

## Book Notices.

*Weaver Stephen. Odds and Evens in English Religion.* By JOSEPH PARKER, D.D. 8vo, pp. 298. London: Swan, Sonnenschein, LeBay & Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Price \$2.65.

In this book the brilliant pastor of the City Temple, London, appears in a new rôle. Of course anything coming from Dr. Parker will possess distinguished merit. The story of Weaver Stephen may be called a theological romance; but its chief merit is not its romantic interest. Like Canning's knife-grinder its author might say, "Story, God bless you, I've none to tell, sir." It is rather a series of graphic pictures of religious life in "Midtown," a characteristic English borough. These pictures range from the tenderest, tear-compelling pathos to the richest humour, if not indeed the broadest farce. Only a man of genius could have written the book; but his is a strange, erratic genius. The wit is at times somewhat elephantine and the humour resembles often rude horseplay. But mixed with this, like veins of gold amid rude ore, is a strain of finest poetry and profoundest piety.

This is pre-eminently a book about preachers and for preachers. The principal characters are the Baptist, Independent, and Church of England ministers of Midtown, with queer specimens of the laity. One of these proposes to convert the ungodly by giving pious names to the streets and houses: as Sabbath Street, Gospel Circus, Salvation Corner, Capernaum Villa, etc.

The chief purpose of the book is the cultivation of Christian charity, the promotion of Christian unity, and the burial of inter-denominational bigotry and strife. Thank God that the religious rancour that embittered Midtown society—the strife and alienation between Churchmen and Dissenters, and

among the Dissenters themselves—is unknown in Canada. The Vicar's daughter, for instance, visits the Baptist conventicle and has to undergo a sort of moral quarantine therefor, as if she had been exposed to small-pox. Indeed, it is suggested that camphor is a good prophylactic in visiting such dangerous places. Dr. Parker is broad-minded enough to see both sides of the shield, to see that both parties have distinguished merits and serious faults, and pleads eloquently for what he calls an "Open Church" or a "Larger Church" which shall better than any existing organization "represent the generous freedom which ought to mark the boundary and function of Christ's Body the Church." For the Romanizing clergy of the Establishment he has no mercy. He has a rich confessional scene in which one of them comes off decidedly second best. One of the best characters in the book is a trusty but shrewish servant-maid, who has a poor opinion of deacons, "Cause the moment they make a deeking of a man he gets as uppy and cheeky as the mayor and corporation, and so bounceable as you can neither hold him nor bind him."

*W. D. Simpson, Methodist Minister and Missionary.* By the REV. SAMUEL WRAY and REV. ROBT. STEPHENSON. With Portrait. Pp. 220. London: T. Woolmer. Toronto: Wm. Briggs.

The visit of the subject of this biography to the United States and Canada a few years ago will be remembered with pleasure by all who met or heard him. Before immense audiences at Chautauqua and elsewhere he made a very favourable impression upon the people. He was an ideal Methodist preacher; full of faith and of good works. The loving portraiture of his early life is