

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

TOUCHSTONE PAPERS.

NO. 1.—THE GOLDEN CALF.

It is not the idol of the Hebrews. Oh, no. He was a mere mould of dead metal, bright in colour, yet brutish in form, costly, yet commonplace. The meanest heifer that browsed on the Sinai slopes was prettier than he, for it had warm blood and a throbbing heart.

Neither is it the fascinating demon which Mephistopheles pictured to Faust, amid the flicker of blue lights. There was a poetry about him which could dazzle and awake enthusiasm. There is a palliation if not an excuse for every folly which man may commit under the influence of bright faucies.

My golden calf is quite other than these. He belongs to the genus Homo; species Homunculus. He is not an abortion, merely a distortion. He has two feet, instead of four, and these are not flat and hooved, but arched and encased in patent leathers. He has no horns, nor even the bumps from which horns might spring. His forehead is narrow and rounded smooth as a terrapin's shell. He has no caudal appendage other than that of his steel pen coat. His is no noble roar, smiting the hills, for his voice squeaks like a penny whistle and he lisps like the fat baby who is fed on mush. He has no lordly mane to shake. His hair is a sticky mass of pomade, parted in the middle and so smoothly brushed, that he takes his hat off with both hands, not to disturb its "lay."

My golden calf has a mind, which is less of a compliment if we admit the new theory of naturalists, that all animals have minds, quite distinct from, and far above, mere instinct. But his mind is peculiar. It is open to perceptions and nothing more. It may form an occasional judgment at the suggestion of others. A downright old-fashioned syllogism it shinks from with positive pain of the frontal. He knows but one enthymeme and he acts upon it:—"I have got money, therefore I am a power."

And he is a power. We need not scorn the Hebrew adoration of the molten heifer. We need not scoff at the ringing song of Mephisto, brandishing the gleaming goblet. We are all reeling drunk with the poison of that cup, and we worship the golden calf. Look at society with its air of mock wisdom, its strut, its liftings of the head, its smile of beautiful disdain, its sarcastic glances at plebeianism. What is its religion? The cultus of wealth. What is the thing it hates and spurns under its sandals? Poverty.

The golden calf is not such a fool but he sees this. He has not to work up to a position. It is already made for him. The platform is raised and upheld by fair white hands and amid twinkling eyes, graceful curtsies of obeisance, murmured compliments from rosy lips; all he has to do is to walk forth and back, with tilted castor, swaying swallow tail and magnificent wave of bamboo cane. What a life! glorious, is it not? Yes, decidedly glorious. The best of us—else we were not human—would choose to be a calf, or even an ass, for such a wage.

There are two classes of men who affect to despise the golden calf—the pauper and the pundit. They rebel against the blind idolatry, and harp on the catch word—quality. But the motive of both is jealousy. The one is inferior, the other superior, but neither can approach the charmed circle.

A learned lecture is to be given by some celebrated foreign professor. The fashion, caught by the name, but unintelligent of the thing, resolves upon going. Word is passed around, a full house promised and the tickets are raised to a fabulous price. On a given night, sails the golden calf, followed by his rustling suite, and they occupy all the best benches. The lecturer lectures at them, but not to them. The poor student, or the intelligent mechanic is pushed back to the rear, where he cannot see the delicate experiments or hear the weak voice of the lecturer. Perhaps, deterred by the high price, he cannot attend at all. Of course, he grumbles. There is no such misanthrope as your poor aspiring man. Why did not the professor, in the true interest of science, keep down his prices and lecture only to those who could understand him. Ah! thou fool. The professor is a wise man and he too worships the golden calf.

Or a concert is given by the best artists of the world—the queen of opera, the prince of tenors and so on. There the same scene is enacted. The poor enthusiast, the art student, is driven back into the corners or excluded altogether, and he too bursts out into cynical apostrophes. Wasted breath, my Bohemian. These petted children of song are cleverer than you think, and for the jewels of their singing, they exact in exchange the sheen and the magnetic cold touch of eagles and doubloons. You would do the same if you had half a chance.

Our golden calf is not a miser. They only are misers who make their own money, and he generally inherits his. He inherits it in most cases from some close, eager old father, who spent half a century in building up a fortune, stinting himself almost to beggary, the while. The well beloved son and heir will spend it gaily for him. It is the inevitable and just human law of compensation. The wealthy son keeps fast horses, a series of winter and summer vehicles, a complete wardrobe, and altogether a princely establishment. He has his dogs for ornament, not for use, as he is not a sporting man. He is seldom seen entering the lists as a snow-shoer, tobogganist, skater, curler, cricketer, lacrosse or base-baller. He goes to races, but it is only to hold the ladies' parasols, or bet a few guineas on his favourite's favourite. He gives little suppers, but his capacities hardly go beyond oysters, never reaching the stomachic risk of lobsters. He is not a jolly good feeder.

He takes a mild interest in passing events. Sometimes, though rarely, he aspires to the position of leader in certain artistic and scientific circles. He indulges in a diluted form of philanthropy. He writes papers on the habits of animals, and presides over societies for the prevention of cruelty to birds. He collects subscriptions for under-clothing to be given to newsboys. Let him have his medal of praise for these charities. The Golden Calf is not devoid of heart. He makes love, of course, though he is rather made love to, than otherwise, but his sentimentality is diffusive. It has none of the concentration of passion. He cannot brook opposition, being used to idolatry, but he is incapable of real indignation.

Raillery is lost on such as have an invincible repugnance to take offence, and where the assumption of superiority is a habit, it is waste of time to find fault. It will be more graceful, therefore, to follow the fashion and bow to the Golden Calf.

THE MISSING LINKS TO DARWIN'S ORIGIN OF SPECIES.

Where all must fall or not coherent be  
And all that rises, rise in due degree;  
Then, in the scale of reasoning life, 'tis plain,  
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man.  
POPE: Essay on Man.

Oh! mighty Darwin, Monarch of all Sages  
Adorning this or long forgotten ages,  
Whose magic touch ope's portals paleologic  
And shatters seals of perlois geologic—  
Before whose search, the mysteries of creation  
Dissolve like mists of morning exhalation—  
Who thread'st the line of life to Nature's germs,  
To find God's image in ancestral worms.

We, rich in faith and warm in strong affection,  
For thy great creed of "Natural Selection,"  
Convinced that man—the modern institution—  
Owes his proud place to laws of "Evolution,"  
Now come, great Sage, a living grand memorial  
Of Man's descent through lineage "Arboreal,"  
"The Missing Links"—those pre-historic sires  
Whose loves and lives a wondering race admires.

When all was void, and Chaos ruled the Spheres,  
Back thro' the shadows of unfathom'd years  
Life's first faint spark flashed thro' a rayless night,  
And quivering fell on the rude Zoophyte.  
"Old Soarer," Sponge, soon felt the genial glow,  
"Mid Coral castles, reared in depths below,  
Where brave Sea Nettles waved crisscrossing arms  
To entranced Polyps, enamoured of their charms.

Where the Mollusca, fierce with yearning fires,  
Thrill'd pearly Shells with tender soft desires;  
And Periwinkles smoothed their coats of mail  
To court endearments from the wooing Snail;  
There warmed the spark in its Crustacean bed,  
"Till Shrimps, enraptured, on its sweetness fed,  
Impassioned Lobsters clasped seductive claws,  
And jealous Crabs succumbed to Hyman's laws.

But kindling more—the piscine Tribe prevails,  
Its in-and-seenes gauds in Dolphin's scales,  
Transforms Sea Dragons into signing swains,  
And distracts Sheepheads with bewitching pains.  
The Flying-Fish men onward wafts the spark,  
"Till loveborn passions thrill the cruel Shark,  
And sweetest transports swell the mighty deep,  
To where the Whales uxorious vigils keep.

Still brighter yet—the Amphibs grow at length,  
With Mermoid graces and with Triton strength;  
The Tadpole whisks it from the Ocean floor,  
The broad-backed Turtle bears it on to shore,  
Where sucking Leeches draw its baby sighs,  
"Mid stolid Frogs transfixed with mute surprise,  
While Caimans wake with new born joy elate,  
And roars the Walrus, eager for his mate.

In reptile form, then creeping from the bank  
Which waits the sea and hurls the morose dank,  
Its savage lustre lights the Serpent's track,  
To blash in beauty on Chamaeleon's back,  
With ardent flame, it fills the Scorpion's eyes,  
With rainbow hues the meek Iguana dyes,  
Until, at last, in sunshine's wealth unrolled,  
The Salamander floods with molten gold.

Refulgent now—its vivifying rays  
Spread far and wide—seen in the tasseled Matze,  
In crimson Carrots piercing Mother Earth,  
In emerald Pinus yielding fragrant birth;  
Festooned Bananas with its glories shine,  
And tribute Grapes burst forth with living wine.

E'en bannered Blossoms, kissing wanton air,  
In shapes as varied as their hues are fair,  
Waft quickened incense up to arching skies,  
That blush with joy and laugh thro' starry eyes,  
Ripe lipped Verbena, on her drooping knee,  
Pale browed Magnolia, from her stately tree,  
Sweet Passiflora, dashed with bloody stains,  
All glow with life that tingles in their veins.

Then Insects come to cheer the flowery glade  
With tender dalliance 'neath the leafy shade,  
Bright buzzing Flies, borne on the languid breeze,  
Keep time with Locusts, droning in the trees;  
Grasshoppers melt to lazy Silk Worm charms,  
The Moth seeks solace in the Beetle's arms,  
Tobacco Grubs essay the loftiest stalk,  
In love sick search of the Mosquito-Hawk,  
While Spiders weave a daintier, rosier net,  
Than ever maiden for fond lover set.

The very winds, pulsating amorous sighs,  
Beneath the beating wings of Butterflies.

And now as years in countless cycles roll,  
Still stronger, brighter burns the living coal;  
The Rodents come with sleek and glossy hides,  
All fleet of foot to catch reluctant brides,  
The scion Moie, from out his earthly lair,  
In haste to meet the froid blasting Hare;  
The Squirrel scurrying from his leafy house,  
Down rugged trunk to woo the virgin Mouse;  
The Rabbit lost in low-tongued dreaming chat,  
With that shrewd robber, the Heentious Rat,  
While high o'er all the wedded branches through,  
Peeps the Opossum at the Kangaroo.

Now loit'ring thro' Earth's fields of living green,  
The Ruminantia come to dot the scene;  
The fleecy Ram, with frontlet hard and bold,  
The meek eyed Ewe, pale matron of the fold;  
With antlered crest, the lithe and sinewy Deer,  
The vigorous Goat (the symbol of Buck Beer);  
The untamed Bison, with tempestuous mane,  
The patient Camel, of the trackless plain,  
The tall Giraffe, instinct with lofty pride,  
The fleet-foot Zebra, with his stripe slashed hide;  
And then the Bull, of brawn and bolting brow,  
Leads in the dainty cream-distilling Cow.

O golden days! Age of Arcadian Joy!  
Ere Sorrow's birth, when Love knew no alloy;  
Scant wonder then the flame waxed fierce and strong,  
When the Carnivora joined the countless throng.  
The Hedgehog, winking, from his spiny box,  
With admiration, at the cunning Fox,

Which joins the Coon, well versed in forest lore,  
In pleasant discourse with the tusked boar.

From fields abroad swoops down the flitting Bat,  
With bated whispers for the rakish Cat,  
Which slips away from purring Pussy's sight,  
On revels bent, and staying out all night.  
The noble Dog by the gaunt Greyhound led;  
The hairy Skye; the Bull with brutal head;  
The Sleuth, keen scented on the trail of game,  
All now the victims of a tenderer flame.

E'en friendly Bears their hopes and fears discuss,  
Before the surly Ill-po-pot-a-mus,  
While listening leopards to the passion own;  
Hyenas laugh and drop the crunching bone.  
The Lion smiles away his heated spleen,  
And harmless sleeps the Tiger on the green,  
As countless rills, from fountains far and wide,  
Unite to form the river's rushing tide.  
So all these types, in Darwin's matchless plan,  
Converged, assert the lineage of Man.  
From Birmah's woods, the Elephantine home,  
Behold his pith and iron muscle come;  
His ardent temper from the tangled grove,  
Where the Rhinoceros dallies with his love;  
His tastes exhaled from that Westphalian bog,  
Where wallows still the epicurean Hog,  
And his endurance from Arabia's strand,  
The tireless Horse produces at command.  
Thus well endowed, ah! Darwin! then—Alas!  
We trace his genius to the sapient Ass.

Enchanting age of soul dissolving bliss,  
When life's whole span was one long burning kiss,  
No wonder, soon in some bright torpid vale,  
Where Quimbrana waved prehensile tail,  
To hounded ares aglow with desire,  
Arboreal loves should nobler tunes aspire;  
Or Chacma Monkeys fall like ripened grapes,  
Resistless victims of the Bearded Apes;  
That Mandrills, lost in soft voluptuous swoons,  
Shyral grace the nuptials of the bold Baboons,  
And Chimpanzees, from waving tree tops hang,  
To court caresses from the fount Orange.  
Oh! rosy hues of Time's dim twilight morn!  
In such an hour the "Missing Link" was born;  
The great Gorilla, flinging wide the gate  
Of Darwin's Eden, and our high estate.

Through nature's void, by arm creative hurld  
Thus fell the spark which warms and lights a world;  
Its pregnant beam first thrill'd old Ocean's caves,  
In myriad forms pulsated through its waves,  
Then clad with verdure and rocks and sand,  
Bale waving branches plume the smiling land;  
Sighed 'neath the shades where burst forth living springs,  
And peopled air with gauzy, rain-bowed wings.

Thus stood Love's temples in expectant state  
Of rites delayed—but little time they wait,  
Evolving races, sluggish, wan and cold,  
Wake into natures active, fierce and bold;  
Selection's Law, their joys unconscious guide,  
To nobler types, they thus unerring glide,  
Perfection's heights are scaled up to the brink  
Of that abyss—spanned by the "Missing Link."  
There stunion Capital stands in hazy state;  
But oh! what Psyche was his nobler mate?

MORAL.

Here sleepless science pales its searching power,  
And awful mystery shrouds the nuptial hour;  
Our father, Ape, by all with pride embraced  
But she, whose love his ardent passion blessed;  
Like Pheidon lost, is hid behind Time's veil,  
We only know—her offspring drop the tail.

The problem vast new Darwins shall engage  
To swell the knowledge of a future age,  
Until the secret countless cycles sealed  
Bursts into life and Man stands forth revealed.

Art and Literature.

Mr. W. Stigand is writing a life of Heinrich Heine. Byron is, at last, to be commemorated by a monument at Missolonghi.

It is stated that Sir John Sinclair, M.P., is preparing for the press a book on the late Franco-German War. It is to be published simultaneously in English, French, and German.

Manufacturers of, and dealers in, poetry may be interested in hearing that there is to be a grand poetry market or contest at Bordeaux. The entrance for the same will be closed on the 15th June.

A new bi-monthly journal, devoted to art and music, has appeared in Brussels, *L'Art Universel*. To judge from the first number, it will be a welcome addition to art literature, particularly if it fully carries out its motto, "Liberty and Sincerity."

An interesting MS., written in Italian, by the late Louis Napoleon, when he was in Italy, an exile from France, has been published in this month's "Revista Europea" by the editor, Professor Angelo de Gubernatis, in whose possession the MS. is.

There is a reason to believe that the long-lost portrait of Molière, painted by Sebastien Bourdon, has been discovered among the Ingres collection at the Museum of Montauban, and that it was restored by the latter painter, who purchased it at a dealer's sale.

Mr. William Simpson and Mr. Robert Landells, two of the special artists of the *Illustrated London News*, have received from the Emperor of Germany war medals as tokens of distinction conferred upon them for their artistic labours in the recent war.

OUR DIGESTIVE ORGANS.—The result of much scientific research and experiment has within the last few years enabled the medical profession to supply to the human system, where impaired or inactive, the power which assimilates our food. This is now known as "Morson's Pepsine," and is prescribed as wine, globules, and lozenges, with full directions. The careful and regular use of this valuable medicine restores the natural functions of the stomach, giving once more strength to the body. There are many imitations, but Morson and Son, the original manufacturers, are practical chemists, and the "Pepsine" prepared by them is warranted, and bears their labels and trade-mark. It is sold by all chemists in bottles 2s., and boxes from 2s. 6d., but purchasers should see the name  
T. MORSON & SON.