

THE
INNER MYSTERY.

An Inspirational Poem.

BY
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BOSTON:
ADAMS AND COMPANY,
25 BROMFIELD STREET.
1868.

KD 21631



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The Inner Mystery.

This Poem was delivered by Miss LIZZIE DOTEN, at a Festival commemorative of the twentieth anniversary of the advent of Modern Spiritualism, held in Music Hall, Boston, March 31, 1868.

Reported by H. F. GARDNER, M.D.



THE INNER MYSTERY.



IN the valley,
Where the darkness dropped its poisonous
vapors on my head ;
Where the night-winds
Moaned and murmured, like the voices of
the troubled dead, —
Groping, stumbling, weary, and alone,
Did I make the earth my bed ;
And my pillow was a stone.

Oh that slumber! It was long and dark
and deep;

Till a voice cried, "Come up hither!"

(And I started from my sleep.)

"Whither?" cried I.

And it answered, "Come up hither! for the
day is dawning:

Through the gates of amethyst and
amber

Shines the kindling glory of the morning."

Then I looked, and saw the blest assur-
ance of the coming day.

Hopeful-hearted,

O'er the mountain-path I took my upward
way.

'Mid the slumbering pines I heard Life's
drowsy pulses start,
Swinging, singing,
Making mournful music;
Thrilling, filling
All the lonely places of my heart.
Then the embers of the morning,
Smouldering on night's funeral-pyre,
Kindling into sudden brightness,
Lit the mountain-peaks with fire;
And the quickened heart of Nature
Thrilled responsive from her Memnon lyre.
Eager, earnest, still ascending
Toward the glory of the perfect day,
I could hear that voice my steps attending,
With the matin-hymn of Nature blending,

Ever crying, "Come up hither! come up
hither!"

And I followed in the way.

Bright the sky glowed
With celestial splendor,
Like the light of love from God's own
eyes;

And the lofty mountains
Seemed to tender
Back their crowns of glory to the loftier
skies.

Far above me,
In the heights so terrible and grand,
I could see the glaciers gleaming
In the hollow of the mountain's hand.

Flashing, dashing,
From the steep the foaming cataract
poured

Over pathways
Which the mighty avalanche had scored;

Dim and ghostly
Rose the clouds of wreathèd spray,
Rainbow-mantled,
Vanishing in air away.

Elfin shadows
O'er my pathway leapt and played,
As the pines their murmuring branches
swayed.

All the air seemed filled with voices
Which I ne'er had thought to hear again;
And I fled, to leave behind me

Sound of pleasure close allied to pain:
Upward, onward, did I speed my way,
Nearer to the perfect source of day.
Awed by beauty and by terror,
Tearful, prayerful, did I sink,
Where the tender, blue-eyed gentian
Bloomed upon the glacier's brink.
"Save me! save me! O thou loving
Lord!" I cried,
"From the unforeseen intrusion
Of this sad, but sweet delusion,—
From this cruel semblance to the love
that long since died."
"Come up hither!"
Cried my unknown guide who went
before;

And I followed in the way once
more, —

Onward, upward, where the tempests gathered;
Where the lightnings crouched within
their secret lair;

Where the mighty God of thunder
With his hammer smote the shuddering
air;

Where the tall cliffs, battle-splintered,
Reared their lofty summits bleak and
bare;

Higher yet, where all my life-tide
With the breath of heaven grew chill;
And I felt my pulses quickened
With a strange, electric thrill.

Not one blossom brightened in my path-
way,

Not one lichen dared that wintry
breath;

But above me and around me

Brooded awful silence as of death:

And I walked where ragged precipices,
Overhanging wild abysses,

Frowned upon the dizzy depths below;

Where the yawning chasms,

Rent by earthquake spasms,

Strove to fill their hungry throats with
snow.

Burdened with a sense of solemn gran-
deur,

Reverent and adoringly I trod

'Mid those awful and majestic altars
Of the Unknown God.

Musing deeply,
As I turned an angle of the rocky wall,
Lo! before me
Stood a figure, ghostly, gaunt, and tall;
Like the famous fabled image, falling
From Dardanian skies:
Wrapped in white, marmoreal silence,
Did he greet my wondering eyes.
Straight upon the narrow pathway,
Fixed as fate he seemed to stand,
With a widely yawning chasm,
And a wall of rock on either
hand.

"Come up hither! come up hither!"

Cried the voice that went before;
And my spirit leapt impatient
To obey the call once more.

"Let me pass, I pray thee,"
Said I in a calm and courteous tone;
But he only gazed upon me
With a face as fixed and passionless as
stone.

"Prithee, stand aside!" I said more firmly;
"For I may not stay:
I must reach the mountain-heights above
me
Ere the close of day."

But he stirred not, spoke not, breathed
not;

Only turned his cold and stony eyes
Downward—to the yawning chasm:

Upward—to the distant skies.

“Wherefore,” said I,

With a slowly-kindling wrath,

“Do you seek to stay my progress,—

Do you stand across my path?

What have I to do with thee,

Or thou with me?

Stand aside; or, prithee,

Which is strongest we shall shortly
see.”

Like a statue did he stand immovable,—
the same.

Then my wrath waxed hotter,
"Demon! speak thy name,
And tell thine errand!" cried I with a
ringing shout;
And his cold lips parted, as he answered,
"I am DOUBT.
Go no farther,
For it is a phantom that hath lured thee
on thy way:
Upward striving
Will not bring thee nearer to the perfect
source of day.
In the valley,
All is warmth and rest and kindly cheer:
Go no farther,—
It is *lone* and *very cold up here*.

Trust to prudence and to reason
All your aspirations to control:
Man grows ripe before the season
When he listens to the promptings of
the soul."

"Come up hither! come up hither!"
Cried the sweet and tuneful voice again:
"Doubt should never counsel Duty when
the way of truth is plain."

"Stay!" replied the watchful demon;
"Thou *shalt* lend a listening ear to
Doubt;

For, by Heaven! thou shalt not pass me
Until thou hast heard me out.

Thou art cursed from the beginning;
All your nature is corrupt with sinning;
God refuses you his gifts of grace to-day;

Christ alone his righteous wrath can stay.

 All your prayerful aspiration
 But retards your soul's salvation,
All the efforts of your godless will
Make your deep damnation deeper still.

 O thou self-deluded dreamer!
 O thou transcendental schemer!
Leave your idle speculations,
Trances, visions, exaltations,
And your toilsome upward progress stay.
 By your fallen, lost condition,
 By the depths of your perdition,

I have promised,
Yea, have *sworn*, to turn you backward
in the way."

"Come up hither! come up hither!"
Cried the voice persuasive from above.

Then I looked; and, bending o'er me,
I beheld my long-lost angel-love.

"Back!" I shouted to the demon.
"Never," in a measured tone he said,
"Till the final resurrection,—
Till the earth and sea give up their dead."

Then I smote him,—
Smote him in the forehead and the eyes;

And I shouted,
"I will not be cozened with your lies!
Go to brainless cowards
With your Hebrew husks and pious pelf;
For MY SOUL IS OLDER THAN THE TRUTH,—
ONE WITH GOD HIMSELF."

Then my blows fell faster, fiercer, harder,
hotter,
Till he yielded like the vessel of a potter;
And I crashed into his brainless skull;
Smote his stony eyes out, cold and dull;
Into shards amorphous dashed his lips
profane;
And, as brittle as a bubble, clove his
shattered trunk in twain.

Then, as if God's millstones surely
Had been given me in trust,
On the rock I stood securely,
And those scattered fragments ground to
dust.

But, O God! what wondrous transformation
Seized me in its mighty grasp of
power,
As a bud, by Nature's potent magic,
Bursts at once into a perfect flower!
Like the record of a wise historian,
Lay unsealed the wondrous Book of
Life;
Swelling grandly, like a chant Gregorian,
Perfect unison arose from strife:

And I knew then that this grim, defiant elf,
That this clay-born image, was my weaker
self;

That this demon Doubt, with which I
held such strife,

Was the sense's logic,—the phenomena
of life;

And, as Perseus slew the Gorgon,

Must this mocking fiend be slain,
That transfixed in stony silence

Faith and hope might not remain.
Only when the soul asserted

What the flesh and sense concealed,—
GOD WITHIN, ONE WITH THE HUMAN,—
Did the INNER MYSTERY stand re-
vealed.

Oh, what glorious consummation to my
strife!

Death of Death! and Life unto Eternal
Life!

All around, the grand and awful moun-
tains

Hushed in silent reverence seemed to
stand,

White and shining,

Like the pearly portals of the better land.

Then I heard the angels singing,

Soft and clear the sweet notes ringing,

Dropping gently, like a golden rain,

From the treasured wealth of day;

And I caught these words of blessing

Floating down the heavenly way:—

“ Oh! what is the life of the soul
But the life of the Infinite Whole?

For God and his creatures are One,
As the tide from the ocean of light,
Which sets through the day and the night,
Is the same in the star-beam or sun.

“ He hath laid out the sea and the land;
He hath balanced the heavens in his hand;
And the Earth, in that order sublime,
How greatly and grandly she rolls,
And casts off her harvests of souls,
In the boundless fruition of Time!

“ We ask not his face to behold;
Of his glory we need not be told;

For the Word of his witness is near.
His Life is the Infinite Light,
Which quickens our blindness to sight;
And he speaks that his children may
hear.

“He suffers and sins with them all;
He stands, or he falls when they fall;
For he is both substance and breath.
Their strength from his greatness they
draw;
His wisdom and will are their law;
And he is their Saviour in death.

“When the depths of all hearts are un-
sealed

Shall the word of his truth be revealed,
That MAN is by NATURE DIVINE ;
And faith in God's presence within
Shall strengthen the spirit to win
A peace which no tongue can define."

Then the music floated upward,
Where the light of parting day,
With its gold and crimson glory,
On the mountain summits lay ;
And it left me longing, praying,
And with quickened steps essaying
Swift the nearest heights to gain,
That my captivated being
Might unto a clearer seeing
Of those fading forms attain.

And ere long, with hands uplifted,
Kneeling on the mountain high,
Out into the listening silence
Did I send my pleading cry:—
“O thou beauteous land of Beulah,
Just beyond my longing sight!
O ye bright ones, loved and lovely,
Dwelling in celestial light!
Leave, oh! leave me not behind you
With the darkness and the night!”
In the sunshine and the shadow,
Then I saw an open door;
And a voice cried, “Come up hither!
Life is yours forevermore.”
Gales of Araby around me
Seemed to wave their fragrant wings;

Strains of music, low and tender,
 Thrilled along celestial strings.
Like a spotless lily, blending
 Matchless bloom and breath divine,
Did my lost one, long lamented,
 Lay her soft white hand in mine;
 And uplifted,
 Strangely gifted,
With a power unknown before,
Did my love and I together enter at the
 open door.

Lo! again those bright immortals, as their
 fadeless flowers they wreath,
 Words of greeting
 Oft repeating,

Celebrate this festive eve.
Listen to their tuneful message for the
hearts that joy or grieve:—

“Truth’s heralds bright,
With feet of light,
Upon Life’s mountains stand;
Sent to proclaim,
In God’s high name,
Glad tidings to the land.
With smiles of love
They wait above,
And ‘Come up hither!’ cry.
When souls shall climb
Life’s heights sublime,
Then Death itself shall die.

“The little child,
Whose bright eyes smiled,
Whom angel-hands upbore,
The good, the kind,
The pure in mind,
Glide through Life’s open door.
With voices sweet,
Their lips repeat
The chorus of the sky:—
‘All souls shall be
From doubt made free,
And Death itself shall die.’

“Joy crowns with flowers
Life’s summer-hours,
When storms of sorrow cease;

And winter-snows,
And calm repose,
Bring thoughts of holy peace.
Thus pales or burns
Life's star by turns,
As swift the moments fly;
But winter's blight,
And sorrow's night,
And Death itself, shall die.

"From Death's abyss
To heights of bliss
Must souls immortal strive;
While loss and gain,
And peace and pain,
Shall keep their faith alive.

But higher still,
With tireless will,
Their course shall upward lie,
Till palms shall wave
Above the grave,
And Death itself shall die."

