

SECRET PRAYER.

I need not leave the jostling world,
Or wait till daily tasks are o'er,
To fold my palms in secret prayer,
Within the close-shut closet door.

There is a viewless, cloistered room,
As high as heaven, as fair as day,
Where though my feet may join the throng,
My soul can enter in and pray.

And never through those crystal walls
The clash of life can pierce its way,
Nor ever can a human ear
Drink in the spirit-words I say.

One hearkening, even, cannot know
When I have crossed the threshold o'er.
For He alone, who hears my prayer,
Has heard the shutting of the door.

—Selected.

THE RATIONALE OF THEOSOPHY.

“How a man, of some wide thing he has witnessed, will construct a narrative, what kind of picture and delineation he will give of it, is the best measure you can get of what intellect is in the man. Which circumstance is vital and shall stand prominent, which unessential and fit to be suppressed; where is the true beginning, the sequence and ending. To find out this you task the whole force of insight that is in the man. He must understand the thing; according to the depth of his understanding will the fitness of his answer be. You will try him so. Does like join itself to like: the spirit of method stir in that confession so that its embroilment becomes order? Can the man say, “let there be light,” and out of chaos bring a world? Precisely as there is light in himself will he accomplish this.”—Carlyle on Shakspeare in “Heroes and Hero Worship.”

Measured by this standard, Shakspeare is certainly the greatest among modern men. Continuing, Carlyle says: “The thing he looks at reveals not this or that face of it, but its inmost heart and generic secret. It dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it.” He further quotes from Goethe, who says: “His characters are like watches with dial plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour, like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible.”

In order to arrive at a true conception of the highest order of character, we must first endeavor to decide what is the real test of true greatness. There are

but two phases of thought now battling for supremacy. The first is the mathematical, where the mind constructs logical deductions based upon the phenomena cognized by the senses, and by the analysis or synthesis of these it builds its theory of the universe.

The second, in the terminology of Carlyle, is that Mathesis, the power of abstract meditation, which gives discernment and understanding without the process of ratiocination.

Among modern writers these two systems of thought are probably best represented by Spencer and Carlyle. J. S. Mill, Humboldt and Kant may be classed in the same category as Spencer; and Emerson, Ruskin, Goethe, Schelling, Schiller and Novalis with Carlyle. I do not wish it to be inferred that I place Carlyle above those Germans whose names I have mentioned in connection with his. I am not sufficiently acquainted with their writings to pass an opinion. Carlyle certainly looked upon Goethe as his teacher.

If the mathematical or the ratiocinative faculty is the highest possessed by man, then Spencer, with the possible exception of Kant, is certainly the greatest of modern writers. Kant is a sort of borderland between Spencer and Carlyle, but nearer Spencer than Carlyle. But that the mathematical or ratiocinative faculty is the highest may well be doubted. That Carlyle and those whose names were mentioned with his, were great mathematicians is certain. In his younger days Carlyle was very fond of that study, and soon after he left college he became the author of a treatise on mathematics for an encyclopædia. I cannot recall the name of the encyclopædia, but the information may be found in Froude's life of Carlyle.

Speaking of Novalis, Carlyle says: “We might say that the chief excellence we have remarked in Novalis is his truly wonderful subtlety of intellect; his power of intense abstraction, of pursuing the deepest and most evanescent ideas through their thousand complexities, as it were with lynx vision, to the very limits of human thought. He was well skilled in mathematics and, as we can easily believe, fond of that science. But his is a far finer species of endowment, than any required in mathematics, where