


+Numbers.+

VALEDICTORY.

MAY SHAW.

 N old Greek philosopher says:— "Number is the essence of all things: and the organization of the universe, in its various determinations, is a harmonious system of numbers and their relations." "Thus number is the prevailing law or symmetry of the universe, the ultimate, the absolutely real. "Everything," says Philolaus, "which is known has in it numbers, for it is impossible either to think or know anything without numbers." Pope says:—"We think in numbers for the numbers come. We either think of everything as a unit or under more complex relations."

In the physical world the question of numbers becomes very important, when the phenomena of heat, light and sound, are solved according to the theory of vibration. The grandest, most beautiful creations in the universe, are based upon the eternal laws of mathematics. Life is dependent upon a certain number of respirations per hour. Gravitation is resolved into a mystic force which acts inversely as the square of its distance. Heat is considered as a mode of pendular motion. Sound rests upon the relations of number. Light as well, on the fact that a certain number of vibrations pass through space every second. The whole science of chemistry rests upon the relations of number. The symmetry and beauty of number is clearly visible throughout nature. From the simplest botanical specimen, to the most complex and delicately organized, the law of multiple and sub-multiple prevails. The crystal, bright, polished, symmetrical, is defined by the number of its sides and the magnitude of its angles. In the higher realm the thought universe, there is also a sort of crystallization, an intellectual gravitation towards the true.

History clusters around a few great names. Each in his own age and clime has formed a centre around which all noble thoughts, all great deeds revolve.

Could we lift the veil that separates the past from the present: wander into the mist and the dreamland of long ago, what revelations? What evidences of thought and skill would meet our eyes. Could we view the colossal monuments of Asiatic pride and Eastern despotism? Could we see the proud mistress of the seas dictating law to the empire? Could we but catch a glimpse of the exquisite sculpture, painting and statuary of Greece! Contrast this Oriental splendor and magnificence with the present and it will suffice to remind us that ancient civilization was one vast system of machinery, that the motor force was simple and yet powerful, that it consisted of a few master minds, that the multitude, impulsive and passionate, was ever ready then, as now, to follow the leaders voice, to tread the foot-paths marked out perchance, by some daring spirit centuries ahead of the times.

In these days of political organizations and mass meetings we hear but little of the individual life. The majority are usually in the wrong, the few are in the right. These are the men of rugged independent thought, who are freed from the trammels and shackles which centuries of idol-worship have imposed upon humanity. One of the seven Sages of Greece remarked, "The majority are bad." As nature ever tends to array herself in symmetrical forms: so the majority ever tends to follow certain lines of thought, certain modes of action and above all the time-worn landmarks, the old beaten paths.

The world has been saved by the few, the "scattered remnant" of the old prophet Ezekiel. Isaiah with his sublime imagery takes up the same refrain, "a tenth shall return" and "these shall be an highway for the remnant of his people." The world's history is the history of the remnant. Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans fell in the fray. All Greece rose up and moved forward to victory. The Hebrew Seers in their grand, luxuriant imagery, saw in the remnant the hope of Israel. The flower of cavalier chivalry melted like snow before Cromwell and his sturdy Puritan