

school should, however, wish to adopt a textbook, which is not included in the authorised list, Inspecting officers are requested to afford every facility in the matter by having the book sent to the Director with a view to its being referred to the text-book Committee and included in the authorised list, should it be found suitable." We beg to draw the attention of the local Education Department to this important circular.

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We have been favoured with the July issue of the *Central Hindu College Magazine*. The current issue of the *Dawn and Dawn Society's Magazine* has also been sent to us. We notice a good deal that is eminently readable and instructive in this bi-lingual periodical.

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## THE EDIFICE OF HUMAN LIFE.

The march of the human mind is from the Finite to the Infinite, from the Known to the Unknown, from the Unreal to the Real. It continually strives upward in spite of the physical law of gravitation and it needs must transcend the limits of time and space. Confined and pestered as it is in the pinfold of this Earth, it wages a continuous war against its laws and limits and is ever bent upon flying to its own congenial atmosphere. Conscious of its illustrious descent, it disdains to mix with flesh and blood and continually yearns to fly to "God who is our home." Indeed nothing is more remarkable and suggestive than this mysterious combination of the finite and the infinite, this eternal struggle between Matter and Mind. If man is "the beauty of the world and the paragon of animals", it is because he is a creature of infinite possibilities, because he is the lord of creation, because he is the Universe

in miniature (microcosm). He alone of all God's creatures is fully conscious of his origin and of his mission. He alone has the privilege of realising the whole of the infinite chain of creation at a glance, of making the Present a necessary connecting link between the Past and the Future. Taken physically, he is but an insignificant atom in the Universe; taken spiritually, he is co-extensive with the Universe, nay more, he claims kindred with the glorious Author of the Universe.

But every privilege has its corresponding responsibility, and it is necessary to remember that of all creatures man is the only responsible moral agent. He occupies the middle zone in the circle of creation, he forms the stepping-stone between brute and gods. Creatures above him are guided entirely by Intuition and, as such, have no plea for doing evil; those below him are guided entirely by Instinct and as such are incapable of committing evil. Man alone is guided by Reason and as such is responsible for everything he thinks, feels or does. Hence all his credit for doing good; hence all his danger of doing evil. This is the allegory of the fall of Adam and this the shame and glory of the progeny of Adam. The goal of ambition of every human being is the realization of the lost Paradise and the final emancipation of his immortal part from the bonds of flesh.

Now in this continual striving upwards, in this slow but sure heavenward march, Man makes the earth and everything earthy, not excluding his own body of flesh and blood, his ladder. "Men may rise on stepping stones, of their dead selves to higher things." Everything material, every earthly success or failure, every gain or loss in life, has thus a high spiritual significance. We are all striving towards our goal if at all we care to keep the goal steadily in view. We are all rising higher and

higher if at all we care to do so. There is no standing still in the earth. The stationary state is a fiction in the physical as well as in the moral world. We must be moving with the movement of the planet we inhabit, as we must be approaching or receding from the goal which it is our duty and privilege to realise. But I say that the tendency of the human race is to march forward, though individuals and nations may be falling back here and there. Science and Philosophy alike bear testimony to this unmistakable fact.

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of  
the suns."

Philosophers and poets have long dwelt upon the tripartite nature of man. The magical number three runs through every part of the Universe, and no where more conspicuously than through the noblest of created things. We are all familiar with the three remarkable aspects of human life, viz., Physical, Mental and Spiritual. Each of these may again be subdivided into three parts from different points of view. But without entering into that curious analysis, I should like to point out that this splendid edifice of human life has always appeared to me in the light of a magnificent three-storied structure built by the Divine Architect after His own pattern. Man is the express image of God in more than one sense. I fancy that the three successive parts of this noble structure are more or less identical with the Physical, Mental and Spiritual aspects of human life. The ground floor of this mansion we dispute with our common brethren the Brutes. In that nethermost region man enjoys no special prerogatives. He is subject to the same laws and the same wants though his freedom of will sometimes leads him to defy these laws, of course not with impunity and though his idea of decency sometimes leads him

to cover the grossness of his want and of the means of their satisfaction. His material part is of the earth earthy and is in no way superior to the stuff that brutes are made of. It is in this region that man is the weakest and the most contemptible. He possesses all the fierce wants and desires of the brute without the brute's immunity from sin, without the brute's compulsory moderation. Cabined and confined within this dark cell, he looks neither to the Past nor to the Future, but is absolutely taken up with the gratification of the Present.

But Man does not stop here. Hard indeed would have been his lot if he were a perpetual tenant of the ground floor. It is only his necessary starting point in his heavenward journey and it serves only as a ladder to lift him up. This is the business of Education—the sole aim of civilization. Man is born a beast but he should die a God. With the seeds of progress latent in him, the human baby comes into this world “trailing clouds of glory” behind him. Education—agencies internal and external tending to bring out or develop his latent faculties and to sow some new seeds if possible—shapes and moulds him and befits him for the first floor of the glorious mansion above referred to. He casts off the foul skin of the natural man and with the shining robe of the Philosopher or the Scholar or the Civilized man, he takes his stand upon the vantage-ground newly acquired and casts his curious eyes about him.

But lo! what does he behold! He gives a name to everything he sees around him from the crawling insect upon Earth to the shining stars in Heaven. He knows the function and nature of everything animate and inanimate and commands Nature herself to minister to his wants and desires. With the magic wand of knowledge in his hands, he touches whatever



he comes in contact with and lo ! like an unsuspected Ariel it at once obeys his call. He is no longer at the mercy of the elements. He is now the veritable lord of creation. The roaring cataract turns his mills. The ever inconstant lightning steadily lights his rooms. The most stubborn soil yields him crops. Impenetrable forests become his pleasure gardens, time and distance vanish precipitately before him and the four quarters of the globe appear to him as familiar as those of his own house. He is constantly adding to his possessions, physical and mental. He is exploring uninhabitable regions, discovering undreamt of continents, raking up the bowels of his mother Earth and making highways over mountains and seas.

Nay he does even more. Not content with the limits of the globe he inhabits and its belongings, he goes on adding to his conquests (like another disappointed Alexander) in "Fresh fields and pastures new." With the help of Art he supplements Nature and makes amends for Nature's thrift with a vengeance. With a bit of glass he discovers that the Earth he lives in, whose immensity it requires the utmost stretch of the imagination to grasp, is but infinitesimally small atom compared to the whole of the known Universe. What is man as compared to the country he lives in—what as compared to the continent and what as compared to the entire globe we call Earth ? More insignificant than a drop of water in the Pacific. But the highest flights of imagination will fail to institute any such comparison between man, as a mass of matter and the infinite Universe which has as yet been discovered by man. It would be the height of absurdity for any rational creature to cherish the faintest sentiment of pride in his breast under these conditions. Thus knowledge is the best antidote to pride, pride that bringeth about the fall of man. But knowledge in this sense is almost synonymous with wisdom of which

we shall speak later on. The conquest of the physical Universe, important as it is, is as nothing when compared to the more glorious, but less tangible, conquests of man. The mind is the man and not the body. The body is only the instrument that is wielded at its pleasure by the mind. Perfect culture means perfect development of all our faculties and perfect command over them. It is then only that man realizes the important truth that "the mind is its own place, and in itself can make heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." The treasures of the mind are simply invaluable.

When he realizes this, man realizes what it is to live in other atmospheres and in more congenial climes. It is then only that he lives in the world of ideas—breathes and draws his nourishment from ideas as he does from the air he inhales. This is indeed a most enviable prerogative of the tenant of the first floor (to continue our metaphor) to which the creatures of the ground floor can lay no claim. The master of his mind, he is now the master of everything desirable. He enjoys the company of the master minds of the past. Homer ministers to his pleasure by describing over again the wrath of Achilles and its dreadful consequences. Aristophanes makes him laugh and Dante makes him sober. Plato shows him all the glories of after-life and Socrates heals his mental and moral blotches with his fascinating conversation. Borne aloft on the wings of fancy he pays court to Helen and Cleopatra and feeds on the ambrosial nectar of the gods. Let the poet come to my rescue at this juncture.

"And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name."

But enviable as are the prerogatives of the tenant of the first floor, those of the tenant of the second floor are more enviable still. In creation there is nothing better than man, in man there is nothing better than mind and of mind the most valuable side is the moral side. Fascinating indeed are the creations of fancy, but the brood of Contemplation will have the first seat before our Maker. Knowledge puffeth up, but wisdom edifyeth. "Let knowledge grow from more to more but more of reverence in us dwell." Man should not depend too much upon the Graces, lest he betrays his soul to the Devil. No better illustration of this principle could be given than that furnished by Tennyson in his inimitable piece, "The Palace of Art." There we find how man, forgetful of his Author and of his fellow-beings, is devoted to the exclusive worship of the Graces and how he awakes too late to a sense of utter vacuity in the inmost depths of his heart which neither Science nor Philosophy can fill up. Perched upon that lofty platform, he takes a bird's eye view of the whole creation and watches with Lucretian luxury the erring footsteps of his less fortunate brethren. From that ivory tower of contemplation man looks face to face upon his Creator and fancies himself within a measurable distance from the fountain-head of all light and grace. All anomalies vanish before him, all the mysteries of this world and the next lie like an open book for him to spell, all the most insoluble enigmas that pressed so long for explanation and that defied systematically the makeshift arguments of Science and Philosophy, now offer their own solution and with the eye of the seer he exclaims

"One God, one law, one element,  
 And one far off divine event  
 To which the whole creation moves."

S. F. G.