

Whether man's body was created mediately through other organisms, or immediately out of clay, is not of much consequence. But when it is admitted that man has been specially endowed with certain faculties which distinguish him from the beasts, the lecturer left us little to find fault with, for he at once declared the existence of a Creator, and of man as a special work of the Creator.

But the theory of the direct assignment of peculiar qualities to man introduces a new difficulty in the way of Evolution. It has been said, If Evolution produced the organisms lower than man, why should it have stopped short of man? In answer to this it may be asked, If the Creator directly interposed to endow man with special attributes, why did He stop there? It must be admitted on this hypothesis that man has been endowed with faculties which have enabled him to diverge so widely from his savage ancestors that there is said to be more difference between civilized man and the rudest savage than there is between the latter and the highest ape. If his special attributes account for this divergence, why should not the alleged divergence of species from their original types be similarly accounted for?

EDWARD DOUGLAS ARMOUR.

HOW SPRING COMES.

To most lovers of nature there is a subtle mystery in the beginnings of things, and a peculiar charm which does not belong to their later growth and development. The bursting rosebud has a certain beauty which we miss in the full blown flower, and to our eyes the moon, rising slowly over the pines, glows with a more splendid light than when she sails across the meridian. Perhaps it is because we know what has been and what is, while what is going to be is to us like the distant and transfigured landscape to the traveller. Whatever failures there may have been in the past, we are sure that nature holds perfectness somewhere, and it may be that it is to be brought forth now.

Doubtless some feeling of this kind, vague and undefined though it may be, underlies our gladness at the approach of spring. It seems then as if a new life, strong and fair, were awaking on the earth, and the memory of past springs is dull and dead in comparison with the living reality that is about to come to us. In spring all the world is expectant of great things. We feel ourselves to be on the eve of a new era—the Saturnian reign and a new age of gold is surely setting in. And in truth, if the year were always May and life always young, it scarcely seems that our earthly existence would need celestial compensations.

Whatever the reason may be, it is at any rate a rare pleasure to watch, week by week at first, and afterwards day by day, the decline of winter and the advance of spring. There is no cataclysm; nature works slowly, and the time of the beginning is uncertain. Yet in March we feel that the coldest winds and frosts have lost the keenness and penetration of winter. And when the vernal equinox has once passed, we may readily mark the changes. The days grow long rapidly, the sun rises earlier and sets later every day, and his march is higher in the heavens.

The tops of the little knolls that lie along the south sides of the hills are becoming bare and dry. But the gray bleached grass that covers them, and the dead leaves blown near by the storms of autumn and winter, give no promise of spring. From the ploughed fields the snow is slowly disappearing, leaving great black patches of bare earth and long furrows half full of water. The little hollows in the meadows and pasture fields are filling up too, though the earth is yet so cold that even before the sun sets these pools are usually frozen over, and it takes the next forenoon to thaw them again. On cloudy days the woods still look dreary enough. The trunks and limbs of the trees stand out bare against the dull sky. The sugar-making season is nearly over, and in the distance the blue smoke from the last camp-fire rises slowly up and up until it is scattered and lost in the tree tops. In the places where the snow has melted only dead leaves cover the cold ground. A few still cling to the branches of the small trees on the edge of the woods, and rustle mournfully in the fitful wind. The squirrels do not come out much yet. Perhaps a chickadee or a little woodpecker is chirping and fluttering around, or a crow flies cawing overhead. In the margins of the fields, around the stone piles and stumps, and on the roadsides, the dry brown seed-tops of last year's weeds and wild flowers appear—mulleins and yarrow and golden rod. These are the granaries from which the snow birds and sparrows fed all winter, and there still is enough left for the blue bird and other early spring comers. Some of the fence corners are filled with the bare barbed stems of the blackberry and raspberry.

On a bright day at this season the farmers' barnyards present an animated picture. After their morning feeding the cattle are turned out of the sheds into the yard. The older cows stand contented in the grateful

sunshine, meditating on June pastures, or wander idly about, knee-deep in the straw that surrounds the dilapidated stack. The younger cattle are quite lively; they frisk around, and bunt and shove each other about in a way that frequently draws a look of surprise and remonstrance from the dignified and contemplative-looking cows. The fowls of the barnyard are peculiarly susceptible to the influences of spring. The air is filled with the cackling of hens over new-laid eggs, or the earnest, chirping inquiry of others searching for a nest. The roosters join pretentiously in the cackling, or crow their salutes or challenges to each other. The ducks quack softly as they waddle in the straw; the turkey-cock gobbles vehemently and struts pompously around, while over near the fence a lonely and disconsolate-looking gander calls with a sharp clanging cry to his patient mate on her nest in the poultry house.

But the winter still lingers; great banks of snow lie in the corners of the fences, and the narrow lanes leading to the farmhouses are full of it; even where the ground is bare the frost has only gone out of a few inches on the surface; the rest is as hard as adamant. The ice still covers the ponds and rivers, yet a great change has been going on here. To the casual observer the ice appears as it did in the winter, and if he were to cut through he would probably find it as thick as ever. But if we look closer we shall see that the transparency is gone, and that the frozen structure has lost its firmness and solidity. In fact the whole mass is honeycombed; the sun has channelled innumerable fine passages perpendicularly through it, and the action of the water beneath will soon wear it thin.

And now comes the spring rain, warm, penetrating, vivifying, accompanied or followed by a fog. At once the bonds of winter are broken. In the course of a single day and night of such a rain the snow nearly all settles down and disappears from the woods, lanes, and fence corners. The ground warms and softens. Innumerable tiny rills drip and tinkle down the hillsides from the rain and the melting snow. A little torrent rushes along at the bottom of every gully, and the smaller streams are swollen to rivers. When all this water pours into the ponds and larger streams the honeycombed ice is heaved up, shattered, and cracked in every direction. Soon the frozen field is entirely broken up, and great masses of ice are borne along on the turbid flood until they are dissolved. Or perchance they are caught by some obstructing rock, or stump, or fallen tree, and the tremendous rush of water piles them up on one another with a harsh grinding and crackling that resounds fitfully above the steady swish of the water. When the ice is gone the current sweeps along majestically, carrying with it in a stately fashion all manner of float and driftwood, logs, stumps, rails, boards, fragments of old boxes and barrels; and perhaps the timbers of some fallen bridge, whose foundations were destroyed by the freshet, are floated far down the stream until the subsiding water leaves them stranded on the shore. The wild water-fowl have now returned from their southern winter-quarters. Scarcely was the ice melted on the margins of the lakes and mill-ponds when they were visited by flocks of ducks, and all the boys and shotguns in the neighbourhood were out forthwith in pursuit. Far up in the dim depths of the air V-shaped flocks of wild geese are flying to their summer haunts in the lakes of the north, and the sharp honk! honk! of the patriarchal gander in the van sounds clear to the earth, a mile below.

After the rain and the floods the advance of spring is rapid. The fields of fall wheat, which but a fortnight since looked bleached and brown, are fresh and green. The buds on the trees swell and unfold, the red maple is in full blossom. The blue bird and the robin have arrived. In the woods the hepatica, the anemone, the spring beauty, the trillium, and the violet are blooming. Farmers are ploughing and sowing in their fields. Sunny lawns grow green in the cities, the golden dandelion is in flower, hyacinths and crocuses appear in the gardens. The great buds of the horse-chestnuts have burst their waxy coverings, and the hickory limbs are decked with white silky tips. Spring has come. A. STEVENSON.

A TORONTO ART GALLERY.

UNDER this heading, a letter from Mr. L. R. O'Brien, the distinguished President of the Royal Canadian Academy and Ontario Society of Artists, appeared in the columns of THE WEEK last month. It opened with the following words: "Nothing is more wanting in Toronto than a permanent Art Gallery, and a good collection of works of art, always open to the public. It would be difficult to find a city in Europe or America of the wealth and population of Toronto that is so badly off in this respect. The Council of the Royal Canadian Academy have granted \$3,000 towards the purchase of a site; a corner lot on Wilton Avenue, near Yonge Street, has been secured at a cost of \$6,000; the balance of the purchase money will be made up by the artists as their contribution toward the scheme. The estimated cost of a suitable building is \$25,000, and a number of citizens