

THE  
INNER MYSTERY.

An Inspirational Poem.

BY  
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The Inner Mystery.

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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.

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'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.

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Flashing, dashing,  
From the steps 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;

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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;

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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*.”

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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;

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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."

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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,

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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."

