

THE INNER BEAUTY

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The Inner Beauty by Maurice Maeterlinck

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MAURICE MAETERLINCK

**THE
INNER BEAUTY**

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BEAUTY.

Maurice Maeterlinck.



LONDON.
ARTHUR L. HUMPHREYS
M. DCCC. X.

*The
Inner Beauty*

*By
Maurice Maeterlinck*

*London
Arthur L. Humphreys*

1910

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THE INNER BEAUTY

NOWHERE in the whole world is so athirst for beauty as the soul, nor is there anything to which beauty clings so readily. There is nothing in the world capable of such spontaneous uplifting, of such speedy ennoblement; nothing that offers more scrupulous obedience to the pure and noble commands it receives. There is nothing in the world that yields deeper submission to the empire of a thought that is loftier

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than other thoughts. And on this earth of ours there are but few souls that can withstand the dominion of the soul that has suffered itself to become beautiful.

In all truth might it be said that beauty is the unique aliment of our soul, for in all places does it search for beauty, and it perishes not of hunger even in the most degraded of lives. For indeed nothing of beauty can pass by and be altogether unperceived. Perhaps does it never pass by save only in our unconsciousness, but its action is no less puissant in gloom of night than by light of day; the joy it procures may be less tangible, but other difference there is none. Look at the most ordinary of men, at a time when a little beauty has contrived to steal into their darkness. They have come together, it matters not where, and for no special reason; but no sooner are they assembled

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than their very first thought would seem to be to close the great doors of life. Yet has each one of them, when alone, more than once lived in accord with his soul. He has loved perhaps, of a surety he has suffered. Inevitably must he, too, have heard the 'sounds that come from the distant country of Splendour and Terror'; and many an evening has he bowed down in silence before laws that are deeper than the sea. And yet when these men are assembled it is with the basest of things that they love to debauch themselves. They have a strange indescribable fear of beauty, and as their number increases so does this fear become greater, resembling indeed their dread of silence or of a verity that is too pure. And so true is this that, were one of them to have done something heroic in the course of the day, he would ascribe