

OUR TABLE.

THE LAST OF THE BARONS.—BY SIR E. L. BULWER.

THE pleasure we have derived from a perusal of this novel, has been very great. Splendid as have been some of Bulwer's previous efforts, this exceeds them all. It is emphatically a Romance of History; and in it the author has presented us with sketches of the most eminent men whom England, rich as she is in gigantic names, has ever given to the world. The time chosen for the tale is the stormy period when the "Wars of the Roses," deluged England with blood,—when York and Lancaster, each contending for the throne, waged war, brother against brother, sire against son. The chief characters are among the mighty barons whose will "made and unmade kings," and foremost among these is "Warwick, the King Maker," a name familiar in the early history of the Island Empire, as one of the mightiest of the Norman Knights who then imagined themselves the hereditary rulers both of King and people.

But mighty as these Barons were, a mightier power was growing up unheeded beside them. Commerce was strengthening her giant limbs, and spreading herself over the whole land. A newer class was growing into existence. Ages have passed since then, and that newer class has steadily pursued its way; and the descendants of the Barons have declined in power as their apparently humble rivals have increased. The force of the physical could not cope with that of the intellectual man. The dawn of this revolution was breaking at the time of which Bulwer speaks in the tale of "The Last of the Barons," and the revolution then foreshadowed has been long since wrought.

With such a subject, and with such characters, it would have been strange indeed if the author of "Rienzi" had not made a splendid tale. He has amply fulfilled the anticipations which the announcement of the projected work created in the literary world, by which his book, though not received without criticism and dissent, has been joyfully welcomed.

FOREST DAYS—A ROMANCE OF THE OLD TIMES.

THE above is the title of another historical romance, which, in scenery, character and incident, is somewhat similar to that of Bulwer. It is written in a simpler and less ornate style, though not on that account less interesting. We do not think it the best of James' works, though it may bear comparison with the greater part of them. No one can read it, however, and fail to admire it, as a picture of the stormy period to which it refers; nor is it possible to avoid feeling an absorbing interest in the fate of the different per-

sonages introduced. To the admirers of fact and fiction, judiciously intermingled; this work will be invaluable, and in those who are not familiar with the history of the times to which it refers, it will almost of necessity create a desire to become acquainted with that stirring period of our national history. It is a book which deserves a very general perusal.

LIFE IN MEXICO.

Is a highly interesting volume, written by the wife of the first Spanish minister, accredited to the republic by the Mother Country.

As a matter of course, the authoress had the best means of seeing the fairer view of Mexican character—having, by her connexion with the Ambassador, had the *entree* of all the better circles. Being gifted with a highly cultivated mind, she made the Mexicans her study, and, in writing to her friends, furnished them with sketches of what seemed worthy of remark. A friend, who enjoyed the pleasure of perusing her correspondence, suggested its publication, which, after it had undergone some necessary pruning, was complied with. The result was the pleasant volume now before us, which, having thus been written without any intention of publication, is free from all attempt at ornament. It is the effusion of a frank, cheerful, and accomplished woman, and, as such, possesses many charms, which in more pretending tomes we might look for in vain.

MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS—BY T. H. MACAULAY.

A NUMBER of Macaulay's magnificent articles, originally published in the Edinburgh Review, have been collected and republished under the above title. To say more of them would be like an attempt to "paint the lily." They are masterpieces of composition, and the language in which they are written is drawn from the "pure well of English, undefiled." Commendation is unnecessary, and criticism impossible; but we beseech those, if any such there be, who have not read them, to possess themselves of the book, and enjoy the intellectual feast which it affords. There are few such to be met with, even now, when the press is daily yielding its mighty tomes, for the instruction and amusement of the world.

We are under the disagreeable necessity of apologising for the want of an engraving to accompany this number of the *Garland*. The want of any resident artist places us under the necessity of sending to a great distance for embellishments, and in addition to the irregularity of conveyance at this season, we have to endure various disappointments, even when to our thinking, most secure against them. The deficiency, however, will be supplied in May, and in the meantime we must throw ourselves upon the forbearance of our readers.