

## "THE NEIGHBOURS."

A TALE OF EVERY-DAY LIFE.

*From the Swedish.*

THESE works justly take a high rank in modern literature,—which mingle with an accurate description of the manners and customs of any nation,—those embodiments of character, sentiment or passion, which are common to all mankind. They convey knowledge without the gravity of science,—and confer an amusement which reason approves. History counts them as her allies, and Wisdom need not frown on their accompaniment of fiction, if it break not the harmony of virtue. The wild-flowers that spring up among the corn, do not choke it, and in the day of harvest, the reaper readily separates them from the ripened sheaves.

In works of this class, a two-fold excellence is required,—that the truth should be simply told, and the fiction harmless. A still closer test is applied by the philanthropic and christian critic,—that both their truth and fiction should be of salutary tendency,—that they should aspire to make their readers better and happier, and thus either directly or collaterally, aid the cause of morality and religion.

The books of Frederika Bremer, translated by Mary Howitt, one of the sweetest poets of any age or country, bid fair to open almost as distinct a school in the writings of the female sex, as those of Walter Scott did, in the department of romance. Especially does the one before us, evince simplicity, originality,—skill in delineating, and distinctness in sustaining character, with that tact in touching its minuter springs, which appertains only to genius. "Ma chere mere" is as peculiar and prominent in her way, as Meg Merril's was in her's. This mingling of strong passions with weaknesses and eccentricities,—the kindness of woman,—with a majestic, masculine, and terrible prowess, required, one would think, more than the energy of a female pen. Yet in the sweet touches of domestic life,—indeed, in the whole intercourse of Franceska and her Bear, looks forth the woman's nature in such weakness, constancy and truth, that we are fain to bless it.

Of the fidelity of Miss Bremer's pencillings of scenery and manners in her native clime, we are assured by competent judges. That they leave a vivid impression, we are confident. Indeed we half fancy that we have been guests and denizens at Rosenrik,—seen Lars Andus amusing himself of an evening with his joiner's

tools, or inhaled the smoke from his pipe;—heard at Carlsfors, the mighty violin, or the speeches of the General in Mansfield, to the well disciplined dependants.

What can be more pleasing, or full of nature than the first approach of the bride to her home, at the former place.

"There, on that hill, from whence I first looked into the valley where Rosenrik lies, behold a dust-covered carriage, within which sat the Bear and his wife. That little wife looked forth with curiosity, for before her gleamed a vale, beautiful in the light of evening. Great woods stretch out below, and surround crystal lakes;—corn-fields in silken waves eucalypt grey mountains, and white buildings peer forth with friendly aspects among the trees. Here and there, on wood-covered heights, pillars of smoke ascend to the clear evening heaven from the burning turf-fields. Truly, all was beautiful, and I was charmed. I bent myself forward, and was thinking on a certain happy natural family in Paradise,—one Adam and one Eve,—when suddenly, the great Bear laid his great paws upon me, and held me so tight, that I was near giving up the ghost,—while he kissed me, and besought me to find pleasure in what was here."

In pathos, Miss Bremer is as powerful as in the frank and discursive epistolary narrations of little things. Witness the scene, where Ma chere mere, after long concealing with, and striving to conceal the increasing malady of blindness announces it to her assembled children.

"Are you all here?" inquired Ma chere mere with a firm voice. We replied in the affirmative, at the same time gathering around her. "My children," she began, with a strange mixture of strength and humility, "I wished to be alone for a moment, in order to prepare myself as becomes a chrisuan, to appear before you, and reveal to you my misfortune. Chagrin has had its full dominion,—it is no time that reason should resume its own. My dear children, the hand of the Lord lies heavy upon me. He hath smitten my eyes with darkness."

A smothered expression of grief was heard, and the echo spread itself around. "My dear children, you must not distress yourselves about me. I myself grieve no longer. At first I acknowledge that it went hard with me, and for a long time I would not believe that it could be so with me, as it now is. No! I would not concede to it. I murmured in my self. But it grew darker and darker. To