

OUR TABLE.

MASTER HUMPHREY'S CLOCK—BY BOZ.

HAVING had the good fortune to receive some of the first numbers of this new work of the "inimitable Boz," we feel called upon to notice it briefly, that our readers may be induced to secure copies of it for their own perusal in full.

We do not, however, augur so well of it as of the "Pickwick Papers," or the "Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby." It will be eloquently and beautifully written—judging from the numbers before us—but it does not promise the same originality of idea, and exquisite simplicity of style, which characterized the former tales—which are, indeed, their peculiar charms. In fact, the rich, racy, delightful thought and feeling, which marked the former of these works, it would be altogether, or next to, impossible, to surpass, and, not surpassing, it will not be wondered at if the reader should deem it somewhat less than equal.

We observe a notice of a republication, in Quebec, in semi-monthly numbers, of "Master Humphrey's Clock," and though condemning the literary "piracy" which it establishes, we cannot say that we altogether dislike this. If it were done with the sanction of the author, we should look upon it as one of the many "signs of the times," which promise so well for the future of the Canadian provinces. As it is, shut out as the public here, are, from possessing themselves of the various new and excellent works of the day, by the operation of injudicious and prohibitory laws, we might give it as our opinion that the author shall suffer no wrong from the re-print of his book here; and we are convinced that the Province will benefit, indirectly, from it—for it cannot fail to give an impetus to the taste for literary composition, which is now beginning to develop itself among the people.

This work is written altogether differently from the recognized style of the author. It is different in design; and though "Boz" occasionally speaks as "Boz" has formerly spoken, we would scarcely recognize him in the new garb he has assumed. It, however, fits him well, and when worn for a brief space, may sit as gracefully upon him as the mantle in which he has before entranced, and led captive the admiring world.

We give below a touch of natural pathos, worthy the pen of "Boz." It relates to Master Humphrey,—a hunchback—and is a reminiscence of his early days:—

"I do not know whether all children are imbued with a quick perception of childish grace and beauty, and a strong love for it, but I was. I had no thought, that I remember, either that I possessed it myself or that I lacked it, but I admired it with an intensity I cannot describe. A little knot of playmates—they must have been beautiful, for I see them now—were clustered one day round my mother's knee in eager admiration of some picture representing a group of infant angels, which she held in her hand. Whose the picture was, whether it was familiar to me or otherwise, or how all the children came to be there, I forget; I have some dim thought it was my birthday, but the beginning of my recollection is that we were all together in a garden, and it was summer weather—I am sure of that, for one of the little girls had roses in her sash. There were many lovely angels in this picture, and I remember the fancy coming upon me to point out which of them represented each child there, and that when I had gone through all my companions, I stopped and hesitated, wondering which was most like me. I remember the children looking at each other, and my turning red and hot, and their crowding round to kiss me, saying that they loved me all the same; and then, and when the old sorrow came into my dear mother's mild and tender look, the truth broke upon me for the first time, and I knew, while watching my awkward and ungainly sports, how keenly she had felt for the poor crippled boy.

"I used frequently to dream of it afterwards, and now my heart aches for that child as if I had never been he, when I think how often he awoke from some fairy change to his own old form, and sobbed himself to sleep again."

A series of old "Legends of London," under the title of the "Giant Chronicles," is commenced in the first number. The tale is excellently written, but the method of telling it detracts from its merit. It is supposed to be related by one of the wooden giants that have stood for ages in the front of the old Guildhall; and is transcribed by an accidental loiterer in the halls of the "antique guild."

It would be, however, premature, to enter into a minute criticism, with so small a portion of the work before us, and the universal confidence in the genius and ability of the author, would render it unseemly in us to criticise too nicely. It may, however, be easily procured, and we doubt not, will be universally read.