

## OUR TABLE.

ON HEROES, HERO-WORSHIP, AND THE HEROIC IN HISTORY—SIX LECTURES—BY THOMAS CARLYLE.

In the composition of these lectures it is evident Carlyle has placed small restraint upon his humour, rather jotting down the thoughts with which his mind was overflowing than following up any regular and properly digested plan! He has, however, written boldly, apparently holding criticism in contempt; and did the reader search for flaws he would find them numerous scattered through the pages of this volume; but if the lectures be perused in a candid and discriminating spirit, the richness of imagination, and the truthfulness of remark, will amply compensate for the minor faults, from which, in common with the most nearly perfect works, it is not wholly free.

The first lecture treats of the Hero as Divinity—the second of the Hero as Prophet—the third of the Hero as Poet—the fourth of the Hero as Priest—the fifth of the Hero as the man of letters—and the sixth of the Hero as King. Each is a unique and striking production, of itself, and the whole collected, form one of the most novel among the literary productions of the day, bearing strongly marked upon them the impress of the author's eccentric and irregular, but powerful and original, genius.

Carlyle is, we believe, one of that class of men who are emphatically described as "self-made." He owes little of the fame he has acquired to any foreign source. In his own intellect has been the lever which raised him to the position he now sustains. Upon his intellect he must depend to maintain it, and though his present position is respectable, if not eminent, we may venture to predict that he will yet climb greatly higher. His History of the French Revolution is held in high esteem. It is a more tangible, readable, and striking history than any of its rivals on the same universally written subject; and, if we except Thiers' voluminous details of the same events, which we have not perused, but which are spoken of in terms of praise, we believe it will be found to supersede all others. The fame of Carlyle, then, is built on no feeble foundation. It has a base to rest upon, and, we have no doubt, it will outlast that of many of his competitors and rivals, who pretend to greater things.

With reference to the book now more immediately under consideration, we have read it with admiration and with pleasure—and we can turn to it again and again, and find something to enlighten and attract. It is not a book which carries all its beauties on its surface—as the author remarks, when writing of Burns, his speech is "distinguished by *having always something in it*,"—something more than at the first glance may be apparent. In fact, to an imaginative reader, almost every line suggests some new idea—some novel train of thought—something to keep the mind lively and employed. In this point of view the book is indeed a treasure—valuable to the reader, and pre-eminently indicative of freedom and originality of thought in the author.

Read the following, of our immortal Shakspeare, and acknowledge the omnipotence and all *enduring-ness* of genius:

England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall out and fight, but live in peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish: what is it that will accomplish this? Acts of Parliament, administrative prime-ministers cannot. America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it: Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone! This King Shakspeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying signs; indestructible; really more valuable in that point of view, than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another: "Yes, this Shakspeare is ours: we produced him; we are of one blood and kind with him." The most common-sense politician too, if he pleases, may think of that.

Yes, truly, it is a great thing for a Nation that it get an articulate voice; that it produce a man who will speak forth melodiously what the heart of it means! Italy, for example, poor Italy lies dismembered, scattered asunder, not appearing in any protocol or treaty as a unity at all; yet the noble Italy is actually *one*: Italy produced its Dante; Italy can speak! The Czar of all the Russias, he is strong with so many bayonets, Cossacks and cannons; and does a great feat in keeping such a tract of Earth politically together; but he cannot yet speak. Something great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius, to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb mon-