

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Marie Corelli, SRC

Marie Corelli, born Mary Mackay in 1855, was a British writer and early feminist, who became one of England's bestselling and most popular authors after her first of 29 novels, A Romance of Two Worlds, was released in 1886. Her many books and poems now form a core part of the mystical tradition. She was actively involved with AMORC in its early years before her transition in 1921.

The Distinguished Scientist sat in his library alone. He was very dispirited and weary; the malady called "brain fog" had got hold of him. Nothing, not even a great discovery, which he had reason to think would be the crowning triumph of his life, seemed of any good purpose.

"If it would make humanity happier," he mused, "then I should be easier in mind. But will it?"

He pushed aside one or two of the day's newspapers wherein certain "sensations," so-called, had been started to give impetus to declining sales – wearisome discussions on social subjects, kept up at the invitation of the various editors by famous-minded persons whose chief delight was to see themselves in print. Their opinions were perfectly valueless to the world, but no matter—they got into print. That was the great and only necessary thing. One of these newspaper "symposiums" had concerned the so-called "conflict" between science and religion, and the Distinguished Scientist had read as much as he could stand of the would be learned twaddle which offered no elucidation of any difficulty and led nowhere.

"They will never understand!" he said, addressing himself to the blank silence of the room. "They will never have sufficient humility or unselfishness to learn that science is religion, and religion science. There can be no 'conflict' between two halves of Divine Unity."

He turned over the pages of a volume near at hand, entitled "The Science of Salvation," and read, as he had often read before, the following passage:

"We know as little about ourselves at present as we do of the opposite side of the moon, which is always turned away from the Earth. Thus, as it were, the face of one's own

self is always turned away. No fact in mentality is more apparent than that within each human personality there are two forces, powers, states, or conditions. One seeks to rise toward perfection; the other, in the opposite way, toward a lower grade or state. One leads to all that can be sensed as happiness here in bodies, brains, and personalities on Earth; and the other to an equal degree of unhappiness. One leads to mental pain, the other to mental happiness. And likewise physical. One must be saved from one's self. This is a literal

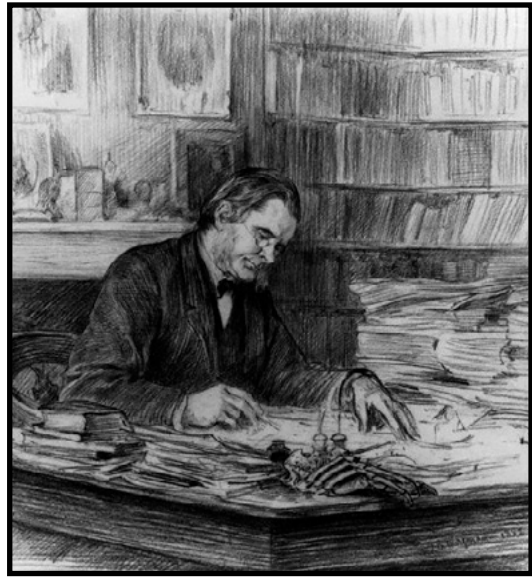


fact, as obscure and inexplicable as it may be. It is a fact as obdurate and rigid as is the fact that gravitation causes bodies to fall to the ground. The subject is one of the most profound in the entire career of humankind. Writers have declared that we are precisely as Nature made us – that we are living just as we are and as we ever have been – exactly according to our inherent natures. There is an opposite side to this tremendous question – the view that an incredible amount of work has been left on our minds and hands. The legacy of labor resting upon humankind is to conquer itself and the entire Earth. People are to annihilate war, alcohol, disease, poverty, crime, pain, insanity, idiocy, poisons, deadly serpents, deadly bacteria and insects, and harmful plants and animals. They must save themselves from sex-horrors, false relations, war, and the greed of gold – and that in a not far distant future – or they must retrograde.”

The Distinguished Scientist sighed and closed the book.

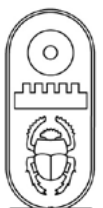
“True enough!” he said. “But truth is never accepted. If we present it to the people, we are scorned. But they will accept any lie!”

His sense of desolate “fog” increased. He thought of a trying experience he had gone through that afternoon when two American young men, representative “bounders” of New York State, had called upon him, ostensibly to pay their respects to a man of genius, but more obviously to assert themselves, and to make a parlous exhibition of ignorance and impertinence combined which would have goaded to fury any less composed individual than the Distinguished Scientist, who, after long experience, had arrived at the conclusion that “young” America generally was a condition of bacterial life in a state of fermentation and evolvment. Nevertheless, their categorical inquiries



and demands, not to say their comments on such information as he was able to give them, had decidedly bored and irritated him, and when he thought of them as specimens of modern humanity, he was not at all sure that he desired happiness for the race.

“Happiness should surely be for those who deserve it,” he thought. “There’s an old West Country maxim which says ‘If thee dussn’t work thee shassn’t eat,’ and that applies all through. Humankind, as I have just read, has a legacy of labor resting upon it – it is to annihilate war, alcohol, disease, poverty, crime, pain, insanity, and all the evils flesh has brought upon itself – and supposing all done that can be done, what then? Will real ‘happiness’ be ours? Shall we be satisfied? Will those who ‘feel immortal longings’ in them find fruition for their desires? I wonder! For example – if I give this new discovery of mine to the world, war will be – must be – annihilated. But will the greed and envy of humankind be likewise annihilated? Only if it can be saved from itself! No science – no ‘ray’ – no marvelous composition of elements can do that for humankind! Only the great uplifting of its whole mentality – the uplifting of love, humility, selflessness, and sacrifice. But your modern person



asks – What is the use of love, humility, selflessness, or sacrifice? The best and kindest of natures are those that are the first to be betrayed – the most loving and loyal hearts are the first to be broken!”

A verse from a free translation of Omar Khayyam came into his mind –

If I were the Divine, I would not
wait the years

To solve the mystery of human
tears,

And, unambiguous I would speak
my will

Nor hint it darkly to the dreaming
seers.

He rose from his chair and went to a corner of the library, where stood a tall cabinet heavily clamped with iron. Opening it, he took out a small box, apparently made of steel, or of platinum, and set it on the table. Then, attaching a thin electric switch to it, he sat down again and waited. In about two or three minutes the room was suffused with a brilliant glow of crimson which seemingly emanated from the box, though there was no indication of any outlet. Still, he watched and waited – the crimson effulgence wavered and swayed as though moved by

a wind, and presently formed itself into a long, straight ray of intense brilliancy stretching entirely across the room. The Distinguished Scientist took a long breath of satisfaction. “Perfect!” he said. “So far as anything can be perfect! Now if there is – if there should be anything in this atmosphere that is commonly invisible to human eyes, it should show up! It should certainly show up – even if it were the road to happiness!”

As he spoke, he reeled back, dazzled and amazed, something there was indeed in the atmosphere not commonly visible to human eyes – not even to scientific eyes aided by scientific appliances – another ray more brilliant than the first, but pure white and without a flicker, which slowly extended itself over the whole length of the red ray in the form of a Cross. Clear as a diamond, still as a pearl, it obliterated every other gleam of light save its own, and so remained. The scientist gazed and gazed – here was a thing beyond his comprehension; moreover, a sense of sudden awe stole over his senses and held him in thrall. Slowly, very slowly, he attempted to move toward that mysterious pure Whiteness, but was held back by a force not his own. He caught at the table edge to support himself and involuntarily



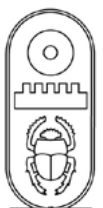


sank to his knees. The Great Light surrounded him in its pearly purity, and its form as a Cross was clear – the head and the summit painting upward and onward. For many minutes it remained then gradually began to fade, though not so much to fade as to vanish – and he was possessed by an eager desire to follow it wherever it went. He had completely forgotten his own “discovery” in the box left neglected on the table, or else he would have seen that whatever properties of light or radioactivity or power it possessed, which he had considered “perfect,” were, for the time at any rate, utterly extinguished. The wonderful White Ray was departing – he made haste to go in its track; it led him through the hall of his house to the door and out into the street, where crowds of people jostling one another on the pavements, murmuring noisily and pushing restlessly, swept to and fro under a driving shower of rain. And again he stood amazed, doubting the evidence of his own senses, for high above them all in its pure radiance stretched the White Ray in its Cross-like form, stretching out, as it were, shining arms of light to embrace the whole dark world. And the Scientist lingered on his doorstep watching the dark, drifting crowd. “So blind they are,”

he said to himself, “that they cannot see what is above them!”

This thought seemed to strike his brain with a sharp pang – was it not the solution of the “conflict” between Science and Religion? “So blind they are!” and if blind, who should lead them? And another hammer-stroke smote his mental consciousness – a stroke of memory, which like a finger typing out a message produced the words – “In the daytime also He led them with a cloud, and all the night through with a light of fire!”

A light of fire! There it was – most surely! – those wide, embracing beams of splendor extended over the restless multitude! But “so blind they could not see!” And was he, the Scientist, clearer of vision than they? He dared not assert it. His great “discovery” was, after all, only one of a million more waiting to be discovered, and as to whether it would add to human happiness, why that was not in his province to determine – that was the business of a Higher Force than any that could be probed or tested by science. So far in his knowledge he was as blind as the blind crowd moving under the stretched-out White Radiance which emanated from nothing that could be scientifically



explained, and which seemed to all those moving beneath it invisible! Then – all at once – clear above the murmuring city noises, came the voice of a street singer ringing sweetly on the rain-swept air – a voice full of the rich, strange pathos born of long suffering, and the words she sang smote the ears of the Scientist distinctly where he stood –

“Lead, kindly Light, amid the
encircling gloom,

Lead thou me on;

The night is dark and I am far
from home,

Lead thou me on;

Keep thou my feet – I do not ask
to see

The distant scene: one step enough
for me.”

The Scientist stepped softly within his own house and closed the door. Returning to his library he found it dark – whatever his “great discovery” was, there was no hint of it – no gleam of “radioactivity” anywhere, not even from the mysterious

box he had set so carefully on his table. He groped for the electric light and turned it on, then looked in a dazed way round the room – all was as he had left it.

Was his strange experience a dream? A warning? – or a lesson? “We go too far!” he said aloud. “We seek to know too much, and in the arrogance of our knowledge we lose the great Ideal! And so we miss the way to happiness both for ourselves and others. We must learn to be wise in time lest we destroy the whole fabric of our hopes and all the beauty of belief. Science is Religion – but we may not forget that Religion is Science! One step at a time! – for the night is dark!”

Involuntarily he closed his eyes.

“One step!” he repeated. “With faith and guidance – but not with pride! – not with arrogance! Lead, kindly light! One step enough for me!”

