

“THE MYSTERY”

BY

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I was not; now I am—a few days hence
I shall not be; I fain would look before
And after, but can neither do; some Power
Or lack of power says “no” to all I would.
I stand upon a wide and sunless plain,
Nor chart nor steel to guide my steps aright.
Whene’er, o’ercoming fear, I dare to move,
I grope without direction and by chance.
Some feign to hear a voice and feel a hand
That draws them ever upward thro’ the gloom.
But I—I hear no voice and touch no hand,
Tho’ oft thro’ silence infinite I list,
And strain my hearing to supernal sounds;
Tho’ oft thro’ fateful darkness do I reach,
And stretch my hand to find that other hand.
I question of th’ eternal bending skies
That seem to neighbor with the novice earth;
But they roll on, and daily shut their eyes
On me, as I one day shall do on them,
And tell me not the secret that I ask.