

OUR TABLE.

THE ARROW AND THE ROSE, AND OTHER POEMS—
BY WM. KENNEDY.

THE author of this very captivating volume having recently been for a short time domiciled in our city, where he was personally most favourably known, and having only recently embarked for his native land, after an extensive tour through the American continent, carrying with him the good wishes of the whole press and people, it may not be uninteresting to our readers to learn something of his poetical works, of which those in the volume before us are esteemed the best; for, although the poems have been some years published, they have not in this country obtained a very extensive circulation,—were it otherwise, we should scarcely venture to intrude our imperfect notice of them upon the public.

The leading poem is founded upon the loves of Henry, Prince of Navarre, and a fair peasant girl, from whom, at a trial of archery, where, like himself, a rival marksman had pierced an orange, and the twain stood upon equal terms, he begs a rose, which having obtained, he places against a tree, as a target at which to aim; and after transfixing the flower, he presents "the arrow and the rose" to the blushing maiden, accompanying the gift with words of knightly courtesy.

A moment and the sweet rose shivered
Beneath the shaft that in it quivered.
He bore the arrow and its crest,
The wounded flower, to the fair
The pressure of whose virgin breast
It late seemed proud to bear—
Shrinking, she wished herself away,
As the young prince, with bearing gay,
And gallant speech, before her bent,
Like victor at a tournament—
"Damsel! accept again," he said—
"With this steel stalk, thy favourite, dead!—
Unwept it perished—for these glows
On thy soft cheek a lovelier rose!"

The friendship thus begun is ripened into a warmer bond of union; and after following the young lovers in their rambles by fountain, stream, and tree, and listening with them to the sweet strains breathed upon the ear of Nature by the warblers of the forest, until they are completely encircled by the meshes of Cupid's net, the reader is compelled to look upon their parting scene, the Prince's mother, on discovering his lowly love, having commanded him to go forth from his boy-hood's home, to mingle with the great ones of earth, among whom he was destined in after days, to stand to pre-eminently conspicuous—it is a melancholy scene, and in it the poet searches the deep fountains of the heart for sympathy, while he pictures the mad grief of the boy lover, and the desolate hopelessness of the forsaken fair. The maiden, indeed, conscious at last of the wide chasm separating her from her high-born wooer, endeavours to crush the strong passion of her heart—need it be

said, in vain. He goes—but, in his absence, instead of schooling herself to forgetfulness, she only more devotedly drinks of the delicious poison she has so long deemed the nectar of her existence—the elixir of her life.

Days—weeks—months, "drag their slow length along," and Fleurette, such is the damsel's name, forgets to welcome the gay dawn with song, or to echo the wild carols of the birds she was wont to love. And yet, "hoping against hope," the maiden anxiously waits the return of her lover—for such is woman's faith, she cannot learn to believe that she has been forgotten—and the rustic wooers, enchanted by her beauty, meet only with stern refusal.

At length Henry does indeed return—but "what a fall was there!" How changed was he from the wild generous boy, whose whole happiness was shrined in the innocent loveliness of the peasant girl. He scarcely dreams that the devoted girl exists! Nay, he roams through the walks she loved, with one, immeasurably more dazzling and splendid—but oh how miserably wanting in winning gentleness and heavenly purity and truth. Fleurette, wandering in her memory-consecrated haunts, sees the courtly beauty hanging on the arm of Henry of Navarre, and hears his voice vowing eternal love to her, and she darts from her covert, and rushes madly to her father's cot, whither she is pursued by the prince, who, on discovering whose hurried footstep it is that told him his blandishments had not been unseen, is stricken with remorse, and begs of her to meet him at evening by the fountain where their first vows were heard; and after many bitter tears, and heart bursting sobs, the deserted one pledge herself to meet once more her recreant lover.

Pass we over the burning impatience with which the prince awaits the appointed time, which seems to him as it would ne'er arrive, so anxious is he to hear from her lips that he is forgiven by the fair Fleurette. The clock at length strikes the hour, and the prince flies to the trysting place; but no Fleurette is there. Moments grow into ages, as chafed with alternate thoughts, he paces beside the spring, listening for her fairy footfall. Alas! it comes not! and wearied with "hope deferred," he turns with an aching heart to his splendid home. But, ah! his foot has struck against a weapon lying on the greensward, and stooping, he finds "the arrow and the rose," with a sealed letter lying beside them, and hurrying homewards, he seizes a taper, and reads the melancholy destiny of her whole fate it was to love, "not wisely, but too well." The poet's words will best explain the sad *denouement* of the mournful story.

The lamp upon his features playing,
Shewed fear predominating there,
Before him the dread billet laying,
While something whispered 'twas conveying
Tidings he could not bear.
What may we not be doomed to feel