

cannot help thinking that he will find more congenial exercise for his faculties in other things—perhaps, on the whole, better worth doing.

*Nelly Carew.* By Marguerite A. Power. 2 vols. (Saunders & Otley.)—There is a good deal of interest in the first part of this story, which leads the reader on to hope for a good ending; but in that the author disappoints us, for the story goes off into vapid common-place in the last volume. We hoped better things from Nelly; she ought by all the laws which govern prophecy, to have turned out a charming heroine. There are graphic touches of description in the book, and traits of Irish life and character, which show that Miss Power can write pleasantly and observe keenly. Mdlle. Renouard, the French governess, is extremely well described in the beginning, though she afterwards degenerates into a character of the Porte St.-Martin melodrama. 'Nelly Carew' would have been better for being condensed into half its present space.

*Aggesden Vicarage; or, Bridget Storey's First Charge: a Tale for the Young.* 2 vols. (Parker & Son.)—There is a great deal that is very nice in this story. The characters are pleasant and life-like; the conversations are good, and carried on in the real speech that human beings use in their conversation with each other; they are characteristic and individual, so that each personage in the story reveals himself and herself to the reader, which saves much labour of description. The Vicar of Aggesden has a few human infirmities, but he is a charming country clergyman. Mrs. Arnold, his wife, with her graceful indolent goodness and high breeding, is extremely well drawn—whilst the various boys and girls are genuine human children. 'Aggesden Vicarage' looks like a true history of a real country clergyman's family, where "high thinking" has to be reconciled with "plain living." As a story, the book is rather feeble—it is written on the model of Miss Sewell's and Miss Young's, but with less vigour, so far as the incidents go. We have, however, read it ourselves with interest; and we have no doubt that they will find "things pleasant and things profitable," as old John Bunyan quaintly says.

*The Day of Small Things.* By the Authoress of 'Mary Powell.' (Hall, Virtue & Co.)—This 'Day of Small Things' is what its name imports. A mild and not uninteresting chronicle of the very smallest small-beer of an invalid elderly lady's life, who, confined to her sofa, in a small, pretty cottage, with a brusque maid and limited means, keeps a diary of the little incidents that befall her and her immediate neighbours. There is nothing like a consecutive story in it, and the book is made up of jottings from the books she reads, scraps of the conversations she hears and holds and little sketches of character very faintly coloured. The Authoress of 'Mary Powell' evidently takes so much pleasure in the inditing of her numerous books that some of the pleasure is naturally imparted to the reader; but the reflex is so very mild that we cannot forbear saying once more (what we have before suggested) that she writes too much, and with too much facility, to allow her books to be of the quality she is quite capable of making them—"the half" would be so much "better than the whole." 'The Day of Small Things,' despite the gentle piety of its tone, is by far the weakest of the many productions of the authoress.

#### OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

*Gog and Magog: the Giants in Guildhall, their Real and Legendary History; with an Account of other Civic Giants at Home and Abroad.* By F. W. Fairholt. With Illustrations by the Author. (Hotten.)—"Miss Anne, there be bears in the town!" Here be the Giants!—On Gogmagog and Corineus, the two awful tenants of Guildhall, has Mr. Fairholt built as pleasant a little volume as was ever laid before John Bull, or any other grown John who, in his boyish days, was *Jack the Giant-killer*. The subject is what the Americans might style "a tall one," a theme full of peculiarity. Dwarfs, pigmies, Pucks, Kobolds, all such tiny people, have, by old allotment, been reputed as witty, exas-

perating, successful—owing to their keenness of brains. Big creatures (the Elephant excepted—that Eastern fortress of strength and sagacity) have been no less traditionally held as dull in capacity. The monster *Polyphemus* was a mere idiot when matched against *Ulysses*, the traveller who could beat the *Sirens*,—when he thought it proper to put out the Big Man's one eye! The Middle-Age giants of Christendom, who took up the part of the Pagan *Cyclops* and other Titans that stalked over the earth in the days of *Olympus* and *Erebus*, were, by common creed, voted to be no less slow-witted than their progenitors.—In one old Gothic legend we shall hear how some sprightly *Una* (leaving out of the question *Britomart*) was able to extricate herself from the heavy thraldom of a Brobdingnag tyrant;—in another how some male midge could sting the burly *Hippopotamus* to death.—Giants, it is notorious, are weak about the knees. The biggest real one with whom we have made acquaintance was the porter of the ancient picture-gallery at Munich: a seven-foot specimen, toppling to pieces beneath the weight of his cocked-hat, and above the prop of his top-boots—civil, melancholy, and altogether as devoid of an idea as giants should be.—The next tallest man remembered was that Westmoreland gentleman, dead some years ago—who, after having been imprisoned for six-and-twenty hours in the old mail-coach, astounded his fellow-travellers by stepping down, not on the step, but on the pavement,—when he arrived in London. How so lengthy a man could have sat in so small a space during six-and-twenty hours is a mystery. Mr. Fairholt has treated his wicker-and-canvas clients—the huge statues that have figured gigantically in so many a foreign guild-festival and religious procession—handsomely, and with a fair amount of knowledge.—Giant-lovers, however, could help him to an example or two, which he may have overlooked.—There is the *Glumdaleitch* painted on the tower at Ratisbon, overlooking the arrowy Danube.—There is the *Santa Rosalia* of Palermo,—not merely huge as she stands, like Niobe "struck to stone" on the height of Monte Pellegrino—but as she creaks in effigy once a year down the narrow Toledo Street; her lack-lustre eyes staring into every one of those florid, flowered first-floor balconies which give so much character to the fascinating city of "the Golden Shell." Saints, it seems, have been as eligible for Giantry as Sinners. There have been more orthodox *Colossi* than the Colossus of Rhodes—to name another, the tremendous *San Carlo Borromeo* above Arona—in whose head four enterprising persons (or thereabouts) can dine.—But, although illustration after illustration of the immunities and fatuities and authorities of Physical Bigness occurs to us we had best close our paragraph about Giants;—having indicated how the *primum mobile* thereof has been this amusing little book on Gogmagog and Corineus (ignorantly miscalled Gog and Magog), at Guildhall, by Mr. Fairholt.

*Fifty Years among the Baptists.* By David Benedict, D.D. (New York, Sheldon & Co.)—This is a curious, genuine chronicle, which may be consulted with profit by any one aspiring to write the history of religious sects in America. Dr. Benedict is prosy, it is true, in dealing with "our denominational affairs," with which he has been conversant during "five decades," but he notes, with knowledge, the changes which have passed over the face of Baptist society.—Some of "the old ways" will seem strange to those who have imagined that self-denial and asceticism belonged to the people who worshipped in barn-fashioned meeting-houses and held a steeple in almost as much horror as the broad-brimmed followers of George Fox.—There was great joviality at the "associations" to which Baptists came from far and over very painful roads. "The ardent article" (chastised out of the Temple by Teetotalism) was there served as a matter of course, and without stint or parsimony.—It seems odd, too, to read of "ordination balls."—Yet "staunch old Baptists of former times," says Dr. Benedict, "would as soon have tolerated the Pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries."—On the whole, the impression made by this book is, that though modes have changed, Baptist sincerity has not,—and that

Time and Change have not brought lukewarmness in their train. Without change is brought by Time, in fact, all creeds that are audited (so to say) by private judgment as distinct from authority, must become so many lifeless formalities. But enough of this history, which for its racy common-sense and its unmistakable American colour, may be securely recommended to such of our readers as care for a discourse about those theological peculiarities in which Humanity will have its share.

*Fables and Fairy Tales.* By Henry Morley. (Chapman & Hall.)—Quaintness is a quality precious to those who can appreciate it,—though such persons make a dispersed, not a collected audience. Those who best appreciate quaintness are not agreed among themselves. That which speaks to some is utterly dumb to others among them. 'Who has not counted on some favourite whimsy or jest-drawing mirth from the *Yorkic* best known for his appetite for jocose whimsies? yet missed his count in the result, when the whimsical jest has been received in blank silence, and the friend who has tendered it been called on to explain what there was, in the tale or repartee, in anywise curious, or clever, or absurd?—Mr. Morley's book is thoroughly quaint, as might be expected from him who wrote 'How to make Home Unhealthy,'—while his reading, as the biographer of Palissy, Cardan, and Cornelius Agrippa has naturally led him into those lands of speculation where fairy-folk are born and bred. But somehow or other there is an ingredient wanting to his tales. He is hardly unconscious enough for a narrator of marvels. His moral often sits on the threshold too fast, and will not allow people to pass by without listening and looking at it. We are willing to be persuaded by Truth and Wisdom when we are in church,—we are less willing to have them plucking at our skirts, or peering in our faces at the moment when we do not covet useful knowledge. The unexpectedness of Hood's Oddities largely contributed to their effect—so did the solemnly-disguised commonplaces of Mr. Sealy's Chinese stories, in the capital 'Porcelain Tower,'—a book too little appreciated.—Thus, we shall possibly not be misunderstood in saying that—while, for ourselves, we have read this quaint miscellany with satisfaction, and more than once have paused over it for a moment's thought (if not that irresistible laugh, which is the best criticism on books of its kind),—it will not surprise us if Mr. Morley's readers be fewer than those whom he deserves to gather.

*The Minsters and Abbey Ruins of the United Kingdom.* By Mackenzie Walcott. (Stanford.)—In this closely-printed little volume of 265 pages Mr. Walcott has given some account of 50 minsters in England and Wales, of 3 in Scotland; 41 abbey ruins in England and Wales, 26 in Ireland, and 11 in Scotland: in all 131, averaging about two pages to each, giving therein something of their history, height, length, breadth, and a few general notes upon matters connected with them, and repeating the stereotyped phrase as to their "eminent suggestiveness." Mr. Walcott has been industrious in digging up facts, more or less known, and in arranging them in a sort of pocket cyclopaedia, devoted to a particular subject. Mr. Walcott's space being contracted, and his divisions many, he has been unable to do more than indicate anecdotes:—as, when he says (p. 63), touching Malmesbury Abbey, and quoting Leland, that "In the church, near the south transept, Duns Scotus was assassinated by the styles of his pupils." There are styles, too, by which those good men, the critics, are, if not assassinated, grievously wounded. We find an instance here, in the same page, where the compiler assures us that "King Stephen hastened from London to oppose the *Young Pretender*,"—which sounds odd, though Mr. Walcott correctly applies an ill-chosen term. We thank him, nevertheless, for a little volume, the compilation of which, doubtless, cost time and trouble—neither of which has been cast away. The result is a useful book, which a second edition may amend.

*A Manual of the English Constitution; with a Review of its Rise, Growth and Present State.* By David Rowland. (Murray.)—The production of a good history of the English Constitution requires