

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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THE MYSTICISM OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

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THE MYSTICISM OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

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Chapter 1.

MYSTICISM AND ITS EXPRESSION.

"Ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity
Whose shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again."

Few words have been so abused by loose usage as "mysticism". In the mental furniture of many people otherwise well informed it serves as a convenient receptacle to which is relegated everything which seems mysterious or magical. Their idea of mysticism is like the idea of the Deity entertained by an old gentleman who described it as a "vague oblong blur".

In spite of its frequent misuse, this term denotes an experience which is by no means vague to many persons. There are five characteristics by which we can distinguish mystic consciousness .

(1) In the first place mystic consciousness is awareness of the transcendent. The mystic feels as present something which to ordinary consciousness is an illusive unattainable, a beyond. He feels that he has come upon something which in its fulness is never known to non-mystics. He has an exalted sense of having found that for which he has always sought. This is the reason that Evelyn Underhill and other writers refer to the mystic experience as the "transcendental consciousness".

Though these assertions may seem indefinite to those who have not shared the experience they describe, we must accept and seek to understand them, for they have been made in good faith by all writers who have left us accounts of their mystical adventures. These ever speak of their lives becoming aware of the larger life in which they are immersed, or of a "more real world of essential life". They have many names .

