

OUR TABLE.

WINTER STUDIES AND SUMMER RAMBLES IN
CANADA—BY MRS. JAMESON.

THE influence of woman upon the social and moral character of mankind cannot be too highly appreciated, calculated as it is, if properly directed, to adorn and ennoble whatever comes within its sphere. In the chivalric ages, when woman was almost worshipped, when her smile was a guerdon for which none save a recreant would have scrupled to peril life or limb—deeds of more dazzling brightness were daily done than at any other era in the world's history. But in those ruder days, brilliant though they were, it was beauty only that possessed this power. The mind's adornments were lightly valued, in comparison with the outward semblance of the divinity within. This was the mistake of the uncultivated and somewhat barbarous spirit of the age, investing it with a halo of majestic virtue, upon which the mind dwells with wonder, but wanting the higher redeeming qualities which mark the greatness of later days. The devotedness of the noblest was then altogether "of the earth earthy," with an outward seeming of reverence for

"Him from whom all glory
And good arise,"

and if woman was the prize for which the warrior fought and minstrel sang, it was sense not soul, which wooed them to the field of war or the groves of poesy. As a natural consequence, when the brief day of her youth and loveliness had set, she was forgotten, or remembered only to furnish a contrast with her departed charms—charms which had faded with the brief flowers of summer, but but unlike the flowers, never to bloom again.

Far different from this transient and spell-like power is the glorious dawn which is now breaking upon the "influence of woman." The rich treasures of her intellect, developed by the cultivation rendered necessary by the enlightened temper of the times, is rapidly raising her to her proper position, as the equal in all things of "creation's lord." This is a legitimate source of rejoicing to all who have at heart the temporal and eternal weal of the human race; for nothing can better tame the rugged nature of the sterner sex, and fit him for calm and holy feelings than the refinements of polished intercourse with the fascinating fair. Endowed with the soul's riches, gathered from the stores of earth's gifted ones, woman wields a power, independent of, and superior to, that we accord to beauty, and is the possessor of a charm that will endure when the form has lost its symmetry and the cheek its bloom—a charm to soothe in the chamber of sickness or on the bed of death, as well as to dazzle in the festive hall, and sparkle in the jocund circle, when health and happiness scatter roses on her path, and gild the

bright world with radiance and beauty. Yet are we not of those ascetics with whom loveliness is held in light esteem. While we rank the diamond highest, we feel that the golden setting is rich and fair. We envy not the philosophy of him who does not render willing homage to woman's charms; but the mind commands a deeper—a far more enduring feeling. While beauty forces the worshipper to her feet, it is mind, and mind only, which can keep him a willing votary there.

Reflections such as these have been suggested by a perusal of the delicious volumes before us. We have been delighted with the sparkling ideas of Mrs. Jameson, for they add proof upon proof of our favourite theory, that woman is not behind her lord in genuine intellectual power, as well as in glowing and poetic fancy, for in deep thought and generous feeling have the "Winter Studies" of the gifted author been conceived, while the "Summer Rambles" are warm with the delicious poetry of nature, which sparkles in every line, unadulterated, and beautifully pure.

Comparatively a stranger in the metropolis of the sister Province, the fair author seems to have been thrown a great deal upon the resources of her library, and of her own fertile mind, for antidotes against the *ennui* consequent upon the dreary monotony of a Canadian winter; and being a decided enemy to any unprofitable waste of time, she employed these hours in noting down the thoughts awakened by a perusal of her favourite authors. These have been given to the world as her "Winter Studies," and though often bearing no relation to Canada or Canadian affairs, and when they do, sometimes touching upon matters with which we have no fellowship, we have seldom read a book upon similar subjects, which has received so much of our delighted attention.

Aware that they wanted the interest naturally consequent upon novel writing, and published without pretence to any thing beyond the character of desultory sketches, we did not anticipate the fascination that lurks in the pages before us; which, leaping from theme to theme, present the reader with successive pleasures, like the bee roving from flower to flower, pilfering delights from each, but unlike the bee, leaving the flowery pages no less rich for that which has been culled from them.

From the portion of the book devoted to Winter Studies, we make a few extracts, as specimens of the style of the author, commencing with one taken from a description of a winter visit to the Cataract of Niagara, with the first view of which Mrs. Jameson confesses herself sadly disappointed; her rich imagination had pictured it as much more magnificently grand than at a first glance it seemed. The season at which she visited the cataract may have contributed to this feeling, for Nature was then stripped of the gay colouring of summer, and the