

OUR TABLE.

MARDI; AND A VOYAGE THITHER—BY HERMAN MELVILLE.

As allegorical romance, from the polished pen of Herman Melville, the author of "Typee" and "Omoo" has just made its appearance, from the press of the Harpers of New York—and already it has created something of what is called a "sensation" in the reading world. Herman Melville, in spite of his romantic name, will be not an unworthy rival of the most celebrated American novelists, and his "Mardi" will lift him at once up many steps of the ladder, which he has stoutly determined to climb. It is, as we have said, a kind of allegory—a fancy voyage into the world, the prominent features of which are portrayed with a racy vigour which is both pleasant and piquant. We have not room to enter into its merits fully, but the following extract, in which the British Isles are introduced, under the name of Dominora, will give a good idea of the character of the book:—

The three canoes still gliding on, some further particulars were narrated concerning Dominora; and incidentally, of other isles.

It seems that his love of wide dominion sometimes led the otherwise sagacious Bello into the most extravagant actions. If the chance accumulated shelf of soil and drift-wood about any detached shelf of coral in the lagoon held forth the remotest possibility of the eventual existence of an inlet there, with all haste he despatched canoes to the spot, to take prospective possession of the as yet nearly sub marine territory; and, if possible, erect the zoophytes.

During an unusually low tide, here and there bearing the outer reef of the Archipelago, Bello caused his royal spear to be planted upon every place thus exposed, in token of his supreme claim thereto.

Another anecdote was this: that to Dominora there came a rumour, that in a distant island there dwelt a man with an uncommonly large nose; of most portentous dimensions; indeed, by the soothsayers supposed to foreshadow some dreadful calamity. But disregarding these superstitious conceits, Bello forthwith despatched an agent, to discover whether this huge promontory of a nose was geographically available; if so, to secure the same, by bringing the proprietor back.

Now, by sapient old Mohi, it was esteemed a very happy thing for Mardi at large, that the subjects whom Bello sent to populate his foreign acquisitions, were but too apt to throw off their yassalage, as soon as they deemed themselves able to cope with him.

But what more of King Bello? Notwithstanding his territorial acquisitiveness, and aversion to stolen nations, he was yet a glorious old king;

rather choleric—a word and a blow—but of a right loyal heart. Rail at him as they might, at bottom all the isles were proud of him. And almost in spite of his rapacity, upon the whole, perhaps, they were the better for his deeds. For if sometimes he did evil with no very virtuous intentions, he had fifty ways of accomplishing good without meaning it. According to an ancient oracle, the hump-backed monarch was but one of the most conspicuous pieces on a board, where the gods played for their own entertainment.

"But here it must not be omitted, that of late King Bello had somewhat abated his efforts to extend his dominions. Various causes were assigned. Some thought it arose from the fact that already he found his territories too extensive for one sceptre to rule; that his more remote colonies largely contributed to his revenues. Others affirmed that his hump was getting too mighty for him to carry; others still, that the nations were waxing too strong for him. With prophetic solemnity, head-shaking sages averred that he was growing older and older; had passed his grand climacteric; and thought it was a hale old age with him, yet it was not his lusty youth; that although he was daily getting rounder, and rounder in girth, and more florid of face, that these, howbeit, were rather the symptoms of a morbid obesity, than of a healthful robustness. These wise ones predicted that very soon poor Bello would go off in an apoplexy.

But in Vivaenza there were certain blusterers, who often thus prated: "The Hump-back's hour is come; at last the old teamster will be gored by the nations he's yoked; his game is done,—let him show his hand and throw up his sceptre; he cutsbers Mardi,—let him be cut down and burned; he stands in the way of his betters,—let him sheer to one side; he has shut up many eyes, and now himself grows blind; he hath committed horrible atrocities during his long career, the old sinner!—now let him quickly say his prayers and be beheaded."

Howbeit, Bello lived on; enjoying his dinners, and taking his jorums as of yore. Ah! I have yet a jolly long lease of life, thought he over his wine; and like unto some obstinate old uncle, he persisted in flourishing, in spite of the prognostications of the nephew nations, which, at his demise, perhaps hoped to fall heir to odd parts of his possessions: Three streaks of fat valleys to one of lean mountains!

THE SEA LIONS—BY J. LENNIMORE COOPER.

ANOTHER novel from the pen of this celebrated author has just appeared. We have not had time to read it, but we have little doubt that it will well pay perusal. Cooper wields a powerful pen, and calls up interest and excitement at his will. We shall probably revert to it more at length, when we have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with its contents.