

"Work Is Love Made Visible"

THE SECRETS OF THE HEART. Selected Works by Kahlil Gibran. Translated from the Arabic by Anthony Rizzallah Ferris. Edited by Martin L. Wolf. 339 pp. New York: Philosophical Library. \$4.75.

LESS than a score of years ago there still lived in New York a man who was to many both a legend and a cult. Though an Oriental (he was a native of Lebanon) he preached no exotic religion. Though virtually venerated as a saint, he lived among the Greenwich Village artists and painted beautiful figures and remarkable portraits. Yet to hosts of his friends and thousands of readers in many lands he was known primarily as a poet and prophet. Clearly this was no ordinary man. An endowment such as his, rare at any time, seemed almost unbelievable in our own lurid Twenties. Perhaps that is why he received no more attention than he did from the mass of the public. But to his own followers and admirers Kahlil Gibran loomed very large.

A succession of little black books came from his pen, "The Madman," "The Forerunner," "The Prophet," "Jesus, the Son of Man," a dozen or so, and they were like no other books of the time. Poetry, parables, dramatic dialogues, aphorisms, all touched with a strange beauty. Said the Prophet:

*Love one another, but make
not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea*

*between the shores of your
souls.*

*Your daily life is your temple
and your religion.*

Work is love made visible.

*Man is two men. One is
awake in darkness, and the
other is asleep in light.*

*Remember, my brother, that
the coin which you drop into
the withered hand stretching
toward you is the golden chain
that binds your rich heart to
the loving heart of God.*

The two dozen pieces making up this book are like a sampling of the variety of Kahlil Gibran's work. They include prose tales and fables, poems of varying length and even a dramatic piece that somehow-reminds one of the No plays of Japan. Most are mystical, all are rich in beauty. In a poem entitled "My Countrymen," he cries out:

*Hypocrisy is your religion, and
Falsehood is your life, and
Nothingness is your ending;
why
Then, are you living? . . .*

For writing things like this he was excommunicated from his church and exiled from his country. Yet today he is a classic there and one of the great heroes of the little Syrian nation living among the cedars of Lebanon.

HENRY JAMES FORMAN.