

## "THE SWEDENBORGIAN HEAVEN."

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR,—On reading in your last issue the anecdote in which a pious old lady is represented as "going into raptures," probably from the fact that she got some definite, tangible idea, in the place of the vague, empty ones commonly prevailing—over her minister's description of Swedenborg's heaven, whereupon she was checked by the presiding elder, &c., it occurred to me to take the liberty of suggesting that when the laugh was so effectually turned upon the preacher in this instance, we may suppose the effect would have been still greater upon the good old lady, had she heard, instead of this *burlesque* of it, a *true* version of Swedenborg's teaching on the subject. She would then have learned that the state and place of the blessed hereafter is indeed a *real world*, containing real, *spiritual*—not *material*—objects; all things, in short, which can minister to the spiritual happiness and delight of those who are there, though I am not aware that *horses* and *cows* are mentioned among them! As to the *beauty* of the angels themselves (so coarsely alluded to), Swedenborg tells us that it is, in the case of *both* sexes, always inseparable from ineffable purity and holiness within; and is absolutely *invisible* to those who, with many so-called *Christians*—and possibly the writer of the anecdote in question among the number—have in their minds the idea of a *sensual* paradise, like that of Mahomet, from which Swedenborg's heaven is as far removed as it is possible for it to be. To correct such erroneous impressions of *our* views is my object in writing the above.

Yours, &c.,

VERUS.

## CIVIC AFFAIRS.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR,—Our city parliamentary building was opened a day or two ago, and speeches were made by His Worship the Mayor and several aldermen, some of which seemed to be slightly out of order at such a time and place. Two things remarked upon, call for special attention on the part of all good citizens. Those *sixteen thousand* dollars worth of "contingencies," alluded to by the Chairman of the Market Committee, Alderman Holland, and said to have been expended by Mr. James McShane and his Committee during his last year of office in that department. Had he a similar item to the sixteen thousand on the books in former years? It appears from Alderman Holland's statements that there was actually a saving in the market department in one year of \$21,000! What should be thought of a constituency that would send such a person to represent them in the City Council, and what of the silence of the press on the subject? Should not Mr. McShane have been called upon to explain the manner in which the "sixteen thousand" was expended before he was admitted to a seat in the Council?

The Mayor, in his inaugural, alluded to "the terrible progress of crime in our city," as revealed by the report of the Chief of Police. He gives only one cause for this "terrible increase of crime," and that, although bad enough, and chiefly confined to his own nationality, not the chief one. He wishes the Council to obtain the right from Parliament to "regulate" this cause of the progress of crime, as if such a thing could really be done, by act of Parliament. The real and most prolific cause of the progress of crime, is the license to sell intoxicating liquors in some three or four hundred places in our city, some of them well known to be dens of iniquity, and yet they regularly obtain their annual licenses. Then there are nearly as many more unlicensed places, where liquor is sold, which are either connived at, or they go on making drunkards, and causing crime without let or hindrance in consequence of the lack of diligence on the part of the police. This, the chief cause of almost all the crime in the city, might not only be "regulated" by act of Parliament, but might be almost extinguished. Let the Mayor then advise the Council to obtain the right to prevent, or greatly reduce the number of tavern licenses, and then crime would very soon decrease. Surely the Mayor must know this well, and yet on a very important occasion he was silent on the matter.

It is very gratifying to hear of some financial improvement, but we had better get out of the wood before we whistle, as we have heard similar things before, and have been disappointed afterwards.

We find from the financial report that it has cost upwards of \$6,000 for the maintenance of the prisoners in jail for last year, and nearly \$5,000 to guard them, making a total of nearly \$11,000. Now it is well known that about two-thirds, at least, of the prisoners are committed, either directly or indirectly, through intoxicating liquors. So that if the Government granted fewer licenses, or better still, none at all, for the sale of liquors, it is evident that there would soon be scarcely any criminals or crime. The whole matter is entirely in the hands of the Government, and it is high time that something was done.

Montreal, March 19.

OBSERVER.

INSTINCTS OF ANIMALS.—All the wonderful instincts of animals, which, in my humble opinion, are proved beyond a doubt, and the belief in which is not decreased with the increase of science and investigation,—all these instincts are given them only for the combination or preservation of their species. If they had not these instincts, they would be swept off the earth in an instant. This bee, that understands architecture so well, is as stupid as a pebble-stone, out of his own particular business of making honey; and, with all his talents, he only exists that boys may eat his labours, and poets sing about them. *Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias.* A peasant girl of ten years old, puts the whole republic to death with a little smoke; their palaces are turned into candles, and every clergyman's wife makes mead wine of the honey; and there is an end of the glory and wisdom of the bees! Whereas, man has talents that have no sort of reference to his existence; and without which, his species might remain upon earth in the same safety as if they had them not. The bee works at that particular angle which saves most time and labour; and the boasted edifice he is constructing is only for his egg; but Somerset House, and Blenheim, and the Louvre, have nothing to do with breeding. Epic poems, and Apollo Belvideres, and Venus de Medicis, have nothing to do with living and eating. We might have discovered pig-nuts without the Royal Society, and gathered acorns without reasoning about curves of the ninth order. The immense superfluity of talent given to man, which has no bearing upon animal life, which has nothing to do with the mere preservation of existence, is one very distinguishing circumstance in this comparison. There is no other animal but man to whom mind appears to be given for any other purpose than the preservation of body.—*Sydney Smith.*

## CURRENT LITERATURE.

WARREN HASTINGS, by Lord Macaulay; POOR ZEPH, by F. W. Robinson; MY LADY'S MONEY, an episode in the life of a young girl, by Wilkie Collins. Harper's Half-Hour Series. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1878; Montreal: Dawson Brothers.

Three more of the Half-Hour Series of which we have had occasion to speak favorably more than once.

AN OPEN VERDICT. A novel by Miss M. E. Braddon. New York: Harper & Brothers, Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Paper, pp. 169; price, 35 cents.

Miss Braddon's sensationalism will soon be quite forgotten if the transition be as steadily continued as in her later books. In "An Open Verdict" there are only three deaths, one being a suicide and the observance of the seventh commandment is never seriously imperilled. The story turns upon the unjust suspicion attaching to a young heiress whose father has killed himself, and upon the manner in which the doubt affects a young curate whose manliness might, we think, have taught him to stand by his love instead of leaving her. The plot is slight and the incidents rather carelessly sketched, but the book can be read, as can most of Miss Braddon's novels, even under protest against book making for selling purposes only.

HARD TO BEAR, by Georgiana M. Craik, and A TRUE MAN, by M. C. Stirling. Two tales of married life. New York: Harper & Brothers. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Paper, price 30 cents.

These two novels join in one volume to show the sorrows and dangers of marriage when husband and wife are ill-mated. Both are pathetic, and both are alike in that the wife is the injured one and the husband wanting in true love; but in "Hard to Bear" the womanly love wins him from all blind fancy in a manner which, as it is told, lends much strength and dignity to the story, while, as the sarcastic title shows, in the other he remains a mere clod, living to marry "comfortably" again after his young wife's life has been crushed out for lack of sympathy. "A True Man" is the more finished story of the two, but both are clever and good to read.

THE DECORATIVE ARTS; their relation to modern life and progress. An address delivered before the Trades' Guild of Learning of London, by William Morris. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1878. Montreal: Dawson Brothers. Pamphlet, pp. 50.

Mr. Morris revives in himself the craftsman of the "elder days of Art," and, poet as he is also, gives to his fellow-workmen some thoughts no less distinguished by their beauty of conception and utterance than by their sound common sense and—must we use the word, the bane of modern culture, because so misunderstood—practical. The scope and nature of the Decorative Arts are his theme, and the rescue of modern life from the miserable blankness with which it is overwhelmed in our cities and homes is his object. Whether the Pelion upon Ossa of depraved taste and lack of the perception of truth and beauty can ever be thrown off, and our daily lives made simple and pure by their surroundings being beautified by true art, is, we fear, a dream, as Mr. Morris says, "of what never has been and never will be," but he adds, "true, it has never been, and therefore since the world is alive and moving yet, my hope is the greater that it one day will be: true, it is a dream; but dreams have before now come about of things so good and necessary to us, that we scarcely think of them more than of the daylight, though once people had to live without them, without even the hope of them." What the author of the "Earthly Paradise" says of the Decorative Arts will freshen a jaded spirit, and lend some hope that his dream may be realized, if not in our day, at least by our help. The gist of his teaching—which is indeed only that of all art—is the avoidance of shams, the study of the beautiful with nature and history as teachers, simplicity of life and love of work.

PROTECTION.—Never mind what quantity of flourishes the supporters of the legerdemain of "protection" may make to cover the performance. Let it be utterly indifferent to you, what names, sacred or profane, they invoke to give gravity to their proceedings. If they are poetical, think of the Rule of Three. If they quote Scripture, take care of your pockets. Your money, which is your life, is at stake; therefore keep a cool head and a clear eye. Trust no man that looks like a conjuror; be upon your guard also against those that do not. Beware of the quack doctors, who make long speeches. Say that "all men are liars," and you will not be very far from being right. Believe nothing, except that two and two make four. If an angel or an archbishop preach anything contrary to this, give them no heed. If judges on the bench contradict it, tell them they sit there to make law and not arithmetic. You have money, and therefore everybody is in a plot against you. There is something in your pockets, and you will be beset right and left, until they are cleaned out.—*Thomas P. Thompson.*

REALISM.—Upon sitting down to read a novel one does not care to know that the personages ever did live, or the incidents occur in real life. The natural and preferable presumption is that they did not, for this very presumption lifts the characters on to the plane of the ideal; and it is upon this ideal plane, parallel with yet above the real, that they must ever continue to move. The mind cannot permit them to descend from the one to the other without experiencing a violent shock. In judging of a portrait the friends of the sitter apply very different tests from those employed by the public. To the latter it is simply a picture, and must be judged by the laws of art. Yet who that has visited our Academy exhibitions has not wandered wearily past hundreds of square feet of canvas, covered with heads whose only merit was their possible resemblance to unknown originals? It is on such occasions that one sighs for some law like that of the Greeks, which, according to Pliny, provided that while every conqueror in the Olympic games received a statue, a portrait statue was erected only to him who had been thrice victor. "For," says Lessing, commenting upon the passage, "too many indifferent statues were not allowed among works of art." If some such limitation was deemed necessary in the days of the Olympiads, when nature was producing her masterpieces, certainly no one will deny that there is more reason for it now. In turning to other branches of art we find the same domination of realism to the exclusion of the ideal. This is especially true of figure and *genre* painting. Lessing's remark that while "painting as imitative skill can express ugliness, painting as a fine art will not express it," is forgotten or disbelieved; and Winkelman's statement that although "beauties as great as any of those which art has produced can be found singly in nature, yet in the entire figure nature must yield the palm to art," is disregarded. But these were principles put forward by two of the world's greatest art critics, and based upon an intimate acquaintance with *genre* art. This art was essentially ideal, and it is with the ideal that the true artist has to deal. It is in this respect that his work differs from that of the photographer and the newspaper reporter. We care not where he procures his materials, whether from the field of life or the yet more fertile one of the imagination; they must be remodeled and adapted to this ideal world. If the artist fail in this, his whole work is a failure. All true art is life-like, but all life is by no means artistic; and it is the true artist who, selecting the parts which are, fuses them into perfect works, just as the Greeks modeled their masterpieces, not from one model only, but from the most perfect parts of many.—*Atlantic Monthly.*

## SPECIAL NOTICES BY THE EDITOR.

"EVERYBODY HAS A QUESTION." THE EDITOR WILL BE HAPPY TO GIVE ANSWER TO EVERY BODY'S QUESTION, PROVIDED EVERY BODY WILL BE REASONABLE.

MEN HAVE MANY INVENTIONS. WE SHALL DEVOTE SPACE TO THE NOTICE OF THEM.