

## OUR TABLE.

### THE SNOW DROP.

THE fourth volume of this most excellent periodical will begin with the April number. We have not space to say what we wish of it, but the following extract from the Prospectus, will, we hope be satisfactory to the reader :

"The Editors contemplate some improvement in the "SNOW DROP" for the coming year—either an enlargement of its size, or the embellishment of wood cuts to each number, and they pledge themselves to omit no pains in the choice of matter, both original and selected, which can render the work acceptable and useful to their readers. They would also request of them to use their influence in obtaining subscribers, which, by many, may, doubtless, be done with very little trouble, in the circle of their friends and schoolmates, and to all who may be so successful as to add six names to the subscription list, the numbers of the "SNOW DROP" shall be sent each month gratis.

With cordial thanks for the portion of public favor which they have received, for the kindness which has overlooked their defects, and approved whatever was meritorious in their efforts, the Editors would close the present year, hoping their little Magazine will be permitted to greet *all* its old subscribers, and to visit many new ones on the beginning of April, which will commence the fourth year of its existence, and a year of trial, on the success of which, its future life depend."

SHIRLEY, BY CURRER BELL, AUTHOR OF JANE EYRE.

THIS is a story quite out of the ordinary course of novels, and it is remarkably well written and well sustained. The author has lost nothing of the reputation he won by his "Jane Eyre." He has selected for his scene one of the manufacturing districts in England, and for his hero one of the manufacturers, whose fate it was to struggle with the prejudices of those who so strongly opposed the introduction of machinery, to supersede the necessity of human labour. It is easy to compre-

hend, and natural to sympathise with, those prejudices. War at the time was raging, and although its foot-print was not seen in England, its effects were felt. The outlets for her manufactured goods were locked up—these goods cumbered the shelves of her warehouses—the consequence was that the working men were thrown out of employment, and of bread. At such a time their deep repugnance to the introduction of anything, that it might well be feared would still further circumscribe the field of labor, may well be pardoned; indeed the great fault of the "hero's" character is the contempt he exhibits for the groans of the famishing multitudes around him, who were vainly asking

———— "Their fellow worm  
To give them leave to toil."

And he had not the power, even if he had the will, to grant their prayer.

There are two heroines. One—she who gives a name to the book—all fire and passion, and energy; the other, all sweet, gentle, kind, and beautiful, full of love and tenderness for all around her. Both are lovely, though the first we think somewhat overstrained—there appears to be a desire for scenic effect which is scarcely needed. But "Shirley" is nevertheless a most interesting character, notwithstanding the masculine sound of her name. Her heart overflows with warm affections and generous impulses, and it is easy to forgive in her what in one of a less frank nature we might be inclined to sit in judgment upon more harshly. Her fellow-heroine is of a different stamp—gentleness is the pervading feature of her nature—and she conquers more surely by it than her friend does by her graceful boldness. But both are very delightful—the one to be admired, and the other to be loved. Shirley attracts the eye; Caroline makes a captive of the heart.

We have no room for extracts, or we would give one, descriptive of an attack upon the mill of Mr. Moore, the hero of the book—repulsed with the vigour which belongs to the indomitable character of the owner. It is a very exciting scene, and very eloquently described. But the book is one which must be read to be appreciated, and we therefore commend it to the notice of the readers.