

OUR TABLE.

THE HEIR OF WEST-WAYLAND: BY MARY HOWITT.
HARPER AND BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

THIS is the latest of Mrs. Howitt's life-like and beautiful fictions, and not the least interesting and powerful that she has written. It is a simple home tale, full of true and noble thoughts, of fine descriptions of natural scenery, and varied and just delineations of character. There is a freshness and beauty, like that of the early morning, about all the productions of Mrs. Howitt's pen, which has a purifying and elevating influence that few hearts fail to feel and acknowledge. This is peculiarly the case with the work under notice, and lends to the narrative, simple as it is, a charm that bears the reader on without any diminution of interest to the last page of the book.

The character of the managing Mrs. Dutton is admirably pourtrayed, and we cannot but rejoice when she is disappointed in her schemes and expectations by the marriage of her wealthy relative. The villain, Richard Ellworthy, is drawn with a masterly hand, but we think all his villany should have been exposed—his robbery of Cousin Thomas, and his cowardly abduction of his cousin's will—that he might have found his punishment in the open indignation and contempt which these base acts would have brought down upon him.

The scenery of Wayland Dale and the primitive lives of the Dale's people is described with a poet's pen, and presents a picture of pastoral beauty and simplicity. Here the lovely heroine of the story, Honour Mildmay, and her mother, came from scenes of trial and suffering to find a new home, and enter upon a new sphere of duties. The impression which the appearance of the quiet and beautiful dale first makes upon her is thus eloquently described:—

"After surveying this scene for some time with sensations of exquisite pleasure, Honour walked round the house and seated herself upon a rustic bench which she found in an elevated spot of the garden, beneath a large birch tree, and which commanded in still broader amplitude the scene I have attempted to describe. Sky-larks were singing in the clear sunny air above her; the dew still lay glittering on leaf and flower, and peeping through the leafy branches of trees, she saw the little gable of their new home, with the white-

curtained casement window of the little chamber where her mother slept.

"The deep consoling consciousness of a loving guiding providence which brought them hither, where the hands of friendly strangers had provided for them not only comforts but indulgences, filled her heart with an inexpressible joy and gratitude. She felt no regrets for the past; she had gone as through the darkness and uncertainty of night, and she stood now in the light and security of morning, and, like the lark on the hill-tops, she poured forth her soul in thanksgiving."

And again in reviewing this period, she gives expression to her beautiful thoughts and emotions in these words:—

"I shall never forget the first morning when we drove into the Dale. All seemed so calm and delicious, so filled with a pure and happy life; it was the strangest effect; I, who was not wholly well at the time, felt it deeply. Someway it seemed as if we had left all our old sorrows and anxieties behind us in the busy world; as if in approaching this region we had passed by that cross which Christian found on his journey, and that in our case, as in his, the burden had dropped of at its foot; and then the next morning, when because I could not sleep, I rose early, almost as early as the lark, and saw a silvery veil of mist lifted up from the valley, which lay before me so beautiful, so calm, so fresh! How happy I felt; and with so strange a happiness, I could not help praising God for it, and praying that he would make my life useful amid such heavenly scenes! But," continued Honour, "something must be deducted from this, perhaps, for the enthusiasm which mere novelty creates. Feelings of so exalted a character are not the best for us. God sends the storm cloud as well as the sunshine; how else could we enjoy the sunshine as we ought? and there is a grand, an immortal influence for good," continued she, after a pause, "even in battling with the storm. The oak tree has strength for a thousand tempests, and the human soul is brought nearer to the god like the severer the conflict through which it passes."

We might make still more copious extracts, of equal beauty, but trust we have said enough to awaken such an interest in the book as will induce many to peruse it for themselves, which we assure them they may do with equal pleasure and profit.