupils in after life. We understand that Mrs. Fleming has in course of preparation for the press, another work, intended to accompany "the Prompter." We hope she may receive the patronage which her exertions in behalf of education have so well deserved.

WE this month present our readers with an article from the pen of a new contributor, C. H.,—an excellent review of an excellent work. As he has not furnished us with his address, this is the only medium we have of thanking him for his communication, which we are certain our readers will unite with us in hoping may not be the only one from his pen that will adorn the pages of the *GARLAND*.

A TYPOGRAPHICAL error occurred in the heading of the tale called the "Yorkshire Factory Girl," which appeared in our last number. The initials of the authoress are "A. E. L." not "L. E. L.," as there incorrectly printed. Some of the city Journals, in noticing, as they are frequently kind enough to do, the appearance of the September number, attributed the story to the celebrated Miss Landon, a mistake to which the initials naturally led. We were indebted for the story to the kindness of the Rev. Dr. Lundy, Vice-Principal of McGill College, whose mother, Mrs. A. E. Lundy, is the real author of the excellent and interesting tale referred to.