

OUR TABLE.

"THE LORD AND THE VASSAL."

"BANKS AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY."

THESE two volumes form part of a series which we have already had occasion to eulogise—"Parker's Collections in Popular Literature,"—which we are happy to see continued with unabated vigour and increased success.

"The Lord and the Vassal" is devoted to an exposition of that important scheme of polity, the Feudal System. The causes which at first gave rise to this system are fully and explicitly narrated, as well as those which led to its decline and ultimate fall; the principles on which it was founded, and the details of its practical working, are stated and illustrated in a most clear and concise manner; and its effects, for good or for evil, are pointed out in many of the still existing usages and customs of society.

The subject here treated of, is no less interesting than momentous. The Feudal System was the prominent and distinguishing feature of the middle ages, and, long after its apparent extinction, its influence may be traced in the political movements of almost every European State.

"It was the growth of ages, and the result of numberless events, each of which contributed its peculiar share in the production of the joint effects: it developed itself in countries where the monarchs were powerful, and in others where the monarchs were almost powerless; it was born in the march, consequent on the overthrow, by rude barbarians, of an ill-ordered empire, and became by degrees, part and parcel of the characteristics of every nation of Europe: it battled at one time with kings, at another with ecclesiastics, at another with the people; and was at length, by imperceptible degrees, subverted by the combined power of all; leaving behind it, however, effects which remain even to the present day."

Nowhere are these effects more apparent than in our own Province, and those who wish to obtain an acquaintance with the various phases of the Feudal System, will find no better authority, under Hallam himself, than this little compilation.

The second of the two works whose titles are given above, is conducted on a plan which unites the charms of Biography and of Scientific History. The central portion is occupied by a life of the celebrated Sir Joseph Banks, including the principal Transactions of the Royal Society, during his long presidency of forty-one years; whilst the previous and succeeding events in the history of that Society form, as it were, a framework for this portion of the volume, and give a completeness to the whole. The history of the Royal Society is, in fact, the history of Science, from the middle of the seventeenth century to the present day. Among its members are recorded

names, whose genius and scientific enterprise have made them world-renowned—Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Christopher Wren, Sir Hans Sloane, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir Humphry Davy, and many others of lesser note. The early difficulties of the Royal Society; its threatened extinction and energetic revival; its patronage of the rising genius of Newton, and publication of his celebrated *Principia*, at its own expense; its continued course of prosperity under Banks and Davy, and the various eminent men who have since filled the President's chair; and the impulse given by it, throughout all that period, to scientific research and consequent commercial enterprise: all these and kindred topics, form a narrative of surpassing interest.

The character of Sir Joseph Banks will be best shown by the following extract from the eulogium pronounced by Baron Cuvier, before the Royal Academy of Science at Paris.

"We may without reserve admire his courage in perilous enterprises; his noble employment of the favours which fortune had poured out upon him in supporting all that was useful; the exemplary assiduity with which he discharged the duties of his honorable station; and the amenities which he introduced into the personal intercourse of the friends of science; the generous solitude which he displayed towards those whom misfortune had pursued; and when we consider how high a place he occupied in public esteem, and in spite of the detractions of envy, how well he has been recompensed by that pure happiness which always results from the untiring exercise of an active benevolence; we feel it to be an especial duty to offer his character, as an example to that comparatively large class—men of wealth and station, who wear out their time in indolence, which is wearisome to themselves, and mischievous to others—time, which from their means and position, might be so easily and so happily employed in promoting the cause of humanity."

Such a man as this was eminently worthy of having his name thus prominently connected with the Royal Society, independently even of the lengthened period during which he presided over its operations. His early life was one of adventurous travels, and ardent pursuit of science, while his ripening age and declining years were spent in a circle consisting of the most eminent literary and scientific men of the age, by whom he was regarded with an esteem and reverence, no less due to his virtues than to his talents.

INDIAN RESEARCHES—BY THE REV. BENJAMIN SLIGHT.

THERE is something peculiarly interesting in all that belongs to the history, manners, character and customs of the native inhabitants of America. The tales which have been told of their persevering energy, their bravery and generosity, have won for them multitudes of ardent admirers among the lovers of romance; and although in