

LITERATURE.

LIFE OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF HIS WRITINGS, BOTH PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL. By William White; with an introduction by B. F. Barrett. J. B. Lippincott, Nos. 715 and 717 Market street, Philadelphia.

Fifty years hence Swedenborg will be far better known than he is to-day. At present, and for centuries, he has been rather a name than a power in the world. Everybody spoke familiarly of his writings, discussed his opinions with fluency, and knew little or nothing of them, more than that their author favored spiritualism. By some he is held as a demi-god—among these we may mention Mr. White, the author of the life before us, by others a fanatic, and by far the greater portion, the bold and rough of his words, who deemed the doctrinal worth of this remarkable man, have caused to the most opinions, they are already the decided rules of action of many intelligent persons in Europe, although his views have made but a comparative small impression here. Besides, as he believed them to be exerted no small influence on the religious world, we will profitably satiate ourselves with a compendium of his doctrine and a sketch of his life.

Emmanuel Swedenborg was born on the 29th of January, 1688. His father was a chaplain in the Swedish church, but was afterward made Bishop of Skara. Emanuel, the author assures us, was not precocious. "His youth manifested less precocity than solid and regular development of mind." But strange to say, after giving this assurance, we find the writer, but two pages off, quoting from Swedenborg's own letter, in which he says, "From my fourth to my tenth year my thoughts were constantly engrossed by reflections on God, on salvation, and on the mutual affections of men." And again—"From my sixth to my twelfth year it was my great delight to converse with clergymen concerning faith." If this was not precocity, will Mr. White pray tell us what is? When he had attained to the necessary age he underwent a long and thorough classical course at Stockholm. For four years he traveled over Europe, in every direction, and during his absence published a number of scientific works, one of which, on ores, secured him the appointment of Royal Assessor. Upon his return he devoted years to the study of his duties and issued a number of classical works, which Mr. White assures us contained all the inventions since allotted to the leading mechanicks of Europe and Great Britain. In a burst of admiration the author says, "That his 'Principia' is only second, if second, to Bacon's 'Principia.' If we can trust our author, to Swedenborg belongs all the triumphs which have made the names of Herschel, Buffon, La Place, Kepler, and Priestley famous. Moderate the writer's enthusiasm, it is undoubted that had Swedenborg's reputation rested entirely on his scientific works, he would have ranked among the first minds of history. Until he was fifty-seven years old we find him continuing to issue works and progress favorably in the world's esteem. He was made a nobleman by the King of Sweden, and was retired from the association on his full salary for life. Hence when "called" to his religious work he was a comparatively old man, with a more than competency, with a wide-spread reputation, and a noble rank.

In 1743 "the Lord manifested himself to his servant." From this time we sincerely pity the "serv." He was subjected continually to spiritual revelations, which withdrew him from the world and its surroundings, and carried him into the seventh heaven. His ptoix pen then abandoned science and took up theology.

He continually issued works containing his revelations, which were eagerly read. By some he was held a prophet; by others a maniac; but by none an impostor. We cannot but believe that a sort of Scottish "double-eight," or "charwoman," was granted to him, and that he absolutely saw many things which, like the Pythons, in his sacred fury, was only vouchsafed to him at certain times. His inspiration we are told, was remarkable, and when he had begun to speak to his religious work he was a comparatively old man, with a more than competency, with a wide-spread reputation, and a noble rank.

"Accident Presidents" and Voices.

From the Tribune.

President Johnson, in a speech delivered in the House of Representatives almost twenty years ago, giving a history of the veto power, after saying that "it was established to enable the people to resist and repel encroachments on their rights" etc., continues:

"We will pass by the administration of Mr. Van Buren to that of John Tyler, called by some—but not by me—in the same language. As the President who gave this power now exists, and is in the administration, is the only instance in which a law was passed over a veto since the origin of the Government."

—A Congress has the evidence here that it can "constitutionally" pass a law over a veto, we hope it will not allow Mr. Tyler the honor of being a precedent, as he was only an "Accidental President." Everything in the war has been "without a precedent," and let us now illustrate this singularity of its history.

The New English Reform Bill.

From the Times.

Mr. Gladstone has at length come forward with his great measure, which is to determine the fate of the Ministry, and whose success will form an era in English political history.

We have only the outlines given us by telegraph, but they show clearly how sweeping and broad is the reform proposed. Country voters who formerly were admitted to suffrage only when paying \$250 occupancy, are now enlarged to those paying \$76, while in boroughs, those paying an annual sum of \$3 for a house in towns those paying \$50 per annum for uplands or portions of houses, are entitled to the franchise.

By this great measure, 400,000 voters are added to the 1,600,000 of England and Scotland, that is to say, the number of voters is increased one-fold. The basis of suffrage is widened to include all the professional classes before excluded, the better class of mechanics, probably all the shopkeepers, and a considerable portion of the laborers. Such a qualification in New York would include almost every male member of the community, except vagabonds, servants, and strangers. If the features of the bill are correctly reported, it will strike the American mind as a most generous and comprehensive measure, certainly widening the suffrage quite as much as the world over.

It will gradually change the whole character of Parliament and English political life.

Never before, probably, in British history, has this body so clearly shown itself a representative assembly of a size as at the present session.

The laying the loss of a country gentleman's castle as a tax on the manufacturers of Liverpool and London, the manufacturers of Manchester, and the day-laborers of the kingdom, was something which no legislative body, except a Parliament and English political life.

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