

The Proper Study of Mankind is Diogenes' Picked Chicken, M A N.

"Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?"—Psalm viii: 4.

What is this vain pigmy, that struts in puny majesty, a few brief years, upon the smallest of a million worlds?—This boastful liliput that vaunts itself to heaven, as the lord of all creation?—This outcast gardener, that claims kinship with the angels and their Maker?—This swaggering braggart, that through its inverted telescope, looks out upon God's mighty universe, suns, moons, planets, and limitless systems of ponderous orbs, rolling in vast immensity, tier beyond tier, circle beyond circle, to the resplendent seventh heavens, where the Almighty has set his throne, and established the headquarters of Omnipotent, Omniscient and Everlasting Dominion—this thing, which sweeping over the boundless realms of Infinity, sees only ITSELF, the central figure of heaven, earth, sea and sky, and exclaims: "For me and my enjoyment were all things made!"

Man! A worm, crushed by a careless tread. A mote in the sunbeam of time. A wriggling animalcule, of whom a thousand millions squirm and caper, slash, fume, cut each other's throats, rage, ravish and devour, in one tiny globe which, amid the whirling myriads of spheres, is but a drop in the boundless ocean of space. Man! A mere link between angels and devils. A blind and stupid gudgeon, perpetually darting at some cruel, barbed hook, to catch a bogus fly. A myth, only real in its follies and its sins. A vapor, fleeting, vanishing before the first beams of true morning light. A scentless bud, which the faintest frost may blast. A pitiful clothes rack, a tailor's sign, a milliner's advertisement. A mere greasy bundle of decaying dust. A postponed luncheon for cemetery-maggots. An invention for feeding doctors, apothecaries, undertakers, hearse-horses and grave-diggers. The only sinner, outside of hell, in all the domains of Jehovah. Oleaginous fuel for the flames of future damnation.

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." And he that is not born of a woman isn't much better. Born, with a feeble wail of suffering and regret, as his first salutation to earth. Born to a heritage of woe, in a world of graveyards; whose every sod is watered with blood and tears; whose every breeze is sick with pestilential exhalations, and heavily laden with sighs and anguished prayers. And yet hear the lunatic rejoicing of donkey daddies, mummies, aunts and grannies. Champagne corks popping. Toasts guzzled. If a ruler's brat, cannon booming and flags flying. And why? Only another hapless little victim of colic, lace-caps, stomach-aches, paregoric, teething rings and spankings, started with weak, unwilling feet, on the path that, wander as it may, leads ever to the tomb. Only another skillless voyager launched on a sea, whose storm-beaten shores are strewn with melancholy wrecks. Only another wretched little foot-ball of Fate kicked out upon the commons, to be cuffed and tossed a thousand cross-eyed ways for Sunday. Only another miserable little gauntlet-runner between heaven and hell, with the chances ten to one for brimstone instead of precious stones.

Man! At his best, but a swift journeyer from Eternity past to Eternity to come. A thistle down of Luck, driven hither and thither and everywhither, by ten thousand times ten thousand varying gusts of passion, chance, providence, hope, fear, desire and discontent. A soap-bubble of Fortune blown from Nature's sportive pipe, to float a brief, bright moment, gorgeous with borrowed tints and lustrousness; then punctured by Death's unerring, inevitable and remorseless finger, burst into nothingness and disappear. A perishable earthenware repository of disappointments, vexations, carking cares and blasted expectations. A sarcophagus of dead hopes and still-born joys. An everywhere set up tombstone, marking the burial place of lofty aspirations, noble purposes and brilliant anticipations. A leather wrapped package of pains and sorrows, rickety bones, rheumatic joints and torturous nerves. A peripatetic hatching-box of disease and dissolution. An ambulant hive of latent or developed crimes and follies. A portable groan-factory. A vagrant laboratory of seething wretchedness. The only being in all God's wide dominions, that bears ever with it, a fountain of tears. Sole rations of hell and the grave.

Father of merces! why from silent earth Didst thou awake, and curse him into birth? Tear him from quiet, ravish him from night, And make a thankless present of thy light? Push into being a reverse of thee, And animate a clod with misery?

Man! A blotch, a leprous pimple, on creation's face; a foul and ulcerous wart upon her nose. A whitened sepulchre, fair indeed to look upon, but within full of rottenness and ashes. A gilded cage of unclean birds. An enamel-rind-enveloped mass of animated carrion, in which swarms of slimy moral reptiles revel and hold high carnival;—loathsome vermin of lusts, battenings, squirming and intertwining, in every nook

and corner of their festering feasting-place;—the hideous maggots of embryo murder, rape and robbery; the lean skippers of fraud, envy, slander and jealousy; rioting in green and scummy spirit-filth and emotional corruption. Ugh! Heaven be praised, that the Almighty Ruler spares all beings but himself, that horrid sight, a naked human heart!

And yet this putridity-bred mite in the universal cheese—this infinitesimal whiff of wickedness in a whirlwind of resistless hap-hazard,—this microscopic atom of pollution in a Norwegian maelstrom of existence,—this anthill builder of infamies on the surface of immensity,—this sole rival malefactor of fiends, between the abodes of Deus and Diabolus,—sounds abroad, with assinine trumpet, the Dignity of his Origin, the Nobility of his Nature and the Exaltedness of his Destiny, his Grandeur of Intellect, his Delicacy of Conscience, his Knowledge of Right and Wrong, his Glorious Achievements and his High and Holy Aims. Ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! tee-hee!

HIS DIGNIFIED ORIGIN;—Descended from a shirtless gardener, who was discharged, kicked out of Eden, for stealing his master's winter apples.

HIS NOBLE NATURE;—Ten thousand penitentiaries, jails and calaboses bear testimony to it. The policeman at every street corner, the gallows on every highway, stands a monumental evidence of it. Every bludgeon's blow or hiss of assassin's dagger, every barred window and clanking fetter, proclaims it in trumpet tones.

The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.—Jeremiah xvii: 9.

The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.—Isaiah i: 5-6.

The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.—Psalm xiv: 2, 3.

None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth; they trust in vanity, and speak lies, they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and he that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.—Isaiah lix: 4, 5, 6.

D'ye hear it thunder? Thus Jehovah sets his seal upon that "nobility of nature."

HIS LOFTY DESTINY;—To die and rot like a dog. To puke the very atmosphere, with the stench of his putrescence. To furnish worm-feed with his dainty flesh, and a lodging place for toads and his haughty skull.

HIS GIANT INTELLECT;—Faugh! Seeing merely the outer crust of things. An ignoramus at his wisest. Unable to tell why one cat's white and another black. A silly tyro. A six-foot-tall, mature-aged babe and suckling. Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw. As delighted with a bit of tawdry tinsel on his collar, breast or sleeve, as a pulling infant with its penny-bells and teething-rings. Go seek the evidences of that mighty intelligence, in our perpetual motion frenzies, our South Sea bubbles and Pulip manias, in our lunatic asylums, our homes for inebriates, our congresses, legislatures, and engine-house debating clubs. Hear the voice of the All-Wise:

Every one is a hypocrite and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly.—Isaiah ix: 17.

Among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee. But they are altogether brutish and foolish.—Jeremiah xi: 7-8.

We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noonday as in the night.—Isaiah lix: 10.

Brutish and foolish. A blind stumbling proper. How are you, grand and expansive, penetrating and comprehensive mind?

HIS CONSCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF RIGHT AND WRONG;—A transient meteor-flash of "What Ought to Be," whose fleeting glare but serves to deepen the darkness of "What Is." A fitful, flickering taper, with a bushel-measure, yea, a hog's head, a huge brewer's vat, of lustful inclination, ever ready to be turned down over it. A wandering uncertain jack-o-lantern light, which only serves to make more plainly visible and more inexcusable, the wrong he wilfully and deliberately does. The multiplier of rods and moral cat o-nine-tails, with which the knowing transgressor shall be scourged.

They are impudent children and stiff hearted.—Ezekiel ii: 4.

They hear thy words, but they do them not.—Ezekiel xxxiii: 32.

They refused to hearken, and stopped their ears. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law.—Zachariah vii: 11-12.

They hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.—Jeremiah vii: 24.

That servant which knew his lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few.—Luke xii: 47, 48.

His vaunted conscience and knowledge, not restraining from iniquities, but adding to the penalties; mere augmenters of his larrupings; supplementary thoughts in the dread knouts, that shall make his spiritual far fly, in the great and terrible and unescapable day of final accounting and criminal flogging-and-singeing. Oh, idiotic and pitiable boaster, bragging of the mill-stones that will only drag him deeper and yet deeper down, in the fiery depths of that sulphurous lava-lake, upon whose flame-crested billows, Satan, Lincoln, Moloch and Stanton paddle their red-hot canoes!

AND HIS GLORIOUS AIMS, ATTAINMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS;—What are they? All, ALL, pitiful vanities, light as the dandelion's down, evanescent as the glow upon a butterfly's wings.—Learning—Wealth, Beauty—Glory—Fame—And Happiness—These are the glittering bubbles for which millions of millions have rushed and scrambled, planned, plotted, delved, sweated, panted, swindled, battled, and plunged headlong into hell. These are the dummy gods of man. For these he wildly strives, fights, sins and prays.

LEARNING;—Tut, tut! After all his strugglings, all his efforts, what does he know? Absolutely nothing. Let him explore the whole wide realm of human knowledge, drink deep of every earthly fountain of information; and he can't tell why the violet is blue, and its leaflet green; why the rose is red, and the lily just beside it, growing in the same soil, watered by the same showers and dews, and kissed by the same breezes and sunshine, is white. With all his puffy wisdom, what philosopher can tell why the same corn and grass turn to hair upon the cow, to wool upon the sheep, to bristles upon the swine, and feathers on the goose?—Why one tree bears acorns and another plums?—Why his dog's tail grows at one end, instead of the other?—Why he is himself, instead of somebody else? Let proud man soar upon the wings of science to the highest heavens;—Let him weigh the worlds in a balance; tame the forked lightnings, and make them the humble ministers of his will; search out every gem of mysterious lore, which the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear; ravage the whole broad domain of literature and art; bear off every jewel of philosophy, chemistry, geology and astronomy; handle fixed stars, comets, eclipses, earthquakes and thunder-storms, as a boy does his marbles and jackknives;—Let him make his mind a grand store-house of all that has ever been discovered, attained or done, since Omnipotence set the universe in motion;—And he can't tell why his hair grows on his head, and not on his feet; why his locks are sorrel, and his neighbor's black; why a jackass shouldn't be a legislator, and a congressman a jack ass;—And in all his highest pitch of pride, with one fell touch of Fever's finger on his brain, he clanks his chains and howls behind the bars of a maniac's cell. A Methuselah's life time of study, midnight lamps and musty tomes, will not enable the fond scholastic highfaluter to enter the lowest blue backed-spelling-book class of eternity.

WEALTH;—The tawdry gilding of the tumblebug's ball. A premium for burglars and assassins. Bribe for one's children to pray for his death. Bonus for his wife's second husband. A little more dirt and lucre. A little bigger muck heap. A few more filthy figured rags, breeding itch and niggardliness. A few more ounces of gold—Gold!—Bane of our race. Stained with the tears and blood of a hundred generations. Cursed author of half earth's sins and miseries. Parent of robbery and murder. Pay of brutal, country and liberty-destroying janizaries. Price of every infamy and horror. Inciter of the savage hordes of Tamerlane, Alaric, Zenghis Khan and Sherman. Execrated, damnable jingler, laden with the guilt of six thousand years of avarice and plunder—This is wealth; and a million millions of its clinking baubles, won't purchase a moment's peace of mind, a clock tick of time, a single gurgling gasp of breath! Let the sordid groveler rake and scrape, twist, contrive, bargain, cheat and steal; enlarge his stores; add acre to acre, and field to field; grab, grind, extort, amass; till, casting his bleared eyes over a miniature empire, he can exclaim, "I a lord of all I survey!"—Death's skeleton arrow smites him; and his shroud is pocketless. A wooden box, and a six foot hole in some cheap corner of his possessions, are all he needs. The reveler in purple and fine linen opens his eyes in hell, and craves a drop of water from the finger-tip of the dog-licked ulcerous beggar!

BEAUTY;—Toil as man may, tower aloft, and boast with vain-glorious pride of his strength and comeliness; though he move an Apollo in proportions, a Hercules in might, an Achilles in valor, a Pericles in eloquence; to a handful of ill-savored dust, must he surely come at last. Let beautiful woman ransack creation to enhance her charms—gather from every clime its rarest gitts; silks, cashmeres, linens, laces, velvets, plumes, jewels and precious stones, paints,

enamels, dyes, gewgaws and flubdubberies, countless as the stars that twinkle in the blue empyrean, or the sands upon the sea-shore—let her shine resplendent in all the gorgeous tinsel of fashion; a sylph in form, a seraph in voice, a rainbow in costume, a goddess in grace, and a woman in all true loveliness—one breath of Pestilence sweeps past; and a few plated nail-heads in a coffin-lid are all the ornaments she requires.

GLORY;—A mythical isle in an ocean of gore. Hundreds of thousands of gallant fellows, images of God, hacking each other into buzzard-bait, for a bit of painted bunting called a flag. A dazzling monster, down whose yawning, insatiate gullet, vast hecatombs of slaughtered victims have yearly, daily, hourly thronged for sixty centuries. Go contemplate it amid the mouldering heaps of Babylon the Great, in whose desolate palaces the wolf and the owl make their habitation. Go muse upon it, over the broken pillars and shattered arches of proud Tadmor, queen city of the Plain. Go behold it in the bramble grown, weed-clad mounds where ages untold, have slumbered the grandeur and haughtiness of Nineveh and Thebes. Go, ponder upon it, where the sad billows chant the eternal requiem of Napoleon, on the rugged shores of St. Helena's lone, sea-girt rock. Caesar, dead and turned to soil again, is peddled by Italian peasants, in beans and garlic.

FAME;—A breath. A puff of empty, idle air. The paid-for blazonry of mercenary tooters. The clamor of a senseless rabble, who now strew the way with their garments, and shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David;" and three days afterward, in those same streets, yell, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" The flash of cheap salt-petre. To have flags half-masted, by special order; and a few yards of ten-cent black cambric knotted on public door-posts and pillars, by grinning clerks and orderlies; and be forgotten before the "thirty days" of mourning by rote, have half expired. Jim Fisk is, to-day, far better and more widely known than Alexander, Peter the Great, all the Popes combined, the whole royal race of France and Britain, Columbus and George Washington.

AND HAPPINESS;—Lost ignis fatuus of the nihilistic train. A mass of nothing, with no place to put it. A tinkling name, without location. The phantasm of a dis-temperamented brain. The absurd shadow of a madman's dream. The bag of gold at the rainbow's end. Happiness! In a world, where every footfall awakes the echoes of a sepulchre; where every gale, drooping pinioned, is burdened with the voice of lamentation. Go find it in the idiot's vacant laugh; in the bacchanalian's maudlin chuckle; in the merriment of children, at the antics of a clown; in the shuffling of counter hopper's heels, at a hugging set to music, a select drawing room shin-dig, or a miscellaneous omnium-squeezem of an anniversary ball; in the giggling and smirking of boarding school misses, over their first love letters. Go, find it, greatest always, where thought is least. For to be sane is to be miserable!

But dear, dearer, dearest, more dearer, most dearest—(keep on in that style, for half a column further)—kind and beloved friends, pardon, pardon such dyspeptic maunderings. There is a better side to man. We know it. Our hosts of noble friends are living evidences of it. Some day, we'll say our say on that brighter picture. Now, we're tired, and so are you. Come in. Come in. You're forty-three thousand, five hundred and thirty-seven and two-thirds times welcome.—*Weekly Caucasian*.

THE MAN WHO FIRED THE NAUVOO TEMPLE.—Among the events of the famous Mormon war was the burning of the Nauvoo Temple. The structure was burned in the night time, and so successful was the party engaged in its firing, that probably he was never suspected. The recent death of the incendiary, however, has removed the necessity of further secrecy, and a day or two ago we were put in possession of his name, and the facts connected with the burning of the temple, by the only living person cognizant of them. The temple was fired by Jos. B. Agnew, who recently died in Appanose Township, Hancock County, in this State, at the age of some fifty-eight years. It was always supposed that the party who burned the building had entered through the basement, but the facts are, Mr. Agnew surreptitiously obtained a key to one of the doors to the temple some time before the act. No one was engaged with him, and only four knew he was the party. Three of these are now dead. Agnew prepared his fire-ball and other combustibles at his residence. Placing them in his saddle-bags, he rode on horseback to Nauvoo, and in the night entered the temple with his key, passed up to the cupola, arranged his materials and fired them, and then quietly escaped the way he came. Our informant, who is a responsible and prominent citizen of the western part of the State, says he thinks he can produce the key of the temple which Agnew secured in order to accomplish his work.—*Peoria (Ill.) Transcript*.

THE "CHEYENNE LEADER" says Dan Rice and his Mammoth Circus during the coming season will visit the principal towns along the line of the Missouri, Kansas, and Union Pacific Railroads.