

# The Writings . . .

—OF—

. . . . Marie Corelli.

BY S. BOSWIN, S. J.

\*\*\*\*\*

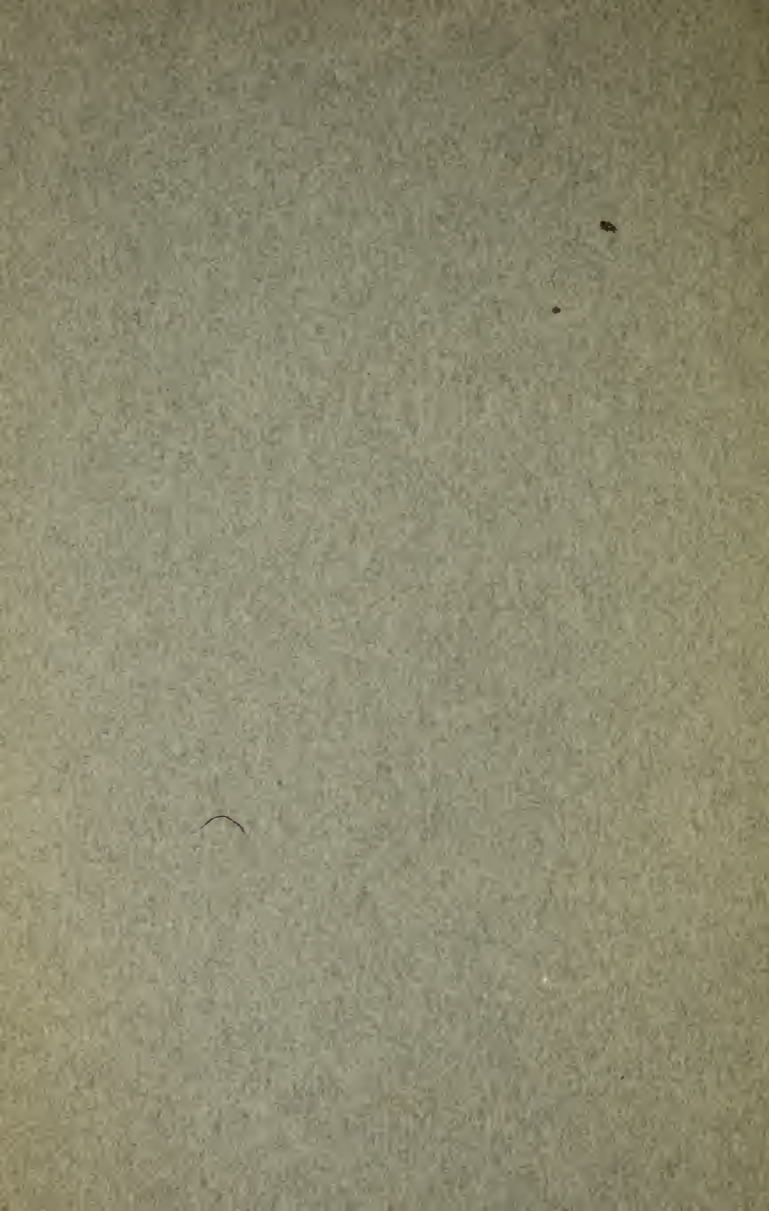
SOLD BY B. X. FURTADO & SONS, BOMBAY ;  
SANDS & Co., LONDON AND EDINBURGH ;  
B. HERDER, ST. LOUIS, MO., U. S. A.  
WM. P. LINEHAN, LITTLE COLLINS ST., MELBOURNE.

---

Price 6 As. or 6d.

---

PR4505  
B74



# The Writings . . .

—OF—

. . . . Marie Corelli.

BY S. BOSWIN, S. J.

89

\*\*\*\*\*

SOLD BY B. X. FURTADO & SONS, BOMBAY ;  
SANDS & Co., LONDON AND EDINBURGH ;  
B. HERDER, ST. LOUIS, MO., U. S. A.  
WM. P. LINEHAN, LITTLE COLLINS ST., MELBOURNE.

---

Price 6 As. or 6d.

---

PR 4505  
B 74

12155



## INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR OF "THE EXAMINER."

The following series of papers on the writings of Marie Corelli, as they appeared originally in *THE EXAMINER*, was intended to meet a long standing want, and especially to save the clergy a considerable waste of time in trying to meet that want. Whatever may be the merits and demerits of the works in question, they certainly enjoy a wide circulation; and Catholics are constantly asking questions about them, such as—Whether they are in the Index, or otherwise forbidden by the Church?—Whether they are sound and healthy reading, or something to be avoided?—Whether a distinction can be made between those which are objectionable and those which are unobjectionable? etc. The first question is easily answered. None of the works of Marie Corelli have been placed on the Index down to date; nor are they likely to be—though some of them well deserve it. Hence they may be regarded as forbidden only so far as they fall under the general rules of the Index—that is to say, so far as they treat of religion or morals, and contain ideas or doctrines detrimental to either. In the third place,—there is a great difference in quality to be found among her writings; some being in all respects unobjectionable and even to be recommended; others in some degree objectionable, and others again altogether offensive to Catholic feelings. To pronounce on the quality of each work, however, has hitherto been possible only to those who have taken the trouble to read them; and priests with neither the time nor the inclination for such labour have often felt the need of having the work done for them by others. This task, though in many respects a tedious and even a nauseous one, has been bravely

undertaken by Father Boswin : and the results are now presented to the public in a collective form.

The booklet is intended to serve several purposes :— First to enable those who have not read Marie Corelli's works to obtain some fairly comprehensive idea of their contents. By this means Catholics, whether clergy or laity, can satisfy their curiosity, and so get rid of the desire to read which follows from curiosity. Secondly it will enable them not to appear ignorant of a kind of literature which is so much in vogue as to be in almost every one's mouth. Thirdly, if bent on reading them, it will show what volumes are worth taking up, and what will prove only a waste of time. Fourthly, it will enable the clergy, without the least trouble to themselves, to offer guidance in the matter to those who consult them. As far as I can judge from the romances which I have read personally, I have every reason to think that Father Boswin's summaries, as well as his assignment of praise and blame can be taken as trustworthy.

Only one objection was raised against the publication of the series, and it was this :—" The higher-class press as a rule will have nothing to do with Marie Corelli's works and generally, if not altogether, declines to review them. Would it not be more to the credit of THE EXAMINER to follow the same line?" To this the answer was that although I agreed with the attitude of the press in general, I thought the actual vogue of the romances, and the frequent inquiries made by Catholics about them, made it desirable to take up the subject for the reasons already given. And where it was a question of general utility, considerations such as those suggested might safely be put aside.

ERNEST R. HULL, S. J.,

Editor of the " EXAMINER."

Archbishop's House, Bombay, September 1st, 1907.

## EXAMINER REPRINTS.

**Studies in Idolatry**—discussing the meaning of Idolatry from various points of view, Christian and non-Christian, and especially in relation to the Hindu religion. EXAMINER PRESS, Second Edition, 6 Annas.=6d.

**Fortifying the Layman**—deals with the problem, how to fortify the Layman against the anti-religious influences of his surroundings and to maintain his faith by creating interest in religion. Catholic Truth Edition, 6 Annas=6d.

**Theosophy and Christianity**—dealing with Ethical Ideas, the Personality of God, the Problem of Evil, Karma and Reincarnation. Second Edition, 6 Annas. [For India only]. Catholic Truth Edition, Cloth 12 Annas=1s.

**Devotion to the Sacred Heart**—dealing with Devotion in general ; Devotion to Christ Our Lord ; to the S. Heart ; Private Revelations ; The Revelations to B. M. Mary ; The Promises ; The Twelfth Promise ; Various ways of explaining it, etc. Scottish C. T. Edition, Two Annas=2d.

**What the Catholic Church is**, and What she teaches ; a short guide for inquiring Protestants. Catholic Truth Edition, One Anna=1d.

**Walled-up Nuns**, and other curiosities contained in Scott's "Marmion." Examiner Press, Second Edition, One Anna=1d.

**Two Articles on Freemasonry**, and the Catholic Objections against it. Examiner Press Edition, One Anna=1d.

**The Writings of Marie Corelli**, analysed and criticised, by S. Boswin, S. J. Examiner Press Edition, 6 Annas=6d.

To be obtained from our Agents.

**Prospectus of "The Examiner."**—THE EXAMINER (formerly called THE BOMBAY CATHOLIC EXAMINER) is a weekly Catholic organ published in Bombay. It began its existence in the year 1849, and is now completing its fifty-eighth volume. It specially aims at "fortifying the layman," by furnishing him with intelligible, clear and up-to-date information on theological, historical, and other questions whether of current or of permanent interest—thus gradually supplying that mental furniture and creating that interest in religious matters which is best calculated to antidote the ignorance and indifferentism of the times. Every number contains Editorial Notes and a Leading Article, often in serial form : while answers to controversial or other difficulties sent in by correspondents, and careful and critical Reviews of current-books, form a special feature. THE EXAMINER is read all over India, and is gradually securing circulation in England, America and other English-speaking countries.

Messrs. Sands and Co., London and Edinburgh, and Wm. P. Linehan, Little Collins St., Melbourne, will receive subscriptions at the rate of half-a-guinea per year : also Messrs. B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., at the rate of three dollars per year for America. Prospectus and specimen copies can be obtained from them *gratis* on application. Payment strictly in advance.

**Publishing Office**—Examiner Press, Meadows Street, Fort, Bombay.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Introduction ... ..	i
The Romance of Two Worlds ... ..	1
Vendetta ... ..	8
Thelma ... ..	15
Ardath ... ..	21
The Soul of Lilith ... ..	26
Wormwood ... ..	31
Barabbas ... ..	38
The Sorrows of Satan ... ..	46
The Mighty Atom ... ..	53
The Murder of Delicia ... ..	57
Ziska ... ..	61
Jane ... ..	64
Boy ... ..	66
The Master Christian ... ..	67
Temporal Power ... ..	72
God's Good Man ... ..	77
Free Opinions ... ..	80
The Treasure of Heaven ... ..	88
Cameos, Delicia, etc. ... ..	93
Conclusion ... ..	94

# A DIGEST OF THE WORKS OF MARIE CORELLI.

BY FATHER S. BOSWIN, S. J.

THERE seem to be few writers of fiction who have affected public opinion in such opposite ways as Marie Corelli has done since the publication, in 1886, of the first of her seventeen novels. She has fairly succeeded in setting the whole English reading public by the ears. Some actually hail her works as a new gospel, others think them a breeding ground of noxious errors. Again, some rank her among the most distinguished literati of the present day, others deny her the graceful style and even the correct language of the average man of letters. Some, finally, see in her a profound and brilliant genius, others no more than an erratic will-o'-the wisp. Truly irreconcilable opinions ! On which side is the truth ? Or, if it lies between the extremes, to which of these does it incline ? This is the question which we have set ourselves to answer. Our plan herein will be to review each book singly, more or less in the order of publication, and, this done, to draw what general conclusions the case requires.

## I.—A ROMANCE OF TWO WORLDS.

PUBLISHED in 1886. The narrator of this Romance is a young lady under twenty, giving an autobiographical account of her strange mystical experiences of a few months' duration. In this character she goes to spend the winter at Cannes in France to be cured of a depressing nervous ailment. She is accompanied by a young married couple from America ; as well for her chaperonage as for their own pleasure of sight-seeing. And this companionship forms the framework of the narrative.



Among her new hotel acquaintances there was one Cellini, an accomplished Italian artist, of high moral principles but with a strangely mystical habit of thought and speech. She obtained from him a mysterious potion which effected an immediate improvement in her health. Showing herself anxious to learn all about the strange draught, she was directed by him to his master, more mysterious still than himself, a certain Heliobas, at such and such an address in Paris. This same Heliobas had shortly before been approvingly pointed out to her, in a gorgeous dream-vision of hers, as a great servant of God. She now sought him out in Paris, and true to her vision found in him a man full of love for God and zeal for souls, who, amid the most affluent circumstances of a life of cultured leisure, bore the impress of saintly virtue and high, spiritual, and ascetical wisdom. She was received, not only with paternal kindness as an ordinary patient and disciple, but was singled out as a guest of the house to be the trusted and only companion of his own daughter Zara. This Zara is altogether a preternaturally exalted creation of Marie Corelli's fancy:—a gay and youthful society lady, who, besides all the usual gifts of fortune as to health, wealth, beauty, rank, talent and social accomplishments, is endowed with the choicest favours of heaven in her angelic purity and virtue, in her inspired wisdom, her astonishing selflessness and humility, and her intense love of God. Veritably, a sanctified pet of fortune, an ascetical blue-stockings canonized before her death! Zara, we ought to add, is by religion a Catholic; there is a Catholic chaplain in the family, also a chapel with the tabernacle and the Holy Eucharist, where long daily devotions are practised. And when she comes to die, she makes her last confession and communion, and is buried according to the Catholic ritual.

Such was Zara,—the highest ideal of womanhood—and such another ideal, Heliobas intended the narrator of

the story to become. To this end he had brought them together as sister to sister. But the chief means of bringing about her conversion into a saint depended upon the success of his own wonderful art of soul-saving. And with this we come to the core of the Romance of Two Worlds.

To speak plainly, as he himself did to his patient, his whole art consisted in electricity of both a physical and a spiritual kind. Every human being is provided, internally and externally, with a certain kind of electricity. The internal is the soul or spirit in a germinal state, and must be cultivated by the will of man. In proportion as this is done the electricity becomes a perfect spiritual creature, glorious and supremely powerful, enabling man by its force to influence and save other souls. Electricity is not a discovery of modern times ; it was known to and made use of by Christ and the Apostles on a wider and more perfect plane than that of godless modern science. The external is the electricity of physical nature. Of itself it is not subject to our will ; but through the invisible protectorate of God the internal can gain the mastery over the external.

It is by this electrical force that Heliobas undertakes first the cure of his patient's bodily ailment. His next and chief care is to raise her to a higher state of spirituality. Under this treatment her soul rapidly approaches the ethereal condition of Zara. And this marvellous change is effected, upon his own declaration, not by any mesmerism or the like, but "by scientific principles" operating chiefly through electrical potions and the personal electrical influence of glance, gesture, and touch. The last stage of his work of spiritualising his disciple consists in his preparing her, by the same means, for a supernatural ecstacy in which she is to experience the final stroke, as he says, of electricity or divine grace. After agreeing to this experiment, she

suddenly falls into a trance, which with Zara watching at her side, lasted unbroken for a day and a half. In her flight to the other world, she transcends the solar system, which she beholds traversed by many human souls serving their term of purgatory in carrying out God's commissions in behalf of mortal man. Rising ever higher and higher, she enters into new systems of worlds inhabited by greater and better rational beings than ourselves. And after many similar sublime views of the outermost supernal spheres, she emerges from out the created world and sees before her the great electrical circle within which God himself abides. Here Christ, with a crown of thorns on his head, deigns to receive her into his divine favour and encourages her to prosecute his work of saving souls, for whom he died, not indeed as an atonement to the offended Father for their sins, but only as a help and an encouragement. Having thus attained her object of disclosing to her readers the mysteries of two worlds, she brings her account to a close.

In appraising this remarkable production, it is a requirement of criticism and justice alike that we apply to it the tests of that particular kind of composition to which it belongs. It is a Romance. Now, one feature of a romance is that it gives very large scope to the imagination, as opposed to the sober, matter-of-fact, realistic considerations of our intellect, in the choice and handling of its more or less unusual, super-human, weird, extravagant, and even eccentric materials. This in its turn necessitates an unrestrained employment of allegory, symbolism, visions, and other devices of indirect representation. Thus it appears natural that the matter and form of the romance appeal more to the heart than to the head of both poet and reader. Add to all this the fourth peculiar feature, namely, the pathetic fact that the true romancist,

dealing with the sublime Christian ideals, works with the consciousness of the inadequacy of all human art to do justice to such supernatural ideals, and also that the reader reaches the end of even the best medieval romances with a corresponding sense of disappointment. This is the nature of the romance as we gather it from the study of the great masterpieces of the middle ages. To support our view, we refer to the classical work of G. Gietman, S. J., "*Parcifal, Faust, and Job*," wherein he censures (pp. 208—211) notable instances of irrelevancy, superficiality, lack of religious inwardness, arbitrariness, and incongruities, in the foremost ancient German Romance of *Parcifal* by Wolfram of Eschenbach.

Such being the nature of the romance, and such the fate it met at the hands of some of the greatest poets,—a number of accusations brought against Marie Corelli will easily appear to be unfounded. Her main object was to establish a parellel between the workings of God and electrical force. That she took this in a symbolical, not in a real sense, she declares in the prologue and in ch. xiii, where she says: "My readers must not be "rash enough to jump to the conclusion that I set it "forward as an explanation or confession of my own "faith." Therefore in poetically fancying electricity to be the key-note of creation, she worked on the legitimate lines of romance. Though we decidedly believe her attempt very bold in view of its arduousness, though we take umbrage at certain oddities of detail, and regret its many deficiencies, still we would clear her of the imputation of irreverence, flippancy and superficiality.

In the style of the book we observed nothing that would betray that the authoress had been many years out of England during her course of education, as she was for instance during her four years' stay at a convent school in France. She shows a predilection for American company, and that of the globe-trotting

sort. The reason of this may be that such decidedly earthly company forms a welcome contrast to that of the celestials in Heliobas' mansion. Besides, it furnishes what little humour there is in the book. And lastly, which is a surmise of our own, she finds among foreigners convenient opportunities to express a certain dislike for the English. Careless workmanship is seen in a number of transitions being brought about by clap-trap devices. The rescue of Cellini from suicide is unpsychological, as indeed much of the whole account of himself is unnatural. These and other flaws are more than compensated for by the powerful imaginativeness of her style. Her ecstatic dreams, the symphony in the air, the phantastic gem on Zara's breast, the spirit-drama among the celestial spheres, and such other sustained brilliant passages, are original creations of a fancy which by its loftiness and concreteness would show that she had not studied Dante in vain.

We come now to the crucial question of our inquiry, —the moral value of the romance. We have in this romance a remarkable book before us. It is one that has a history, and no solution of our problem is trustworthy that discards this history. The edition of 1892 contains noteworthy historical data in the form of two apologetical papers by the authoress. The first is a frank and spirited vindication of the religious tendency of the book, to this effect, that she utterly abhors atheism, materialism and agnosticism; next, that she denounces the popular craze for spiritualism, occultism and all similar charlatanism; and lastly, that in the "Electric Creed," "I merely endeavour" (she writes) "to slightly shadow forth the miraculous powers "which I *know* are bestowed on those who truly love and "understand the teachings of Christ, and who, with "adoring faith in Him, strive after the highest spirituality "of a pure and perfect life."



The second paper is an annotated selection of authenticated letters of approval, sympathy, and consultation from her readers. Here are a few admissions made by some of the correspondents, among whom there were also Protestant clergymen: "You have made "the next world a living thing for me."—"It has "deepened and strengthened my belief in and love to "God, and has made the New Testament a new book to me."—"Forgive my troubling you with this letter, "but I am grateful for your labour of love towards "raising men and women."—"I have never viewed "Christianity in the broadly transfigured light you "throw upon it. I hear from persons who have seen "you that you are quite young, and I cannot understand how one of your sex and age seems able so "easily to throw light on what to many has been, and "is still, impenetrable darkness."

So much for the fact of these asseverations. They show the reverent and well-meaning spirit with which Marie Corelli approached her task; and on the other hand they leave no room to doubt that the romance actually did in its way very much spiritual good. But admitting all this, as we do, with readiness and gratification, we still have to ask ourselves, would the book produce the same good among Catholics,—in other words, are books like these to be recommended to Catholic readers?

On Aug. 8th, 1903, THE EXAMINER issued an able and instructive article by K. A. on the incongruities, absurdities, and theological errors contained in the "Romance of Two Worlds." We are here, of course, concerned only with the theological errors; and of these we unhesitatingly say, they are so numerous, whether expressed or implied, and so grave that they are destructive of the Christian Faith. We repeat, this otherwise so charming book is characterised by



true poetic conception, lofty imagery, delicate emotion. It even contains passages that could serve as sound spiritual reading ; as for instance those on the contempt of human honour and other vanities of the world, the spirit of humility, resignation to the will of God, a pure intention, self denial,—all this it contains and more, yes ; but hopelessly intermingled with ideas counter to our faith, like a cornfield overrun with tares, like a crystal cup brimming over with sparkling poison. In reading this Romance the mind is often obtruded upon with grossly false notions of hell, suicide, the resurrection of the body ; we are asked to believe in the transmigration of souls, and in such new-fangled tenets as that the Blessed Virgin was not of a human nature, but a radiant spirit ; that Christ's spirit [only !] rose from the dead and returned to Heaven,—and, the worst of all, that Christ's death on the cross was not a sacrifice of atonement for our sins, but only an example of encouragement and a proof of his love to us. It is in short, hardly a book which a sensible parent, teacher, or guardian would recommend to Catholic youth.

## II.—VENDETTA.

PUBLISHED in 1886. Vendetta is in several respects a clever book, but its excellence is marred by two defects. The plot is in outline the following. Count Romani, a young, wealthy, high-principled, Neapolitan nobleman, marries a Catholic convent girl of sixteen by name of Nina and joyfully accepts in place of a dowry her poor father's assurance, that she is as innocent as a flower on the altar of the Madonna. With one child, Stella, to bless their union, he spends the first three years of his married life in supreme happiness. But at this period, in 1884, cholera was devastating Naples, and among its victims it singles out also young Romani, while absent from home a short distance. A Bene-

dictine monk attends him on his death-bed, and receives his last message to Nina. Unfortunately the charitable confessor himself falls a victim to the pestilence, and Romani is left in the hands of panic-stricken strangers, who mistaking him for dead hustle him away in an improvised coffin and deposit him thus in one of the open niches of the spacious underground vault of the Romani family. Before long he recovers consciousness. With characteristic self-possession and the strength which the desperate situation gave him, he bursts open the coffin. It is midnight of the very day on which he left his mansion. Stopping on his way home at a clothing-shop for a change of raiment, he discovers that the horrors of the grave have made him look thirty years older and turned the hair of his head and beard entirely white. Nevertheless he hurries forth again upon his homeward course and is nearing his mansion by one of its grove-like approaches. There he suddenly sees the white-clad figure of Nina advancing leisurely at the side of a certain Ferrari, a family friend of theirs, who had been Romani's chum from boyhood. The latter being unobserved, overhears the whole conversation of the other two and learns therefrom to his horror that Ferrari has been a base hypocritical traitor ; and that Nina is that "mean animal, that horrible deformity of nature so utterly repulsive to man—a faithless wife." Ferrari and Nina had from the third month of Romani's marriage been husband and wife in all but name. After their return to the mansion, Romani sits down under a tree and does not rise till, with studied coolness and deliberation, he has formed an irrevocable plan of horrible and unique vengeance against the two dastardly lovers. It takes him six months to execute it. His first step is, by elaborate contrivances and a painstaking course of training, to effect a complete disguise of himself. He assumes

the title of Count Oliva, returns to Naples and soon becomes the most popular and esteemed member of the nobility there. In this new character, he receives and accepts from his widowed Nina and her betrothed Ferrari frequent invitations to the Romani mansion. In this strange company he enjoys the melancholy pleasure of seeing his little Stella, rocking her on his knees, and always giving her assuring answers to her many questions as to the return of her father. He quickly notices also that the child is being neglected by the mother, and even bullied by Ferrari; and in a month or two the sweet but heart-rending duty falls to his lot of closing her eyes in death while the cruel mother has shut herself up in her chamber for fear of contagion. He had rightly calculated that these familiar visits would attract his wife's attention, not indeed to his seeming advanced age, but to his great wealth, and has now the satisfaction of seeing her actually court him while she is engaged to Ferrari. Coolly and deliberately he lets her entangle herself more and more, and then arranges for a formal marriage with her. The immediate consequence of this is a duel with Ferrari, in which the latter is killed. Now preparations for the marriage go on apace. The great day has arrived, the religious ceremony is over, the ball is drawing to a close, upon which the event of the day, the great dinner with the toasts, will follow. But at this very moment, by a previous arrangement between themselves, the married couple slip away unobserved for a short time from the happy guests, in order that the husband may present his wife with the hoard of treasures which he has promised to give her on the marriage day in the secret place where he had stowed them away. They must take a carriage, as the place is some little distance off and a fierce rain-storm is raging. After a considerable drive they halt

in a grove, where he ushers her through a dark-looking portal. Once in, he locks and bolts the door behind him, and amid slight misgivings on the part of his wife, he leads her forward to where the fragments of his former coffin lay scattered on the pavement. There he reveals his true identity to her, and next gives full vent, in torrents of scathing reproach, to the passionate rage that he has repressed for six long months. But even so the fiendish heart of the woman remains untouched : she expresses no repentance, asks no forgiveness. On the contrary, she succeeds in engaging her infuriated husband in a fierce altercation for over an hour, and then under pretence of asking pardon falls upon his neck, snatches a hidden dagger from his bosom, and makes a murderous assault upon him. Being easily disarmed she at last realises her helplessness. After a brief suspense she suddenly turns away to apostrophise the spirit of Ferrari, which she sees approaching for her rescue. A few words of her love-sick address to his rival convince Romani that her mind has become deranged. He desists from any further violence and turns towards the door, intending at least to leave her entombed alive. That instant an awful crash is heard, and on looking back he sees that the violent storm outside loosened a huge rock which fell down and crushed his wife to death. Rushing to the spot he sees that she is beyond help, with only her little white hand protruding from under the rock. At sight of it he places in it the crucifix with which he had himself been buried—and so departs. Next morning he boards a steamer in disguise, and in due time finds himself, unknown to the world, in some deep forest of South America ; but ever afterwards, up to the time of his writing these memoirs of tragedy, that little hand with the crucifix in it would continue to beckon him on to—Hell.

Here we certainly have a story of deadly, venomous hatred on an heroic scale. And still in all the details of Romani's insatiable vengeance, with the countless varieties of sentiment, situation, and intensity in his indulgence of it, there is nothing untrue to nature, no morbid exaggeration, no mawkishness or improbability. Its restraint is worthy of a classic. In the characterisation of Nina, however, this sense of moderation or proportion is wanting. Nina does not possess so much of any good moral quality as is worth the printer's ink necessary to record it. She is throughout irredeemably wicked. Such a human being is hard to imagine and fails to win a due share of our interest and sympathy even in her bitterest adversities. But apart from this, the dazzling personal beauty together with her astounding hypocrisy and heartless infidelity, are a theme which the authoress, though she reverts to them a thousand times, presents with ever new impressiveness by her delicate imagery, telling similes, and glowing diction.

Another striking feature of art in this novel is the masterful handling of the plot. In a few pages the entanglement is fully formed, viz., Romani's plan of fiendish revenge. The clever device of such a disguise as he adopts creates dozens of situations of thrilling interest to the reader, which in their turn keep his curiosity as to the nature of the hero's revenge increasing to the end of the book, when the dreadful catastrophe suddenly breaks suspense.

There is a genuineness and depth about the pathetic and tragic elements of the style in this book that mark out Marie Corelli as a writer of great strength and profound insight into human nature. The humour is often too satirical and even offensive to serve poetic purposes; as, for instance, when she describes the Neapolitans as "half-pagans" and calls English gentlemen travellers "human icebergs."



But now for the moral of Vendetta. It is gratifying to know that the book is very widely read, for the lesson it explicitly and frequently inculcates is the moral and social iniquity of matrimonial infidelity. It stigmatises, with much point and insistence, modern society, modern plays and novels, and above all modern legislation, as tending to produce, and actually justifying and idealising, such women as Nina, the Countess of Romani. With regard to the more individual lessons as conveyed by the two heroes, the authoress leaves the reader to interpret them for himself. Viewing first Nina in this light, we surely have nothing positive to learn from her. Her character is as to virtue a perfect blank, or rather, one great ugly moral blotch. Her whole career was repulsively wicked; yet the shocking retribution that is meted out to her serves a good purpose: it is to every reader that does not read merely to shirk the labour of thinking for himself, a wholesome and powerful deterrent from following the ways of the unfortunate Nina in desecrating beauty by sin.

It is otherwise with Romani, if only his character is rightly interpreted. He is by far the better of the two. There are charming qualities in him to palliate his crimes; and when, as autobiographer, he has said the worst of himself, we know that he is still among the living and do not give up the hope of his eventually appeasing his savage hatred before the end comes. In particular let us note that he is no cynic. He cherishes a tenderly loving remembrance of his sainted mother, he is endearingly attached to his little Stella, he has a paternal care for his servants, looking personally after them in illness, encouraging them on occasion to marriage and helping them thereto with generous gifts of money. His sense of justice prompts him to exculpate the nuns that had educated Nina. Just before her second



marriage, the pious creature retired to her former convent school of the nuns of the Perpetual Adoration, to make a spiritual retreat. Of her ghostly doings there, God only knows; but the nuns themselves learned that during that time of grace Lady Romani attracted certain forward girls of the institute and tried to set them against one of the nuns who had formerly seen through the girl Nina and told her the truth. On the occasion of this sham retreat, Romani himself called over and was inwardly delighted to hear the superioress frankly but respectfully warn him against the marriage. With equal sincerity he assured her of his appreciation of the experience, wisdom, and virtue which the nuns brought to their self-denying task, and he departed with the reflection, that there will always be wayward and worldly girls who take little else away with them from their convent-school than a fair body and a foul soul. (chap. xxvi. xxvii).

But though Romani was no cynic, he went to almost incredible excess in his cold-blooded vindictiveness. In satisfying his revenge he did not stop short even of the destruction of Nina's soul. When in receiving the usual sacraments on his second marriage day, he thought of his guilt of sacrilege, he consoled himself by saying: "If I am damned, she is thrice damned." And for this utterly un-Christian and even inhuman hatred he receives his retribution, as did Nina for her sinful love. The curtain of the novel closes upon the criminal undergoing his partly self-inflicted punishment, as an outcast of human society, his heart torn with the memories of the past, while that little white hand with the crucifix in it is forever beckoning him to his dreadful account in eternity. But nothing prevents us from awarding him a still more ideal and Christian retribution, which consists in this that in some hour of grace he accepts the true invitation of the crucifix to follow the example of Him

that hung on it and with His dying breath said :  
 "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

### III.—THELMA

PUBLISHED IN 1887. Following upon "Vendetta," "Thelma" transports us from Italy to the Altenfjord, or Bay of Alten, at the northernmost extremity of Norway, "where, though beyond the Arctic Circle, the climate in summer is that of another Italy, and the landscape a living poem fairer than the visions of Endymion." In scenery, character, and incident it bears some resemblance to Scott's *Pirate*, but it does not display in the same degree the direct and vivid presentment borne of personal experience. Her gorgeous descriptions, however, of light, and cloud, and glacier in the polar-regions, form a notable exception. For, particularly in *Thelma*, the boundless stretches of surging, enrapturing colours, with their magical interplay of tint and shade, are scenes which she rightly compares to Dante's visions, and which it is a rare delight of the reader to see her revel in.

In Part I., which is significantly entitled, "the land of the midnight sun," there is discovered cruising in the Altenfjord a pleasure yacht belonging to Sir Philip Errington. In Corelli's works one must not leave unnoticed the religion of her characters. Errington is a Theist; of his three companions, Lorimer is an Agnostic, Duprez an amusing specimen of the light-souled French Atheist, and Macfarlane a candidate for the Scottish Presbyterian Ministry. In the first 50 pages or more, we are given only too much of the chaff of these men as an introduction to their characters; and this is one of the circumstances that make the opening of the book rather tame. A welcome change is effected by the first chance meeting between Errington and Thelma Guldmar, the heroine of the novel. Thelma here and Nina in Ven-

detta represent opposites of an extreme kind. To put it pointedly, the first is an angel, the second a devil. Such creatures never existed in reality. Therefore, as in our mind they are not associated with us by the ties of a common nature, they fail to command our unreserved sympathy or interest; and, when holding prominent places in a romance, they taint the work of art as with what is unnatural, disproportioned, caricatured, untrue, unpoetic. Glancing forward to "Ardath," we have in each of Corelli's first four works an impossible woman, distorted by the false art of the authoress into a sensational counterfeit of a daughter of Eve.

To proceed with the story. Errington soon has the gratification of being acknowledged a household friend of the Guldmars. And what a Corellian household it is! There are only father and daughter alive. Thelma herself is a devout Catholic, fresh from the convent school at Arles in France, where she has received a thorough classical education. She speaks several languages, is well acquainted with the literature of several countries, is highly accomplished in music and art, possesses great beauty and wealth, innocence and every other virtue,—in short, gifts and blessings enough to fill the box of Pandora to bursting. Her father, Olaf, on the other hand, is a declared idolater. He openly professes the religion of the ancient Norsemen. He worships Odin, invokes all the gods of Valhalla, actually believes in the Valkyries, swears by the Hammer of Thor, and sets his cult above the religion of his Christian daughter. Errington longs to have the fine old Odin-worshipper one day among his fashionable friends in England, and to hear him putting their faint and languid ways of life to shame by his manly, honest, and vigorous utterances. But still more does he long to claim as his own the absolutely true, innocent, and beautiful daughter of Olaf. This wish

soon becomes realised : he marries her and takes her home to England.

Part II., entitled "the land of mockery," narrates their adventures in this country. It contains an elaborate and scathing exposure of certain modern social doctrines, with the consequent foibles, faults and, as the authoress puts it, the crimes of high-bred society. And to make her satiric thong extend the farther, she includes in this society a party of American money-bags, unblushing marriage-schemers, who, once the daughters of an upstart pork-butcher of Cincinnati, have recently discovered their descent from one of the Pilgrim-fathers. With this world of evil-doers before her mind, Corelli's pen becomes a horse-whip. She holds up to scorn, by every kind of satire, the false glitter and reckless hypocrisy of modern fashion and folly: the frothy gaities, the amiable and insincere smirks, the inanely polite voices of people who are no better than on show at social festivities,—turning into practice the crazy one-sided notions of human life which they learned in French and Russian novels,—some of the noble-born flaunting their immorality and low licentiousness in the face of the mocking and grinning populace,—women of pleasant courtesy and countenance, to whom truth is mere coarseness, and with whom polite lying passes for perfect breeding. "Tis a mad world, my masters"; and Marie Corelli despairs of accounting for the great follies and mean toadyisms of the people in it.

And it is into just such a world that the utterly unworldly Thelma is thrown, quite unprepared for its many startling and painful surprises. The authoress will have it, that her heroine was perhaps most bewildered by the women she met, and she gives a classified list of the better sorts of them as diagnosed by Thelma. There were those who had no ideas beyond dress and show; others that looked upon their husbands



as pieces of furniture; others having nothing better to do went in for spiritualism; then there were the woman-atheists, creatures who had voluntarily crushed all the sweetness of the sex within them, foolish human flowers without fragrance; there were the platform women, unnatural products of an unnatural age; there were the amateur actresses, patronising the drawing-room stage as an opportunity for displaying themselves in extravagant costumes; and there were the professional beauties who owed everything to elegant attire and face cosmetics. The worst classes escaped Thelma's notice altogether. In fact, she did not understand society, nor did society care to understand such a moral finger-post as they took her to be. No wonder: worldly society is no place for stray angels from heaven. The crisis was not long in coming; her career in "the land of mockery" lasted only a few months. Some wretches had plotted against the happiness of her wedded life. They did not require very great cunning to entrap the wholly unsophisticated, the exaltedly simple-minded, the superhumanly disinterested Lady Errington. They brought to her notice certain facts which they plausibly construed as proofs of her husband's infidelity, but which in reality were wholly a matter of a wretched misunderstanding. She took them for true, as everyone in her place would have done. But then instead of doing what she ought to have done—laying the matter before her husband to give him a chance to explain and exculpate himself—she does not breathe a word to him of the whole matter. She has her own code of morality, and according to this, as she deems herself unworthy of her husband's love, and since he has chosen another woman, she must not interfere with his choice, but for reasons of conscience, sacrifice herself entirely for his happiness. And this she actually does, with heart-breaking sorrow to herself, by secretly and

hurriedly leaving "the land of mockery," and returning in mid-winter to her frozen home in the north. As for poor Thelma we only say that, for abetting her lawful husband's adultery or bigamy by this kind of self-immolation, we hold her for an heroic goose. But as to Marie Corelli, we ask her: Is this moral theory and practice which she admiringly records of her heroine, and nowhere condemns, any sounder or more humane than some of the social and conjugal crimes to which she devotes page upon page of stinging satire? Where is this authoress's consistency in her views on so solemn and sacred an institution as marriage? Thus Part II., comes to a close with a piece of exalted immorality.

If the disappointed, or rather disgusted, reader goes on with Part III., entitled "the land of the long shadow," he will find nothing to compensate for the fiasco in what precedes. In both parts large sections are little more than padding; and the 600 pages of the entire book would be less tedious reading if they were cut down to 300. One strange thing is that there is little more seen of the heroine herself. The tolerably long account of Errington's journey by reindeer sledge through Norway in search of Thelma, is of interest as bearing upon the main plot, but as a narrative by itself it lacks the detailed accuracy of a writer that knows her subject. More care is devoted to the execution of the description of poor Olaf's last, fatal reindeer ride in a raging snow-storm; but with strangely unsatisfactory results, as we shall see. He is already approaching his home with his reindeer team, when they are suddenly precipitated down an embankment. He is extricated alive; but he declares that he has actually seen a Valkyrie welcoming him to the gods in Valhalla, and must comply with the summons as the religion of his ancestors enjoins. Immediately after



reaching home, therefore, he gives orders to have himself placed forthwith on the deck of his favourite ship *Valkyrie* ; and when, after being brought there, he sees that the hold is stowed with combustibles and these set well ablaze, sending the flames, roaring up through the hatches, he has the hawzer slipped and he alone on board drifts out to sea, everything around him gleaming red through the flaky snow-storm. This scene Marie Corelli makes part and parcel of a modern story that does not go back more than a generation. This is indeed romancing with a vengeance ; yes, and a piece of literary tom-foolery.

The tragedy, such as it is, happens on the morning of the day on which Thelma arrives by sea. On the very next day Errington also reaches the once so happy home of his beloved. The following scenes of their immediate reconciliation, the subsequent recovery of Thelma, and her second settlement in England, are too hurriedly disposed of as the tag end of the book ; and even these last thirty pages contain irrelevancies that we could well afford to miss.

Such is the book, *Thelma*. It contains a few excellencies of style, but a much larger number of serious defects in both literary and religious respects. Concerning the last, we have to add that, apart from her thrusts at other individuals and classes of persons, she also censures in a very compromising manner the clergy of Scotland. To this we object none the less because they are Protestants. If Marie Corelli has a definite, sober-minded, and consistent religion of her own to recommend,—which, however, is so far conspicuous by its absence,—she is free to address herself about it to those that desire her enlightenment ; but to positively wound the religious susceptibilities of anyone following his creed in good faith, is not the way of any considerate, self-respecting author.

## IV.—ARDATH

PUBLISHED 1889. A sequel to "A Romance of Two Worlds." Our old friend Heliobas, of spiritual electricity fame, is the connecting link, but he yields his former distinction as central hero to one Theos Alwyn. The latter, a confirmed atheist and, as we are supposed to believe, the foremost contemporary poet of England, is upon an adventurous travelling tour in the Caucasus. Circumstances force him to seek shelter in the Pass of Dariel among the detested inmates of what would seem a Catholic monastery. He meets in the person of the Father Superior there no one less than Heliobas ; and the outcome of their first interview is that Theos receives an "electric" shock which, for the length of a day, transports his soul amid wonderful supernal visions to the world of spirits. His soul returns to its body with renewed faith in God. He has seen his "twin-soul" Edris, who declared herself his "beloved," and arranged for a "tryst" with him in the Field of Ardath. Heliobas shows him from the book of Esdras, that Ardath is a waste field four miles west of the Babylonian ruins ; and gives him at the same time a letter of recommendation to the hermit Hilarion dwelling there. On the very day of his arrival at the hermit's, Theos receives a visitation of his beloved Edris, and is mysteriously charged by her "from the perils of the past to learn the perils of the future, and to weigh against the immortal destiny of Love the worth of Fame." Thereupon he immediately falls into a swoon. Now, his experiences in this swoon occupy 275 of the 500 pages of the entire book, and would constitute a gorgeous romance by themselves. It is called the dream-vision of Al-Kyris, a great oriental capital that once flourished where Theos was in trance ; and by an unusual exhibition of imaginative power it draws a picture, at once delicate

and luscious, weird and horrifying, of the depravity of a royal court, with its lecherous and tyrannous king and still more lewd queen, with the self-immolation of a frenzied heathen devotee reminding us of suttee, and chiefly with the cynical self-worship of the unprincipled court poet and wit, Sah-luma. Theos passes a whole night in this romantic trance, and the patient reader spends a still longer time over Marie Corelli's account of it, without either of them understanding what it is all about. Finally Theos awakes, and the Spirit Edris is at hand to throw light upon the situation. She explains that the dream was only a reproduction of Theos's own personal experiences at a time when, among the many transmigrations of his soul, æons of ages ago, he resembled the godless Sah-luma; and that the calamitous end of the latter's ambitious career as a poet should induce Theos finally to seek true happiness in the immortal love of God through her. This completes his conversion; he casts himself before a crucifix in the hermit's lodge and makes his entire renunciation of self. A sudden change of scene discovers Theos in London. There the ubiquitous Heliobas soon ferrets him out, and gives him stores of instruction on the higher life of unselfish love and apostolic labour. Then, while Heliobas leaves for the land of Mexico on business of his Order, the selfless convert and now apostolic poet Theos, to seek seclusion and tranquillity, travels up the Rhine. Halting at Cologne, he beholds in the grand Cathedral his beloved Edris once more. But this time she comes to him never to part again. In short, they marry there and then, of course without witnesses either terrestrial or celestial! The only subsequent information we get of the happy super-spiritual pair is in the words of the Romance: "Away in a sheltered mountainous retreat, apart from the louder clamour of the world, the poet and his heavenly companion

dwell in peace," he composing poems and she inspiring him.

In this romance there are striking evidences of a facile and rich imaginative style. Such, for instance, are the frequent occurrence of expressive, original, and ornate similes, the constant, delicate, and varied play of colours in her descriptions, the admirable skill with which the harmonies of music and their effects upon the mind are depicted. She invariably expounds the position of the agnostic and the infidel world with penetrating accuracy, while her portraiture of particular characters, especially those that like Sah-luma incline towards violence or excess, is also incisive and graphic, though this is somewhat owing to the external shifts and machines of romance. But we see the crowning quality of her genius, powerful imaginativeness, at its best in such daring lofty flights as she takes when transporting herself and Theos to the world-city of her own creation, the mystic Al-Kyris.

But, to turn to the defects of the book, her very strength becomes her weakness in the matter of style. The dream of Al-Kyris is decidedly a masterpiece of a powerful imagination and fairy-like fancy. It is a gorgeous panorama of a by-gone godless civilization. But as a structural part of the entire book it is sadly mismanaged, on account of the authoress presuming too much on her device of suspense. To leave the majority of readers in the dark as to the bearing of 275 pages on the preceding portion is to make suspense defeat its own end: before half is read, the reader finds the overwhelming mass of enigmatical beauties weary reading, and lays the book aside.

Besides, there are quite a number of crudities to be noted. Any whole-hearted judge will consider much of the spiritual yearning of Theos for his Edris as unmanly sentimentality. And not seldom he will be taken



aback by that inequality of tone in thought and speech by which the descent from the sublime to bathos is so easily made. Passing by the other-worldly monstrosity of Sah-luma's character, it is incongruous to find even the sublimated Heliobas lapsing at times into downright vulgarity. After one of his exalted instructions to Theos on high spirituality he abruptly invites him to an opera for that evening, and in the same breath launches into a coarse denunciation of "the crabbed musical critics and the literary oracles," interlarding his criticism with unctuous expressions like these: "tranced geese, stand cackling, fools, asinine braying, similar fools."

The real charge to be brought against "Ardath" concerns its moral and religious tendency. While in literary respects it is, if anything, superior to the "Romance of Two Worlds," it is unmistakably inferior on account of its far lower standard of morality and its increased spirit of religious aggressiveness. Some of the scenes in which the queen appears are offensively realistic, and would by not over-sensitive judges be deemed obscene. The prevailing tone of Heliobas has lost much of its former dignity; his effusiveness on religious matters assumes an air of flippancy; his glibness makes one suspect his sincerity; he talks much more than he believes and feels. Indeed, it appears in "Ardath" that his whole religious theory of religion itself, as propounded in the *Romance of Two Worlds*, has degenerated. Electricity is on the wane; even Christ does not stand so prominently in the foreground; and the centre of attraction and chief object of "worship" are the sexual twin-souls; so that his whole cult resolves itself into a thinly veiled, dreamy, sentimental sensuousness. Even at its best, Heliobas intends it only for a coterie of spiritual enthusiasts, for he actually cautions Theos to use great



reserve in the propagation of the heaven-born faith. And in both romances the only converts we hear of are his daughter Zara, his adopted daughter, the narrator, and our poor Theos. Thus it seems that his all-loving, all-redeeming, Christ is only for some of the upper ten of the cultured world; and herein he recalls the old Rabbi who taught that only eight mortals were to be saved in his day, and that to this number belonged himself and his seven sons.

In the present romance, Marie Corelli is not content with fighting infidelity but she must, more than in the other, discredit or denounce all positive creeds, especially the Catholic. She mocks the traditional views of the joys of heaven; gibes at the sacred office of the Roman Pontiff; denies the need for any authoritative Church at all; denounces the preaching of St. Paul; accuses all the generations of Christians from the days of Christ to our own of not having fully or correctly understood even the Alpha Beta of Christianity.

Let us bear in mind that her professed primary object is to put down agnosticism and infidelity; and yet here she puts down all positive creeds, Christianity in particular. The only possible third alternative is her own romantic fancy-bred theory of elementary eternal truths,—but even this is so “hysterical sublime” that as a writer she does not even dare to profess it herself. Suicidal! This tends not to lead atheists back to God, but to turn Christians into deists and then into atheists.

In conclusion we would only say, that for every grain of good that “Ardath” may do, it will actually do a pound of mischief. There are more good books than any one can read, that offer us literary entertainment without making a travesty of our religion, insulting our Church and belittling its most revered and holy teachers. Catholics that respect themselves and their

religion will consider it their duty to leave "Ardath" unread.

#### V.—THE SOUL OF LILITH.

PUBLISHED 1892. Marie Corelli, as authoress of *The Soul of Lilith*, explains in chapters 34 and 42 the tendency which this out-and-out romance is intended to serve. She declares that never before did people search with such unabated feverish yearning into things that seem supernatural. A certain feeling of "Excelsior" is swaying the minds of the world. Of the old earthly stories about love, war, art, wealth, politics and adventure, they know pretty well the beginning and the end. Any new contribution on these time-worn themes they receive with transitory pleasure and evident indifference; but when an author attempts, however feebly, to lift their inspirations to the possibilities of the unseen, then they give to these their eager attention and almost passionate interest. She instances what she calls "the nonsensical tenets of theosophy, the 'tricky spiritualists,' 'the preachers of new creeds and new forms,' as proofs of her contention, that 'the time is ripe for a clearer revelation of God and the things of God than we have ever had before.'" And this clearer revelation she designates as "the one pure example of embodied Divinity in manhood as seen in Christ." Now, let it be well understood that, if we have caught the spirit of the present and the preceding four works of hers, this "clearer revelation" is to come to us through the channel of Marie Corelli's romances. For in these she not only spurns "the preachers of new creeds and new forms," but insists that all Christianity from the days of Christ has barely understood the A. B. C. of his spirit. The poor atheists are simply nowhere, and the believers of all positive creeds are immersed in dense superstition. But latterly a God-enlightened Prophetess has begun to let her light shine into the darkness and shadows of death; and,

burning with the love of her kind, she still goes on pouring forth her "clearer revelation" in ever-increasing volumes of romance from on high,—half a crown per copy—which, though they prove weary reading to the flesh, still contain according to their authoress our only elixir of eternal life.

Such, then, being her programme as expressed in her own works, we have a right to judge her by it. And we now proceed to do so, with her fifth elucubration, *The Soul of Lilith*, before us. In briefly repeating the plot, we shall endeavour to spare our readers, as much as possible, the indignation which they would surely feel in the original, at the authoress's want of reverence for the dignity of man, and at the indelicacy and indecency which goes through the whole of this disgusting story. The main figure, apart from the tragic heroine Lilith, is a certain El-Rami. He is from some Eastern country. It is generally a puzzling circumstance in her works, that so many Oriental characters are in the foreground, putting up for the most part in London. El-Rami and his young brother, Feraz, are notable instances in point. Plenty of conventionalities about their beauty, accomplishments, and hazy religion are heaped upon them ; but there are exceedingly few individualising notes that give you a satisfactory idea of their native country, their race, origin, and their conversion to Christianity, such as it is. Now, the narrative proceeds to tell us that the two brothers travelling in a desert of Syria are joined by a caravan, two members of which are on the point of dying. El-Rami, who is in possession of the occult science of the ancient Egyptians, is also a practitioner of the Oriental art of healing, and gladly accepts the charge of the two dying patients, as the caravan is eager to continue its march. One of the patients is an old woman whom El-Rami succeeds in restoring to health. The other is an orphan

girl, Lilith by name, of extraordinary beauty, and twelve years of age, who succumbs to her sickness and dies. This poor waif El-Rami makes a "subject" for his science. It must be noted here that the miscreant had been a member of the so-called Brotherhood of the Cross, an order of monks of Marie Corelli's invention, and practising some nondescript kind of Christian religion. But he found even this Christianity too much for him ; so he left the order and even set up as a professed "scientific" atheist. He gave it out as the principal tenet of his belief, that death could be overcome by the occult science of nature, and God was in no way master over life and death. To demonstrate this by actual deed was thenceforth his life's task. And with this mad scheme on his brain, the child-victim, Lilith, fell into his power. She was to serve him as the *corpus vile* for him to experiment upon. Before beginning his operations, he got Feraz out of the way by sending him to a monastery of the Brotherhood in Cyprus for his education. Then he immediately administered an elixir to the dead Lilith, and in a few days really succeeded in bringing her to life again. In his peregrinations he eventually reached London, always continuing his administrations of the elixir to the dead-alive creature, Lilith, whom he dragged along with him. In London he hid her away in a luxuriously furnished chamber of his private mansion, the whole affair being known only to the old woman. For six long years, during which his victim developed from girlhood into womanhood, he lived and laboured for this one idea of completing his triumph over God, by not only keeping her passively alive but quickening her into voluntary, active life. His elixir had ordinarily the effect of sustaining the powers of vegetation only : if left to herself, she had the appearance of a beauteous, breathing corpse. In his presence sensation returned, and by



the command of his will the intellectual powers of her soul revived. If the reader does not at once throw the book away with disgust, he will be presented over and over again with the degrading picture of how the monster spends hours by the bedside, summoning the soul of the mechanically vegetating corpse to hold converse with him. In his diabolical presumption he claims the full mastership over her soul, because he had saved her body from the grave. Once, on the occasion of his admiring the dead-alive corpse, the authoress cannot refrain from a most revolting comparison between El-Rami and Christ: "like the Christ of Galilee," she says, "El-Rami had raised the dead to life,—ay, if El-Rami chose, he could say as his Master said to the daughter of Jairus, Maiden, arise!" In these sickening interviews with Lilith, he frequently commissions her to bring him information from the other world about definite points of inquiry. Thus he learns from her that there is no such place as Hell.

It is a leading feature of the plot, that all this time El-Rami of set purpose repressed in himself every feeling of affection for his victim. His reasons for this were, because the abominable cynic hated God and the soul alike, and because he entertained the mysterious belief that by winning her soul by love he would lose his power over her body. Now, it happened one day that the old woman let Feraz into the secret, and even allowed him an interview with Lilith. Her secret purpose herein was to excite the jealousy of El-Rami, and through his jealousy, love and pity for the poor girl. And her subtle scheme began to work a change in El-Rami. At the same time the Head Superior of the Brotherhood suddenly called on him, and brought him the alarming intelligence that he knew all about El-Rami's trickeries, and had through God more influence upon Lilith than El-Rami himself. This finally



moved the latter to win the love of Lilith for himself. He therefore approached her as a suppliant and tried to conciliate her. She promised compliance on condition of his renouncing his blasphemous unbelief. This being at length promised, the two embraced each other as lovers ; but before he released his hold on her, he became aware that he held an actual corpse in his arms. The sudden shock which this loss gave him, deprived him of his reason on the spot ; so his brother took him to the monastery in Cyprus, where the outwitted infidel spent his remaining years a mental wreck.

In reading this revolting romance the mind is not in a disposition either to note or relish with particular care any literary excellence. It is engrossed for the most part with the wearisome and repulsive task of wading through masses of low sensationalism, long and shallow digressions like that of Dr. Kremlin filling several chapters with nonsensical vagaries on scientific and philosophical questions, and above all the offensive experimentalising of the brutish El-Rami. To hear this blaspheming quack, and others no better than he, continually airing their foul irreligious opinions from beginning to end of the book, with only a portion of them satisfactorily refuted, will have the effect of habituating the minds of average readers to the ways of such half-frenzied infidels. Thus is positive damage done to unsuspecting, untutored readers—mischief which is not at all undone by the catastrophe that befalls the miscreant in the end. To place before the minds of the masses such abhorrent examples of godlessness is not bringing them nearer to God, but nearer to Satan; it is not a “clearer revelation” of Christ, but of Belial. Where, then, remains the Prophetess?

Looking over these first five works of Marie Corelli, we come to this conclusion. The Christ, whose reverent treatment is an undoubtedly praiseworthy feature of

*The Romance of Two Worlds*, is with each new romance receding noticeably farther from her view. It is a trick of hers to produce here a crucifix, and there a beautiful painting of Christ; but in her hands these sacred emblems serve more and more the purpose of sentimental clap-trap. Her entire religious views are gradually dwindling down to the merest vagaries. These first five works are a drama of degeneration in five acts, with the anticlimax in the fifth.

## VI.—WORMWOOD.

PUBLISHED in 1893. From *The Soul of Lilith*, Marie Corelli returns to the realistic world, this time a very realistic world indeed,—the absinthe world in Paris. Taking from the Apocalypse what she considers a pat quotation, she makes it the motto of her book: "And the name of the star is called *wormwood*: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were bitter" (Apoc. viii. ii.). This she follows up with an equally significant dedication in French: "To the absinthe gentlemen of Paris, *ces fanfarons de vice* [boasters of vice], who are the shame and despair of their country." Finally, we have also a personal note in the preface, where she disavows any personal experience of certain of the worst orgies described in the book, and gives her sources of information in the following words: "I sitting close by in a corner unobserved, listened (to a certain fellow-passenger) with a good deal of surprise as well as amusement to his eulogy of the 'cancan' as he had seen it danced in some peculiar haunt of questionable entertainment, and I took calm note thereof, for literary use hereafter."

The book recounts in Marie Corelli's favourite autobiographical form the pitiful downhill course of an absinthe drinker, involving a period of scarcely a year.

Gaston Beauvais, an exemplary young man of twenty, was the sole pride and consolation of his wealthy father. He betrothed himself to a charming, noble, young lady, Pauline de Charmelles, fresh from the Sacre Cœur Convent School at Vevey. A few weeks before the marriage, however, his affianced communicated to him of her own accord that she had never loved him, and that she there and then appeared before him a dishonoured woman, having been seduced by their common friend, a certain Silvion Guidel, a seminarist nearing ordination. On the strength of these admissions, she demanded the renunciation of his marriage contract. In his cross-questioning he became suspicious of some further evil designs on her part, and closed this first parley with only a request for more time to consider his final decision.

On that very day, heart-broken as he was, he by the merest chance fell in with a dissolute, but well-known Parisian artist, Gessonex by name, and was easily entrapped into sipping his first glass of the "emerald poison." The immediate moral effect of that first unhappy draught was that he threw every consideration of pity and pardon to the winds, and determined upon a scheme of revenge,—a revenge which became more heartless and cynical with every fresh visit to the absinthe den. Meantime the marriage preparations proceed as busily and gaily as though nothing had happened, and the two supposed lovers manage, in society and the family circle, to keep their deadly secret to themselves with a skill of dissimulation that would be worthy of the boards, and which actually affects the reader with the sensation of tragic pain. Finally Gaston breaks this unnatural tension in his own barbarously cruel way. He waits till the very marriage day, and when all have appeared before the registrar, and the father is in the act of giving away his daughter,

Gaston, drawing himself up proudly, proclaimed that he would not have to wife the dishonoured woman that Pauline was.

This was the first of many tragic events, that came from Gaston's first taste of absinthe, and which now follow each other fast till the final catastrophe. Gaston is forthwith ordered by his father to rid him of his presence by travelling abroad; but instead of keeping his promise in this regard, he lurks about Paris *incognito*, to indulge his passion for absinthe and revenge. On one of his prowls he managed to meet the dastardly Guidel, who had in his wisdom contrived to get speedily ordained, and took satisfaction from the miscreant by throttling him to death. Then he sought for Pauline, as the next victim of his vengeance. She had also run away from her happy and opulent home, and, infatuated with the hope of joining Guidel somehow, she was now in hiding amid the slums of the great city. Gaston lighted upon her while singing a ballad in the street. It attracted no special notice in that crowd, that he seized her roughly and threatened her with violence unless she followed him to his haunt. To crush her the more, he broke the news to her of his having murdered her treacherous lover, Silvion. This disclosure was a shock that unhinged her mind, so that she tore herself out of his grip, ran down the street to where the waters of the Seine seemed to be inviting her, and, reaching them before Gaston could overtake her, plunged into them and found her death.

Three unfortunate deaths more followed, all which were at least occasioned by his first deed of vengeance on the marriage day. The grave soon closed over the father, and the mother of Pauline, and over Heloise, the nearest friend of hers, for whom Gaston himself had entertained a lurking regard and affection. So all the ties that bound him to humanity had snapped asunder,



save one, viz., religion. He would try that, to see whether heaven was willing to declare for him through its ministers in his quarrel with all the world. To this end he went to church for confession, and chose for confessor the very uncle of the murdered Guidel. But this confession is, not to mention the half-frenzied state of Gaston's mind, a medley of unpsychological and imaginary statements on the part of the authoress, and no better than an offensive caricature of what the Catholic world knows confession to be. In the confessional, the strange penitent declared not only his crimes, but even the personal names concerned in them, his own included. He was refused absolution, of course, for the simple reason that he had come not to give proof of repentance, but to have his crimes justified by the confessor speaking in the name of God.

Thereupon he was confined to bed for several weeks by a serious illness, and during his convalescence he used the first return of strength and reason to denounce his physician as he had before done to his confessor.

Thus he rapidly arrived at that stage of bodily and mental corruption in which the world meant nothing more to him than absinthe. The record of less than a year's indulgence of it discovers him in the end an utterly abandoned, cynical, desperate, and half-frantic wreck. He possesses, as he says with a stupid vaunt, the clue to the question of the unseen world in the form of a crystal-clear phial of quick-working poison; but in the same breath he says that he is too cowardly to use it. And here the catastrophe leaves him.

Of *Wormwood* we would say in general, what we think true of other novels of Marie Corelli, that it is an unequal book, a medley of good and very bad. One of its unquestioned merits is the art she displays in the treatment of so mystifying a topic as absinthe. Her disavowal of not having any personal experience



of the absinthe-dens and other revolting aspects of her subject, not only raises our estimation of her as a self-respecting woman, but indirectly attests the skill with which she worked up her second-hand information into this graphic, powerful, and original presentment of the baneful beverage. By a happy dramatic device she employs different characters to put on record their tried experience of it, as gathered through different channels, and reported from their own individual point of view. In Book III. ch. XI., the physician gives a professional explanation of the havoc it works; then, throughout the three books, Gaston serves to reveal its withering effects upon conscience; while the muddled mind and half-crazed genius of Gessonex, by an admirable stroke of originality, acts much in the way of Shakespeare's drunkards by shedding on the subject the lurid poetic light of his sardonic humour, unsuspecting pathos, and tragic, raving cynicism. The cast of the novel is such, indeed, that the frequent objections to the "shriekings and ravings" of our authoress cannot be admitted here. As little as Shakespeare could make his prince of tipplers, Falstaff, speak soberly, so little could Marie Corelli make Gessonex, and latterly Gaston, do anything but rave at times. This is unobjectionable truth to nature, if you choose to take nature at its worst.

But the present vindication concerns the violent reflections only as to their kind; their number is another thing. Gaston might undoubtedly have been made more sparing of his incessant ruminations. His broodings are in many chapters an irritating check upon the progress of the main action. Nor is this the only overstrained point. In Book III. ch. II the conduct of the departing father towards Gaston seems unnaturally hard: a wiser father would have averted a breach. In the letter-scene, Book II. ch. IV., Pauline's

affection for Silvion is overdrawn. Heloise's character is a running puzzle. The confession-scene is worse than a failure. The Catholic confession is a part of the world's philosophy of which Marie Corelli knows still less than she does of absinthe.

Apart from these strictures, the sentiments are powerful and original. And they confirm the opinion which we expressed of *Vendetta*, that Marie Corelli has a remarkable insight into the workings of certain violent passions. But we cannot warrant the inference from her possessing such insight to her always using it. For there are a number of books of hers in which, either from hurried work or the wish of indulging the popular taste for sensationalism, her characters are lamentably unreal and untrue. Marie Corelli is truly an unequal writer.

Furthermore, it is particularly noteworthy that the make-up of *Wormwood* harks back suspiciously to *Vendetta* in three respects. In both we have the same motive of insensate, insatiable revenge; the same first expedient of satisfying this revenge by unexpectedly converting an intended happy marriage into a scene of tragic horror; and the same mismanaged catastrophe.

The unsatisfactory catastrophe leads to the question of the moral influence of *Wormwood*. In *Vendetta* we rather glozed over the utterly unredeemed state of Romani's mind and conscience in which the curtain falls upon that wretched hero. For the circumstances in the latter's case suggested to the Christian reader at least the possibility of his return to grace and society. But the case of Gaston Beauvais is much more repulsively hopeless. He has the last word to say in the autobiographical novel, and if we go by that, he has debarred himself for ever from all favour of God and man, being wrecked in body and debauched in mind. And in spite

of all that Marie Corelli says to the contrary, this is his irrevocable doom to the end. This is truth, as we have admitted above; but it is not the whole truth,—least of all, ideal, poetic truth, to which the novel should be devoted. It is the truth of the Police Gazette, the Criminal Intelligence Department, or other such piquant records of moral enormities as are intended for the rabid delight of that large section of the so-called reading public whose minds live on the offal, or the luring absinthe, of the current realistic literature. As is it presented to the world by the authoress, the study of Gaston Beauvais is a demoralising exhibition of human depravity, with the many saving influences of religion and society so scantily and ineptly arrayed against it that passion appears the dominant, fatalistic factor in human destiny.

This one-sided apotheosis, whether intended or not, of criminal vice accords ill with the purpose which, upon her own declaration, Marie Corelli set herself to follow as a novelist. In her very last work, *The Soul of Lilith*, she comforted her readers with the assurance that the spirit of "Excelsior" had begun swaying the world, but here in *Wormwood* the cry from end to end of the book is not "Excelsior," but *à bas, à bas*, down, down, and evermore down. With loud flourishing of trumpets she there pointed to the grand new revelation of Heaven that was going forward, but here the talk is almost exclusively about a new revelation of Satan's works and pomps in the shape of the modern suicidal craze for absinthe. In her earliest works she held up Christ, at least as she understood him, as the only end of man: but in *Wormwood* his holy name is hardly once on the lip or in the thoughts of even the good characters; while his person and religion are desecrated by volleys of blatant nonsense, numberless flouts, and the blasphemous untruths of Gessonex and Gaston, without Marie Corelli's

taking the trouble to rebut them or put the unwary reader on his guard against them. From all this it would appear that her programme was a sham.

In a word, there is much evidence to show that the authoress has in this the sixth of her seventeen works abandoned that programme: and that, in religious matters at least, she writes like a person who does not know her own mind. In *Wormwood* she has added one more to the number of the books which, instead of leading souls to Christ, lure them nearer to Anti-christ.

#### VII.—BARABBAS.

PUBLISHED in 1893. In *Barabbas* we have Marie Corelli's first attempt at a purely scriptural romance. It is quite in order, therefore, to recall some of the principles by which we must judge this kind of fiction. A leading characteristic of a scriptural romance is that in the main its characters, incidents, and scenes are borrowed from Holy Writ. To these strictly historical elements there may be added fictitious ones. The former should conform to their originals in the sacred annals; the latter should be kept within the bounds of probability. Apart from this question of matter, the scriptural romance is executed as to form on the same principles as were explained in the case of *A Romance of Two Worlds*.

We have an admirable model of a scriptural romance in *Ben Hur*, a Jewish story of the days of Christ written, years before *Barabbas*, by an American Protestant, Wallace by name. Wallace was very likely personally acquainted with the Holy Land; at least he shows an intimate knowledge of the researches made into the history, topography, and general archaeology of Palestine, Italy, and Syria. In reading his work, you fancy yourself transported back in time 1900 years. Besides this scientific thoroughness of it, there breaths through its



every page the dignified and reverent tone of a pure and sincere Christian faith. Yet the best of the book is the happy way in which it realises its tendency of bringing home to the minds of unbiassed readers the truth of the divinity of Christ as proved upon rational grounds, amid the charms of a poetic style.

Books like *Ben Hur* are calculated to dispel the lurking suspicion which some well-intentioned and otherwise enlightened persons entertain of a novel that bears the sacred name of the Saviour in its pages. But this class of literature is vindicated by weightier considerations than the precedent of a few worthily written contemporary fictions. The worship of our Saviour which the Catholic Church enjoins, engages all our powers, especially those of the soul, viz., the understanding, will, memory, and imagination. With regard to the last named, the Church allows it a large scope in her ritual, in the fine arts she employs, and in her very modes of prayer. The writings, either wholly or in part, of a number of her sainted children such as St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, Ludolph of Saxony and Catharine Emmerich, have through centuries refreshed generations of readers with the spiritual balm of their devout, rich, and tender imaginativeness. As long, therefore, as romancists built their fanciful creations on the ground of faith, and remember the sacredness of their theme in their elaboration of it, they are only doing what is in itself good—they are consecrating their mental gifts to the greater honour of God.

We regret that we must emphatically exclude the authoress of *Barabbas* from the category of such romancists. For our examination of this so-called scriptural romance will show it to be a shallow, blundering, irreverent, and even insidious, smudge of portions of Holy Writ.



A running account of the passion and resurrection extends through the whole book. The plot itself has the title hero, Barabbas, for its central figure. Barabbas is discovered, in the eighteenth month of his imprisonment, desperately pining for his lost love, Judith, the sister of Judas Iscariot. On the day of the sacred Passion he is released by the people in preference to the Nazarene. At sight of the Divine Sufferer, feelings of humanity and pity are aroused in him as the first step towards his final conversion. In the course of the day he learns from various sources that Judith is dallying with other lovers than himself, foremost among whom is the high-priest Caiaphas. Early on the same day it also happened that he begins to be shadowed by a true Corellian character, a mysterious someone, passing under the name of Melchior, whose identity is made a useless conundrum to the reader during the whole of the action until the very end of the plot. We frankly own that, having come fresh from the reading of *The Sorrows of Satan*, we suspected in him another disguised demon, but were *not* surprised to find him ultimately disclosed as one of the three wise men of the East. In Ben-Hur all the three wise men play an important part, but so that everyone knows with whom he has to deal; whereas with our authoress it has become a downright fad to turn suspense into mental annoyance by such mystifying makeshifts as Melchior. Now, Melchior gradually lets Barabbas into the secret of the springs that brought about the betrayal of Christ. The secret is as follows :—Instigated by Caiaphas her lover, Judith, under pretence of favouring the cause of the Nazarene, advised her brother Judas to betray him into the hands of the synedrium, as he would thereby afford Christ a rare opportunity of effecting his delivery by a manifestation of his Divine power, and of establishing the belief in his divinity throughout

the land. To come to a decision in the matter, Judas consulted Peter, and arranged an interview between the latter and Judith. Peter went into the trap, approved of the plan, and thus became abettor of the crime.

Then, while the execution of our Lord is taking its cruel course, Marie Corelli entertains her readers with several scenes of flirting and violent quarreling between Judith and her two lovers, Caiaphas and Barabbas, all enacted in close vicinity to the cross. It is hard to make out what particular wisdom the wise man of the East, Melchior, showed in constantly dogging Barabbas; for there would seem to have been many greater interests at stake in the fateful hours of those three days than the conversion of this one wretch out of so many thousands. But, as it is, with the consent of this "incomprehensible personage,"—for such Marie Corelli herself calls him on this occasion (ch. 38),—Barabbas hid himself in a hollow near the sepulchre to be a witness of the promised resurrection. He sees the great event take place, as also the apparition of our Lord to Mary Magdalen. But he is not convinced by the miracle, for he insists that Christ had only swooned on the cross and managed to recover by the ministrations of his friends and his own acknowledged healing powers.

In his further rambles, he falls in with Peter, and conjointly with Melchior takes the apostle to task about his faults and crimes, especially that of his complicity with Judas in the betrayal of the Crucified. Subsequently the three go to the place in Gethsemane, where the body of Judas is still hanging. They convey it home on Sunday night, and at sight of it Judith loses her mind, escapes from her family to seek Caiaphas, stabs him nearly to death, then dies herself,—“safe in the shelter of that mystic garden where Christ is King.” Sainted, though till within twenty-four hours of her death, when

she lost her reason, she had lived the life of a high-placed, villainous strumpet!

Barabbas had already questioned the virgin mother personally about the rumoured Divine origin of her son; but getting no satisfactory answer from her, he goes post-haste to the distant Nazareth, where he first breaks the news of Christ's death to Joseph and the latter's two sons. Then proceeding immediately to business, he threatens the silver-haired old man with violence (ch. 46) unless he be told the origin of Christ. Before Joseph has fully explained himself, Christ appears in a vision to them from outside the open door. He speaks not a word, but only shows his presence; and lo! this silent vision (though not the glorious ones at the tomb) convinces Barabbas of Christ's divinity. The new convert rushes forth from the hut and returns with feverish haste to Jerusalem. On his arrival there, he is thrown into prison on the charge of having helped in breaking the seals at the sepulchre. Disdaining to associate with any of the traitorous apostles, he had formed the plan of becoming a hermit, but in the first night of his imprisonment he is favoured with a new apparition of Christ and forthwith taken to heaven by him.

The romance bears the alternative title of "A dream of the world's tragedy"; but the signification of it is not clear. We will venture, therefore, to put our own interpretation upon it. The fanciful and sentimental impressions and even the visions which Barabbas received, are indeed, if considered as the motive for his conversion, an empty, futile dream. An unbeliever, for whose change of mind this romance is intended, will not see any proof of anything supernatural in such a prying visionary as Barabbas. Marie Corelli's freaks and phantasms pass by his mind, as water flows over a rock.

As a romance of by-gone days, *Barabbas* is exceptionally void of specific concrete details. There is no

indication in it that the authoress prepared herself for the ambitious task of composing a scriptural romance by the study of any of the numerous and elaborate works of research treating of the archaeological and other particular aspects of her subject. *Ben-Hur* contains in the famous conversation between the youthful hero and his mother more of ancient history, philosophy, religion, and even human nature than can be scraped together from all the forty-eight chapters of *Barabbas*. On dozens of occasions we would expect the authoress to work up concrete details of natural history, national costumes, ancient manners and political situations, into an instructive, engaging, and even poetic picture; but the expectation comes to nought in almost every case. To take only one example. The resurrection occupies the four chapters, 38-41. The glorious event was a fine opportunity for her to enliven the gorgeous physical aspect of the scene with graphic particulars racy of the soil. Yet a special examination of these four chapters yields only the following sum total of the plants introduced into the picture: tangled shrubs, vines, little trees, burnt brown turf, a bush of myrtle, a thousand flowers, blades of stunted grass, leaves upon their branches, little trembling trees, a small bell-shaped blossom, pure white and delicately shaped. Mary Magdalen carries in her hand only "flowers and sweet herbs." In this complete list, only the vine and the myrtle are of a specifically local interest; all the rest are commonplaces that can be found anywhere on the globe as far as  $23\frac{1}{2}$  degrees from either pole. The frequent occurrence of such work without local colour, concrete interest, allusiveness of thought, and retrogressive view, gives her whole romance the character of shallowness.

To what astonishing degree the book teems with scripture errors, can be seen from the following speci-



men list. Christ's bodily frame is repeatedly spoken of as "Herculean." For this reason a cross of exceptional dimensions is allotted to him, which it requires an extra number of men to raise on high. Christians who truly know and reverence the Saviour, denounce "Marie Corelli's" comparison of Him with Apollo, as untrue and flippant. The scourging is performed exclusively by Pilate's own hands—a task which history assigns to the well-known lictors or apparitors. Moreover, while he is performing it, high-priests stand by taunting him with cries of encouragement couched in these identical terms: "Do what thy duty bids thee,—strike!—To it again, and harder, most noble Governor! Again, and yet again, most worthy Governor; but let the stripes be heavier!" Christ dies at the moment of sunset. The good thief is converted before he is raised on the cross. Marie Corelli ignores the historic way in which the cross was fixed in the socket. The good thief dies immediately after the words of Christ addressed to him. The order of the last two words is inverted. Christ's side is pierced with the lance before his death. For Longinus, the traditional name of the centurion, that of Petronius is substituted. The wicked thief is taken down from the cross with signs of life in him. The bones are not broken. The mother of the Saviour goes to the sepulchre on Saturday evening. She meets Barabbas there, and the authoress makes a melodramatic scene of it. Christ rises with body and soul, while in *A Romance of Two Worlds* only the soul rises. The holy women report to Barabbas that they found the soldiers lying senseless on the ground. The apostles have already set out for Galilee on the very day of the resurrection. Judith is buried, with great pomp, but surely not in the potter's field. One last *verbum sapienti*: Very many passages concerning the tortures of the "fair limbs" of the Divine Sufferer are the outcome of a cold, aesthetic



sentimentality. The one word of the psalmist: "I am a worm, and no man," contains more thought, pathos, and poetry, than the whole volume of *Barabbas*.

There remains to be seen with what further disregard of the truth of Holy Writ, and with what open and concealed personal spite, Marie Corelli treats the character of St. Peter. He already stands pilloried before every reader in consequence of his admission of his complicity in Judas' betrayal of the Lord. But it is not enough for the authoress to put Peter, once and for good, on a level with the real and only traitor; but she must drag this frivolously fabricated slander through a large number of chapters, and deck it out with ever new imaginary foibles and faults of the great apostle. In ch. 44 and 45, the malicious blows rain particularly thick upon him: St. John rebukes him, Melchior blandly catechises him, Mary Magdalen derides him, and the immaculate Barabbas denounces him. We fancy that, if the authoress had at her disposal a still worse character than this base and cranky Barabbas, she would have him also yelp at this first Roman Catholic, St. Peter.

We would gladly pass over all this filth that Marie Corelli flings at one of the greatest historic characters; but the necessity of the case obliges us to specify one certain class of her aspersions. It is that by which his future career as head of the Christian Church is, on several occasions, described as the career of an ambitious striver after power and ostentation, to the ruin of those who take him for their guide; "for verily," as Melchior prophecies, "this fatal clinging of thy soul to 'things temporal' (the italics are Marie Corelli's) 'shall warp thy way for ever and taint thy mission.'" Views like these betray the insidious tendency of *Barabbas*. In former works, all the generations of the past have been declared ignorant of the A. B. C. of Christianity; and here in *Barabbas* the same Christian

Church is attacked in its first divinely appointed head, St. Peter, by a new plan of campaign of forged history and a vilifying fancy.

#### VIII.—THE SORROWS OF SATAN.

PUBLISHED in 1895. Another biographical romance. The narrator, Geoffrey Tempest, introduces himself as a convert from Atheism and intends to give an account of his conversion in the present volume. He had started life as a poetic drudge, who from want of appreciation and support was threatened with starvation and soon contemplated suicide. Then, lo ! by most extraordinary good luck, he comes to inherit a fortune of no less than £5,000,000. At the same time he receives a letter from a certain Carrington, once his college chum, and now his only sympathiser. The letter recommends him to cultivate the friendship and patronage of its bearer, Prince Lucio Rimanez, whose presence bespeaks him a lordly, yet fascinating young nobleman, and who is designated in the letter as an absolute master in things scientific. Soon a pledged and intimate friendship springs up between the two; for Geoffrey has three desires in life: wealth, fame, and pleasure; and in the Prince he seems to have found the man to secure him all three.

Rimanez, on his part, proves worthy of this trust. In the brief space of a few months, he makes Geoffrey's poem the book of the season in spite of the opposition of the critics; he makes him the winner of the Derby by putting at his disposal his own incomparable jockey; he gets him lionised by society; and finally sees him wedded to Sibyl, the daughter of the Earl of Elton.

All this while, however, Rimanez was becoming more and more a puzzle to his acquaintances. He seemed to be equally well known in India, Egypt, Russia and the United States, though his actual race and country remained shrouded in mystery. Conversant with all the

phases of human life and every class of society, he still betrayed personally a cold aloofness from them all. Amid all the frivolities of his associates he played the part of an unimpassioned on-looker. While he frequently indulged in startling bursts of cynicism, his habitual turn of mind was serious, sometimes strangely melancholy, and even religious. Though Geoffrey's boon companion in the gaming house, the theatre, and the race-course, he not seldom found opportunities to catechise him on the duties of a life of faith. The whole affair, however, mattered little to Geoffrey. He had attained his three great desires and had become a thorough egotist. Only when his strange friend and patron displayed some extraordinary exhibition of his masterful qualities, Geoffrey would occasionally ask him about his real character. Even then he only got the curt reply, that Rimanez was not what he seemed to be; and with this he had to be satisfied.

But meanwhile a reverse of fortune was awaiting him. Sibyl, his wife, still in her teens, had before her marriage become secretly convinced by novel-reading that there was no love without lust, no religion without avarice, no friendship without self-interest, no virtue without its corresponding vice. These negative principles she made her rule of life in marriage. Her last act of infidelity was that, while her husband was an unobserved witness of the scene, she threw herself upon her knees and implored Rimanez to accept her as his mistress; an overture which the latter rejected with scornful anger. Seeing what her "modern society" principles had brought her to, and unwilling to adopt any others, she committed suicide, after writing an exorbitantly long document; at the end of which, just before the pen dropped out of her dying hand, she broadly hinted that Lucio in the form of Satan was coming to claim her soul.

The latter point escaped Geoffrey's notice. He was too sick at heart, and other mental troubles were fast assailing him. In fact, his old ideals were beginning to pall upon him, and he felt a desire for some change. Lucio therefore took him in his yacht to the Mediterranean, to finish off with a trip up the Nile. But Geoffrey's disposition becoming worse, they had to turn back when half way up the river. It was on their return voyage through the Mediterranean that Geoffrey at length learned to his horror with whom he had now been associating for almost a year. He had one day been renewing his heartfelt thanks to Rimanez for all his disinterestedness, when the latter suddenly flared up with the astounding declaration that he was Geoffrey's friend no longer, and that Geoffrey himself had never at all been a friend to him. He went on to say that Geoffrey had had plenty of warnings concerning the character of the person whom he was leaning upon for help and guidance ; but that his sinful egotism and unbelief had made him blind to them. He himself would now open his eyes. He was Satan in person, passing among mortals under the disguise of Prince Lucio Rimanez. He had indeed forfeited his eternal glory by his rebellion against God and by his share in the guilt of the first sin in paradise. But this would not endure for ever. Christ had redeemed man, and had shewn by his teaching how it was possible for man to redeem him, the devil. The redemption of Satan, in short, depended on the virtuous conduct of mankind. If men were what they should be, the closed doors of Heaven's paradise would be unbarred, and Satan, lifted towards his creator on the prayers of pure lives, would wear again his angel's crown. Hence the devil was always ready to put aside his connatural hatred and envy in order to prompt well-disposed souls to virtue, in case he saw a chance of success. But because



mankind gave him little prospect of redemption or reprieve, he usually acted as the arch-enemy of that worthless race.

In the particular case of Geoffrey, he accused him of great ingratitude since, in spite of so many favours received, he had spurned Lucio's advice and continued on his sinful path, and thus deprived him, Satan, of that respite from his never-ending sorrows which Geoffrey could have obtained for him from God by embracing a virtuous life.

Satan therefore declared their friendship at an end : both of them must now go their separate ways. At the same instant he called forth a terrible storm which wrecked his yacht. Geoffrey drifted away with the wreckage and thought his end had come; but he only fell into a swoon, in which his good angel disclosed to him some of the horrors of the next world. When he recovered consciousness, he found himself on board an English steamer which had picked him up. On landing in England, he soon learned that the remainder of his £5,000,000 had vanished, and he was reduced to penury again. But he was now a new man, and, as a firm believer in God and his providence, he willingly accepted this hard stroke of fortune and began life anew.

*The Sorrows of Satan* calls for special comment on account of its position in the Faust literature. Already far back in the middle ages Satan was a familiar subject for treatment in the works of more than one art. In architecture he was forced into the service of God in the figures of the hideous-faced gargoyles and corbels. In the popular mystery plays and moralities, he was made the "ape of God" by being held up to the scorn and ridicule of the crowds of believing spectators. In the mouth of the people, he and his doings point many a fine moral epigram and proverb. He also gave rise to a number of legends. Now, one of these legends



was the well-known Faust legend, the nucleus of which is to the following effect:—A certain scholar of the name of Dr. Faust, despairing of God and himself, makes an actual compact with the devil upon the understanding that in return for a life of sinful pleasure he should surrender to him as a forfeit the salvation of his soul. In this original version, in spite of its crudities and fanciful details, the legend rested upon truths of the Catholic religion, and as such bore a wholesome moral. But after the Reformation, its materials were utilised by non-Catholic authors to embody views far different from its original ones. In Shakespeare's time Christopher Marlowe, in his drama, *Faustus*, laid stress upon its coarser elements as such, and directed his unsavoury treatment of them (much to the amusement of the rabble in the pit of the early English theatres of the 16th century) against the Catholic clergy. That the legend is of vast poetical possibilities is evident from the fact that Goethe seized upon it and constructed out of it his world-renowned reading drama, *Faust*. This *Faust*, at which he laboured in the very earliest and latest years of his career, contains the sum total of the varying ideals of his long and experienced life. In his hands it became the sad legacy of a great genius, betraying to posterity his own moral calibre. Goethe's hero, Faust, is made to pursue in turn all the Promethean ideals in which the author himself had at times sought the chief good of man. Now it is romanticism, the bloom of which he glorified in the spirit of independence and licence engendered by the French revolution; then classicism, as representing human culture, or humanitarianism; then naturalism; and finally a nondescript religion without the slightest degree of moral responsibility. At this last stage of development, Faust's stipulated time was run out, and his soul was destined to become the prize of

Mephistopheles, his familiar demon. But, by a mockery of all that has been revealed to us about the divine economy of salvation, he escapes the clutches of Mephistopheles and, after a very long life of sin and crime, and without as much as a sigh of repentance or even a particle of religious faith, he is led lovingly and triumphantly to heaven by the very Margaret (Gretchen) whom in life he had seduced and seen condemned to execution for infanticide. The supernal farce by which Mephistopheles was got rid of and Faust himself rescued, consisted in this. Margaret descends and gives her former treacherous seducer a posy of roses from heaven; whereupon Faust makes capital out of the posy and puts Mephistopheles to headlong flight with it—truly a childish way of solving the tragedy of human existence! But it is a telling instance of what the poesy of the middle ages becomes in the hands of modern unbelief; and sadder still, there are many thousands in and out of Germany to whom a great name is everything, and who point to this output of the debauched genius of the great Goethe as the reason of the faith that is in them.

Perhaps Marie Corelli approached the Faust subject with the intention of mending matters. In some respects she realised her intention. Her Lucio Rimanez, far from being a scurrilous, cynical Mephistopheles, works even for the spiritual good of his charge. Her Supreme Being is not the doting, happy-go-lucky, "humane gentleman (humaner Herr)" of Goethe. And Geoffrey, unlike Faust, does really make his peace with God through penance and a change of life. So far, so good. But the whole spiritual economy, in appearance so irreproachable, rests upon a ground-work of positive and far-reaching religious errors. What, as we learn from his correspondence (Gietmann, *Parzival*, *Faust*, *Job*. p. 443), Goethe merely projected, Marie Corelli

carried out, viz., the prospective salvation of Satan. The part which Lucio plays is utterly untrue, and involves a number of equally egregious untruths against the faith that Christians hold. It makes of Christianity a milk-and-water religion, in which sin is merely error; even Satan does not rejoice in evil; Hell does not exist; and the salvation of every rational being is infallibly assured by the mere fact of his existence.

Thus a decidedly pernicious religious atmosphere pervades the book as a whole; its good points do not at all out-weigh its radical errors. In reading it, we follow even the conversion of Geoffrey with as little ease and pleasure of mind as we do logical conclusions drawn from false premisses. In short, we look upon this new-fangled Faust romance, *The Sorrows of Satan*, as another instance of the baneful consequences of modern writers dabbling in religion. A tinker in metal is bad enough, but a tinker in religion reaches the climax of botchery.

Nevertheless, should any one be tempted, against his better religious sense, to read "The Sorrows," he would find his way to the theological stuff in the second part of the book pretty effectually barred by the secular stuff in the first part. A fair half of the book is taken up with Lucio's ushering Geoffrey into society. A long series of chapters treat severally of different phases of aristocratic life. Thus we encounter a chapter each of Newmarket twaddle, gaming-house twaddle, drawing-room twaddle, royal levee twaddle, art twaddle, and some few other kinds of twaddle. We get something about everything, and nothing about anything. Yes, there is music, gaming, art, racing, scandal, fashion; but an entire absence of elevating thought, cogent reasoning, or diverting humour; the last feature being singularly absent from all Corelli's works so far.

The plots certainly constitute one of the correct features of these works of fiction. They have hitherto been clear in structure and compressed in duration. This has uniformly been the case especially with the novels proper; but not in the same degree with the present semi-romance. The difference of success is as natural as it is common among writers of fiction. As romancists they have to grapple with two distinct kinds of action, characters, and interests; and this involves an effort naturally tending to obscurity and intricacy of detail, and complexity of treatment.

In the *Sorrows of Satan*, in particular, the character of the demon affords an instance of this obscurity not found in the earlier works. The necessities of the plot require that he should disguise his identity till towards the close of the action. Now the disguise in which he does appear, makes him too good for the devil and too bad for a man. During the greater part of his career he is to the mind of the reader a conglomeration of good and evil bewilderingly mixed. Certain extraordinary occurrences, such as sudden flashes of lightning, that accompany his presence at times, are, no doubt, intended by the authoress as artistic means of hinting at his preternatural character; but such expedients are futile. Either they rouse the reader's suspicion, and then the disguise is betrayed; or they do not, and then they make him still more enigmatical.

Considering the foregoing facts, therefore, the final verdict on *The Sorrows of Satan* must be, that it is in its first half exceptionally tedious reading; and in its second, religiously objectionable.

#### IX.—THE MIGHTY ATOM.

PUBLISHED in 1896. After the severe strictures which, from a Catholic point of view, we had to pass on the preceding works of Marie Corelli, it is a pleasure to recommend *The Mighty Atom* as a book



which is not only harmless in itself, but also very opportune in view of the godless education that the Governments of France and England are at the present day trying to force upon two Christian nations. The noble purpose of the book cannot be more clearly or forcibly set forward than it is done by the irony with which the authoress dedicates the volume—"To those self-styled progressivists who, by precept and example, assist the infamous cause of education without religion, and who, by promoting the idea, borrowed from French atheism, of denying to the children in board-schools and elsewhere the knowledge and love of God, as the true foundation of noble living, are guilty of a worse crime than murder."

Though the story is not of France, it throws strong side-lights upon that misruled country; as for instance, when it reveals the horrible fact that, "for the past ten years," formal catechisms of free-thinking have been assiduously circulated among children's schools. The main object, however, which the book constantly pursues, and which constitutes its real value, is to warn the English not to stifle God's nature in children by irreligious teaching, whereby they would turn their schools into nurseries for future criminals.

This lesson is illustrated by a tragical story of an innocent boy whose life was cruelly wrecked by the lack of all religious training. The action, as in most of these fictions, is admirably compressed into the space of a few weeks, and the scene centres around Combmartin, an out-of-the-way place on the coast of Devonshire. Mr. Valliscourt hires a cottage there as a holiday residence, not to suit his own taste or that of his wife, but to give his only son, Lionel, the benefit of sea-air, and to enable this child, between ten and eleven years of age, to continue his vacation tasks under an efficient tutor without undue distraction or



interruption. The tutor in question, Mr. Montrose, refused point blank to go through the holiday schedule of tuition formulated by the unnatural parent, and insisted that it was rather rest that the child needed. Knowing that it would cost him his dismissal from a lucrative post, he frankly told Mr. Valliscourt that he would not be an accomplice of intellectual child-murder, by depriving his tender charge of such pastimes and exercises as were necessary to his health and growth; by giving him no companions of his own age; and by surrounding him with petty tyrannies which made his young life a martyrdom.

Lionel himself was by this time a complete infidel. He had purposely been kept away from public schools for fear of his coming under Christian influences. For a father he had a declared atheist, who sneered at everything in the way of belief or sentiment. His mother he loved ardently; but he somehow never understood her, for the father had long since been a barrier between the mother and the son, and in her despair as an atheist she gave her affection to a Sir Charles Lascelles, "a fashionable pet blackguard of society." A materialistic view had been instilled into his mind, by which he took *some one mighty atom* to be the prime cause of all existences.

On the day of Montrose's dismissal, Lionel for the first time in his life crossed the bounds of his father's homestead without permission. His way led him to the churchyard, where at the first meeting he became friends with the good old sexton, Reuben Dale. But he also became strangely attached to Jessamine, the six-year-old daughter of Dale, by a childlike affection. He saw her only once again in his life, but his innocent fondness for her was to bring on his doom. In their company he, for the first time, set foot into a church, and heard from the lips of Jessamine wonderful things

about God and religion of which he had never before possessed the slightest idea.

With these new religious impressions he went home, where he was received with gross unkindness by his father for his truancy. But this great crime of truancy was made impossible for a couple of weeks by the insensate discipline of the new tutor, Professor Cadman-Gore, a dry-as-dust infidel pedant, who entered heart and soul into the educational plans of Mr. Valliscourt. But the boy's better nature was beginning to assert itself. He would advance doubts about "the atom" without getting any satisfactory explanation. Still, he followed out his prescribed curriculum with conscientious exactitude. Having, however, continued a short time in this course of study, he fell dangerously ill.

He was removed to the health resort of Clovelly, where his tutor relaxed his absurd severity, and even began to befriend the child. After his recovery, he had hardly taken up his drudgery again, when the news came that his mother had eloped with Sir Charles. To this was added the additional shock that during his absence little Jessamine had been carried away by death. He got this news unexpectedly from her father, whom Lionel again chanced to meet in the church-yard when actually digging Jessamine's grave. Lionel, though near fainting, did not shed a tear; but he took in all that the broken-hearted father had to say about hope in God, and Heaven, and Jessamine's being there as an angel. With these thoughts on his mind he went home; and in dreary loneliness, for a day and night, he set them against the theory of his father. They all admit, so he reasoned, a prime cause of all creatures; but father says the prime cause is a senseless atom, while Reuben Dale says it is a personal being. Upon this depends our happiness in this and the next life.

The poor child could come to no decision, and he had no one else to ask. So in the distraught state of his mind, being tired of life as he experienced it, he took the unhappy resolve of throwing himself into the arms of that prime cause and getting his doubts solved thereby. With this purpose in view, he retired into the privacy of his study, and put himself to death by hanging.

Besides its good tendency, this novel contains other commendable features. First, negatively, we note with pleasure, which is a rare experience, the absence of ranting against any Christian Church. Then it is also a very welcome change, to meet in Reuben Dale a prominent character that speaks a broad provincial dialect. There is also some beautiful landscape painting of portions of the Devonshire coast. The rugged, yet simple-minded and kind-hearted Dale is one of the most natural characters in all these novels. His grief at the loss of Jessamine is described with genuine pathos.

On the other hand, there are also some notable flaws. Lionel will be considered by many readers as too much of a prodigy of precociousness. His controversies, and those of others, are at times too summarily treated: we hear only of the heads or topics touched upon in the course of the discussion, together with the general conclusions drawn therefrom; of the detailed arguments we get too little. The severity of Mr. Valliscourt's pedantry is extremely overdrawn. In this way the authoress's indictment against irreligion loses much of its force; for, in that case, the blight of the boy's career and the wreck of his life are made to appear as if due to the cruel, unbearable drudgery to which he was subjected, rather than to the godless nature of his training.

#### X.—THE MURDER OF DELICIA.

PUBLISHED in 1896.—The murder referred to in the title of the present book is not of a physical, but of a

moral kind. Delicia Vaughan, a lady of stainless character, and an accomplished and popular writer, is beguiled into marriage with a dashing but impecunious officer in the Guards, Wilfred de Tracy Gifford Carlyon by name. Though she was long in discovering the fact, it was a misalliance from the beginning. She made of her husband a god ; and he made of her a convenience, by spending upon the race-course, gaming-house and the creatures of the music-hall, the liberal allowance she granted him of half the earnings of her pen.

At this point, readers might expect that the love of Delicia is to be only a repetition of the unsuspecting love of Thelma for Errington. But in due time they are undeceived. Delicia's character possesses a hidden reserve of strength ; so that, when she finally obtains convincing proofs of Carlyon's treacherous rascality, she takes steps, with surprising decision, to vindicate her rights. She has even to resist a strong temptation to take away his life ; but this being overcome, she proceeds to settle scores with him in the legal way. She declares to him that, after he has murdered her soul by destroying its love, there is nothing that binds them together any more : she therefore insists upon being separated from him, though without divorce. Her legal advisers are instructed to draw up the necessary articles, and to alter her will so as to leave him only enough to live frugally upon. For a few months she lingers on, broken-hearted, and passes away by a sudden death.

In the preface, Marie Corelli, anticipating the objection raised against the character of Lord Carlyon as being that of a despicable cad, will have us understand that the two chief personages are drawn strictly from life. But quite apart from the issue here at stake, it is far from entertaining to a reader of even average taste and judgment to observe the spirit of invective constantly pervading her stories at this time. By pouring

abuse on the object of her displeasure she resembles a disputant trying to give emphasis to her views with a cudgel. The impression is made worse by her frequent exaggerations, such as the following: "There are thousands of such murders daily happening among us"—"To put it bluntly and plainly, a great majority of the men of the present day want women to keep them."

The tale of Delicia proves that the finish of Marie Corelli's workmanship does not increase with the number of her works. On the contrary, many parts of the present volume show evidence of hasty, slipshod writing. The very first chapter is a mass of long and involved sentences, numbers of them succeeding each other without a break, eight of them covering more than half a page each, and at least one (Skeffington's Edition, p. 18) being so tangled that several readings are required to unravel its meaning. Another such jumble is on page 14. Chapter III. opens with a paragraph almost four pages in length, which for neglect of proper division would bring censure even on a school-boy; while the first sentence of this paragraph is as unintelligible as it is long. Naturally such a breakneck style of sentence brings in its train corresponding faults of diction; but these can be passed over here, as there will be opportunity enough in the subsequent volumes to discuss that point.

The tendency of the work is, of course, polemical, viz., to expose the vices of lady-actresses and their adorers. But with this, as happens in most of the novels, there is associated a second object,—the moral education of the lower classes. She says as much in the following stereotype sentiment, which can be taken as the chief tenet of her radical democratic creed: "The safety of the country is with what we elect to call the lower classes, who are educating themselves slowly, but



none the less surely." Now, while her second object is praiseworthy, there is strong reason to doubt whether the first object of the book offers moral or legitimate means of attaining it. The lower people will welcome any amount of scandal about their betters; but generally the moral influence of the scandal ends with the low pleasure found in it. Nay more, the common man, the half-educated man—for it is becoming more and more clear that these fictions are specially written for him, and that he alone will appreciate them—far from being elevated by the peculiar scandal-mongery of Marie Corelli, will lose in moral tone by perusing her increasingly slangy and vulgar invective. Marie Corelli does not raise the masses to herself, but lowers herself to them, and sinks, at times, even beneath the level of the better sections of them. In proof and illustration of this, we need only to take the preface, where we meet with examples of coarse abuse such as these: "the lazy noodle of an aristocrat,—such inefficient weaklings—every ragamuffin of the press—the head of the smallest masculine noodle—the by-word and contempt of all self-respecting commoners—blue-blooded lacqueys." Such is the tone of the story throughout.

We close with an incident showing the heroine in one of the most pathetic situations of her career, while struggling against despair. It will serve as a specimen, both of the moral influence of the book at its best, and of the practical working of Marie Corelli's Christianity. In her dire distress, "Delicia drew aside a curtain which hung before the niche she called her oratory, where an ivory crucifix hung white against draperies of purple. 'The man of sorrows acquainted with grief,' with arms outstretched upon the cross, seemed waiting to receive her,—and with a sudden sobbing cry she fell upon her knees." After a few brief sighs of prayer, she rose and paced the room, still in a prayerful mood.

Then she stepped to the mirror and delivered a long apostrophe to her reflected image, introducing classical heroes and myths, such as Mark Antony, Theseus and Ariadne, of whom she had much more to say than of Christ. And finally, having thus received comfort through Christ and her classical models, she brought this hour of communing with "the man of sorrows" to a close by "leaning forward and kissing the reflection of her own quivering lips in the mirror" (p. 170). The educated non-Christian of India would make as much of Christ as does this Corellian St. Delicia.

#### XI.—ZISKA : THE PROBLEM OF A WICKED SOUL.

PUBLISHED in 1897.—The scene of this latter-day romance is characteristically laid in two hotels, viz., the Gezireh Palace in Cairo, and the Mena House under the shadow of the neighbouring sphinx and pyramid. In the first-named establishment we find, at the height of the Egyptian season, the usual mixed crowd of tourists from Europe and America. The most prominent among them is the Princess Ziska. Her antecedents are entirely unknown, though some guests take her for a Russian, and others on account of her Nubian household for an Egyptian. In wealth, culture, and personal charm she is superior to all the ladies present, so much so that the first glimpse of her makes the men simply giddy with love. This is particularly the case with two of them, who had hitherto been friends; one being Gervase Armand, a celebrated French artist, dissolute worldling and scoffing atheist, the other being Denzil Murray, a wealthy, sturdy Highlander. A fourth important personage is Dr. Maxwell Dean, figuring as a student of antiquities, but who as often plays the part of a faddist, being ever ready, like Heliobas in the earlier romances, to tutor his associates and amuse the reader

by shedding the light of his occult science upon certain new-fangled and fantastic spiritist theories, which are rather Marie Corelli's than his own. Within two weeks, strange, mystifying events take place in relation to Ziska ; as, for instance, when Gervase's picture of her turns out to be an image of life under the mask of death ; and when, in a visit to the sculptures of the pyramids, Dr. Dean points out the resemblance of Gervase and Ziska to two ancient Egyptian celebrities, King Araxes and his concubine bearing the name of Ziska Charmazel, whom he had killed in a fit of jealousy.

Meantime the rivalry of the two friends grows to such a pitch that they resort to the following mad scheme of settlement. They allow each other in turn a fair chance of winning over Ziska—Denzil for his wife, Gervase for his mistress ; and after she has made her choice, a duel is to be fought for the satisfaction of the rejected suitor. Poor Murray's efforts at courtship meet with a rude refusal from Ziska ; while Gervase is informed that he shall receive her decision at a specified hour of the next night. On presenting himself at the Mena House, he is suddenly set upon, gagged, blindfolded by Nubian servants, and hustled along interminable corridors and pathways. At last he is told that his way will now lead downward to a great depth. Once below, his bandages are taken off, and he sees around him an underground, though richly furnished chamber, situated beneath the pyramid. In the centre was the gorgeous tomb of Araxes, and before it stood Ziska, a hideous figure of death. She revealed to him that she was a re-incarnation of the historic Ziska, and that he was similarly a re-incarnation of Araxes, her foul murderer. After many ages of fruitless waiting she was now to wreak her vengeance upon him by dragging him down to Hell, her own abode ; for fate had destined them for each other. In spite of the

frightful situation, the atheist did not lose his presence of mind and began to discuss the situation. The parley ended with his acknowledging his fault and asking her pardon, and they were reconciled. This did not save him from his temporal doom, but it turned the scales of eternal justice : and the sentence to perdition, long since passed upon them both, was reversed, and they entered together the abode of supernal bliss.

Such fiction, with the many religious errors involved in it, may prove delectable reading to those that have no definite religious views of their own, or who are willing to amuse their fancy at the expense of sound reason; but to a Christian who reveres the tenets of his belief as unalterable revealed truths, it can only be regarded as a flippant and profane distortion of fundamental Christian doctrine. We are aware that the authoress in several of her works disclaims all responsibility for the views held by her characters. But such plea is contrary to all literary canons. If an authoress sets up a character as an ideal, it lies in the very nature of the case that the views and principles of that ideal character are recommended to the reader, unless they are directly or indirectly repudiated by the authoress. On this principle we hold Marie Corelli responsible for the propagation of the following errors, which are calculated to rob not only Catholics, but also Protestants, of their Christian faith. First, as enunciated by Dr. Dean : human personality is a psychic germ developed by evolution from matter ; there are many departed souls who, as real "ghosts" like Ziska, associate for years in perfect human form with mortals ; true marriage takes place only between twin-souls predestined for it by God, and their marital relations continue in the next world, as is shown in the case of Gervase and Ziska, and in the still more sentimental case of Theos and Edris in *Ardath*. Secondly, on the part of Ziska : the

theory of the manifold re-incarnation of herself and Araxes; redemption from hell. One remark more suggests itself. *Ziska*, though written of set purpose to illustrate the divine economy of salvation and as an antidote to infidelity, contains but a few insignificant references to Christ, or rather Christianity. And what is more, in the final scene of repentance and admission to divine grace, the name of Christ is neither on the lips nor in the hearts of the two reclaimed souls. On the contrary, when the reconciliation is effected, Marie Corelli pens this concluding paragraph, which actually substitutes Belial for Christ, and which can be taken for the pagan refrain of the whole book: "And presently, out of the heavy gloom came a Voice which said: Peace! *The old gods are best*, and the law is made perfect. A life demands a life. Love's debt must be paid by love! The woman's soul forgives; the man's repents,—wherefore they are both released from bondage and the memory of sin. Let them go hence,—the curse is lifted!"

Against such a desecration of Christ and his holy religion, the very few literary excellences of the book are of no weight whatever. But if it were possible, our aversion to the book would be increased by the vagueness, exaggeration, and vulgarity that disfigure so many of its pages. We consider *Ziska* execrable reading for any sincere Christian.

## XII.—JANE.

PUBLISHED in 1897. *Jane* is the first story proper in the series of Marie Corelli's works thus far reviewed. It treats of a social incident. The central character is Jane Belmont, the daughter of a deceased parson. She is an old maid of fifty-seven years of age, amiable in disposition and well-bred in manner. At that age she suddenly inherits a large fortune, and for reasons of her own, establishes a residence in London and en-



ters into society. She keeps open house and confides its management to the Hon. Lady Maddenham, a person whom she knows to be a female sponger and upstart. Under this management her knowledge of the fashionable world grows apace : she soon finds her house turned into a rendezvous of snobs. When she thinks she has seen enough of the world, she turns the tables upon her major-domo ; and this constitutes the incident of the story. Lady Maddenham had invited, as she said, two royalties, and with them came a houseful of guests unknown to Miss Belmont. Late in the evening of the reception, the latter discovered that the royalties had arrived without being presented to her, the lady of the house, and that they were then being actually entertained at her own table by Lady Maddenham. Then, while on her rounds among the other strangers in her own house, she happened to meet with a group of gentlemen whom she overheard making offensive remarks about herself. She instantly turned upon them with the intelligence that she was the lady about whom they were speaking so freely, and ordered them straightway out of the house ; whereupon there was a great move for hats and umbrellas. Next, summoning Lady Maddenham, she ordered her to clear the house of her royalties and all the other guests, and that within half an hour.

The following day the manager got her dismissal, and Jane returned to the sphere of her former peaceful and charitable work in her old country home.

The story is told in a simple and attractive way. There is idyllic charm in the account of Jane's retired life in the parsonage. But one would hardly recognise it as the work of Marie Corelli, if there were not a declared tendency in it ; and this reveals itself in the pretty broad vein of satire which proves that it is intended for a skit upon vulgar gentility.

## XIII. BOY.

PUBLISHED in 1900. The publishers, Hutchinson and Company, prefixed to their first edition of *Boy* the notice, that "this new long story is the most important volume by Marie Corelli published for some years, and the first issued since the author's serious illness." Here they call a "long story" what the authoress herself more appropriately designates a sketch. But the importance which they attach to the publication is not a mere puff. *Boy* does hold among the works of the authoress not only an important, but an exceptional place, and that in a favourable sense.

For, with regard to tendency and literary excellence, it is the only one of her thirteen works hitherto reviewed which is entirely unexceptionable. Here, at length, in this one work, she leaves religion alone and does not quarrel with the better classes; but she takes the world as it is. And in doing so, indeed, she exposes certain phases of its depravity; but, with equal truth and with warm-hearted sympathy, she none the less shows how that depravity is everywhere opposed and oftentimes overcome by the hopeful daring, the subtle endurance, and pathetic suffering of man's better nature. And this is the truest and most ennobling view of human life: genuine idealism; neither pessimism nor optimism, but the mean between the two. Such ideal accounts of man's battle of life produce, if we may compare small things with great, a sublimely soothing or chastening feeling akin to that which sways the minds of Christians when on Holy Saturday they hover between the tragic horrors wrought by sin on the cross on Good Friday and the glory to come on Easter Sunday.

The titular hero of the novel, Robert D'Arcy Muir, goes through life under the pet name of Boy. Though he was of gentle birth, there clung to him till his early death at twenty-two the evil effects of bad example,

and the bad training he received under a drunken sot of a father and a sloven of a mother. But from the age of four he came also under the benign influence of a noble-minded elderly lady, Miss Letitia Leslie, and of her equally magnanimous friend, Major Desmond.

The object of these two kind souls was to adopt Boy; but from the stupidly proud mother they could only obtain permission to keep him a month or so with them at long intervals. The consequence of his evil surroundings was that the youth went from bad to worse, and finally withdrew himself from the influence of all that were interested in him. Then, while his parents sank into a state of extreme wretchedness and had nothing but curses to offer him, Miss Leslie, now old and very feeble, bore for him still, in spite of her disappointment, all the tender remembrance and affection of a mother. One day, during the late Boer war, upon the news of the battle of Colenso reaching London, Desmond learned at the War Office that a private soldier of the name of Robert D'Arcy Muir was numbered among the slain. From other sources, it became known that Boy had thoroughly repented of the past, and had begun trying to deserve the forgiveness of his injured friends by a reform of life. But this consoling news was never to reach his kind, disconsolate benefactress; for, when Desmond reached home with the touching news, he found her dead.

#### XIV. THE MASTER CHRISTIAN.

PUBLISHED in 1900. This romance represents Christ coming back to earth as a foundling, in order to reveal anew to man the true meaning of Christianity, and after a few months' sojourn to disclose his divine identity by a mysterious departure out of this world. An Italian cardinal-archbishop, Bonpre by name, but whose diocese is unnamed, discovers him as a waif in Rouen

and adopts him as a child of extraordinary wisdom and wonderful character. In the prelate's company, the boy at once seizes on every opportunity to give free expression to his views about the morality and religion of the world around him. But it is chiefly at Rome that he makes it a point, even in the presence of the Holy Father, to criticise the riches and worldliness of the Vatican and of the Church generally, as having lost the Christian spirit. The cardinal whom we see depicted in this story is such only in name. As represented, he is a nondescript creature of Marie Corelli's imagination, and might pass for a dreamy pietist, goody-goody Swedenborgian pastor, or another Heliobas (*Romance of Two Worlds*) in pontificals. He estranges himself more and more from the views and practices of the Catholic religion, and stands from the outset with only one foot in the Church. Instead of looking after the interests of his diocese, we find him fraternising with a band of Marie Corelli's religious enthusiasts of the Salvationist type in London, Paris, and Rome; and at last he forgets his high position so far as to officiate in plain black attire at one of their public religious ceremonies. Hereupon he is threatened with deposition by the Pope. In this crisis he consults the boy, and by his advice severs himself from Rome. Thereupon he gets suddenly ill, and is the same day taken to heaven—after receiving a glorious vision of the boy in his true character as Christ.

We have restricted this sketch to the barest outlines in order to spare Catholic readers the pain of considering more of the offensive details than is necessary. Of all the works of Marie Corelli so far reviewed, *The Master Christian* is probably the most hostile to everything Catholic. In the others her attacks, though sometimes very bitter and even insidious, are more incidental and limited in scope; but the composition of

this one is *designed and executed as an open and systematic denunciation of the Catholic religion*. Far from considering this a too sweeping condemnation of *The Master Christian*, we believe that rigorous justice would warrant even a stronger censure. We are satisfied that, in any case, conscientious Catholics will recognise at once the spirit of the book.

In the present work, as in a number of the previous ones, she openly flaunts her disregard of Holy Writ. Thus she makes no one less than Cardinal Bonpre declare: "The Church is a system,—but whether it is as much founded on the teaching of our Lord, who was divine, as on the teaching of St. Paul, who was not divine, is a question to me of much perplexity. St. Paul was a gifted and clever man, but he was a man,—he was not God-in-man. Christ's doctrine leaves no place for differing sects; St. Paul's method of applying that doctrine serves as authority for the establishment of any and every quarrelsome sect ever known." Another approved character says: "Who can believe that the Saviour of the world ever condescended to 'pun' on the word Petrus (?), and say, 'On this Rock (or stone) I will build my Church', when He already knew that He had to deal with a coward who would soon deny Him?" Again, to the mind of the cardinal, the "foundation of the Church rested upon the memory of the 'Lying Apostle.'" And the writer, while thus openly proclaiming her disbelief in Holy Writ, and summoning its holy inspired authors, Apostles and martyrs of Christ, before the tribunal of her private opinion, reiterates over and over again her accusation against all Christian churches, of having fallen away from the true doctrine and spirit of the Saviour; and after vilifying St. Paul, and insidiously blackening the character of St. Peter (cf. *Barabbas*), she has the effrontery to close the romance with the adjuration, which is the burden of



the whole book, "When the Son of Man cometh, think ye He shall find faith on earth?"

Classic composure is utterly wanting in Marie Corelli. Indeed, it could not be otherwise. Her whole object is not, in the first instance, to soothe and elevate the mind as a true novelist should, by the contemplation of ideal beauty; but to propagate her eccentric religious hobbies by protesting, denouncing, wrangling, inveighing, slander, and throwing filth at others, generally. Even the occasionally genuine warbles of this uproarious songstress are sure to end in a groan, or a croak, or an hysterical shriek. Her mind is in a constant ferment of polemical rancour, which prevents her from seeing things in their true perspective, or in any other light than that in which Don Quixote frowned at the famous windmills. Hence comes her habitual spirit of exaggeration which, even from the aesthetic point of view, mars some of her finest work; as, for instance, the untrue, unnatural characters of Zara, and Nina. But this false art, as betrayed by her want of balance, moderation, and mental composure,—in other words, this untruth of exaggeration, becomes a very serious moral consideration when it is applied to the real world of men and human institutions.

Of this want of truth and honour in dealing with whole classes of her contemporary fellow-men, she has left in *The Master Christian* a monumental proof. To begin with, in the whole voluminous work she has not a single word of unqualified praise for anything in the Catholic Church; while her misrepresentations, mockeries, false accusations, foul suggestions, and venomous invectives, are simply boundless. Thus, she dilates on an imaginary case of clerical seduction; she also takes delight in dragging other clerics into the mire. The niece of the cardinal is an accomplished artist, and in Paris she exhibits a picture of:—"Low

beetling brows,—a sensual cruel mouth with a loosely projecting under-lip, — eyes that appeared to be furtively watching each other across the thin bridge of the nose,—a receding chin and a narrow cranium, combined with an expression which was hypocritically humble, yet sly,—this was the type Angela Sovrani had chosen to delineate, a type mercilessly true to the life ; the face of a priest,—‘ A Servant of Christ,’ as she called him.” In the discussion of the picture, the cardinal listens to the artist while she declares : “ These faces are ordinary among our priests ; ” and she is not refuted.

Various prelates of the highest ranks in Rome are described as contemplating or executing dastardly crimes ; foul motives are imputed to the Holy See ; and the sacraments and other sacred institutions of our religion are scoffed and sneered at. It is not too much to say that unsuspecting readers, of whom there are many, will conclude from the book, that the Catholic Church is governed by a pack of villains. It is in a way a matter of satisfaction and legitimate pride to us Catholics, to know that this traducer of all Christendom has, in *The Master Christian*, singled out the Catholic religion as the special object of her deep-seated hatred. Being among her religious enemies, we are in the very best company. Let us compare sides : — With us there are the apostles Peter and Paul, all the other inspired writers, and the unbroken chain of Christian tradition. The supporters of Marie Corelli’s cause are the following : — First and foremost, of course, comes herself as the alpha and omega of her phantom Christianity ; next some tag-ends of Scripture ; then her fancy-born Walhalla of *fin-de-siècle* apostles. The most exalted of these are—the unctuous Heliobas,—the ethereal blue-stockings Zara,—the spiritual-sensual Theos,—the staring visionary Barabbas,—the impenitent Judith Iscariot,—and probably also her brother Judas, though he was by far the

better of the two,—the Egyptian idol-worshipper Ziska together with the atheist Gervase, her idiotic lover,—the revolutionary assassin Lotys in *Temporal Power*—and in *Master Christian*, the religious leveller and would-be parricide Cyrillon,—the street ranter Leigh, made in America,—and the salvationist Cardinal Bonpre. Last of all comes the forward and priggish foundling whom her imagination mistakes for the boy Jesus.

Truly, the fictions of Marie Corelli embody a huge religious imposture, of which she herself is the most pitiful victim in believing that the whole of Christendom is wrong, and that she alone is right.

#### XV. TEMPORAL POWER; A STUDY IN SUPREMACY.

PUBLISHED in 1902. The semi-romance *Temporal Power* bears on its title page the well known passage from St. Paul: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, "but against principalities, against powers, against the "rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual "wickedness in high places." But judicious readers that are in any degree familiar with Marie Corelli's works, have long since become suspicious of any of her quotations from Holy Writ. One of its inspired authors, St. Peter, she has pilloried in *Barabbas* as a worthless character even in his apostolic career after the ascension of Our Lord. In the same romance she deranges the order of, and corrupts the truth of, so many passages of the holy book as to make a mockery of its sacred inviolable truth. The very St. Paul whom she quotes here, she has in *A Romance of Two Worlds* belittled as a preacher. We have only to turn to the first pages of the present work to see with what flippancy, unwomanly boldness, profanity and inconsistency withal she pooh-poohs a statement laid down by the author of the Pentateuch.

To restrict ourselves only to her inconsistency in this case,—she accuses the “old-world narrator of the creation of having been moved by the natural conceit of man to give *undue importance to the earth as his particular habitation* ;” and after several ironical thrusts at him, she eases her mind of the following exclamation: “How self-centred and sure the faith which could so arrange the work of infinite and eternal forces to suit its own limited intelligence!” And still this same reprover and mocker of God’s holiest and wisest men strains the best of her powers in *A Romance of Two Worlds* to show, by her then enthusiastic account of Christ’s redeeming mission, that God himself awarded the same *undue importance to the earth as man’s particular habitation*.

After such glaring instances of Marie Corelli’s utter disregard for the sacred character of the bible, we fail to see what legitimate purpose she wishes to serve by any further quotations from it. They will surely fail of their object, if they are intended as voucher for the Christian spirit of her writings. For any tolerably instructed Catholic will readily understand that her vaunted Christianity is but a morally barren, and unreasoned abstraction concerning the Divine incarnation, and not the less so when she puffs it with the specious recommendation of pat quotations from Scripture.

But besides the haughty unconcern with which she sets her own individual intelligence above that of heavenly inspired writers, there are other points in *Temporal Power* that make it highly offensive to Catholics.

The purport of this odd book is not clearly expressed even by its double title. But, as seen from the contents, it is to show the struggle of a constitutional king against the encroachments of Jews and a plutocratic government on the one hand, and of the Vatican



and Jesuits on the other. It is a twentieth century contribution to the "Patriot King" literature of the eighteenth. The contemplation of the Patriot King necessarily involves problems of religious, social, and other kinds. On a number of these the authoress expresses her opinion only too clearly; but some others she leaves vexingly unresolved by her unaccountable trick of making a matter-of-fact novel suddenly turn into the metamorphosis of a tragico-comical romance. On the whole, *Temporal Power* is a hybrid work of fiction, which satisfies neither the intellect nor the imagination.

There is a monarch ruling over an unnamed Catholic country in the south of Europe. By a not unusual outlay partly of platitudes and partly of ingenious fancies, we are given to understand that he is a man and a king in one; and that in the former capacity he is a man of parts and has liberal tendencies, while in the latter he is only a puppet of a money-grabbing government and an ambitious clergy. So he determines to make himself a king that not only reigns, but also rules, "by crowning himself with his own resolve"; but while he is studying the ways and means to effect this end, a revolutionary society is gradually getting control over the populace. A certain Sergius Thord has been the soul of the movement, but suddenly an unknown stranger, Pasquin Leroy, outwardly much resembling the king, associates himself with Thord.

In addition to the political troubles of the king, in seeing himself opposed from above and below, the domestic relations of the royal family were of the most unhappy kind. The queen was a heartless woman, and had been estranged from her consort since,—as she called it—her unnatural State-marriage with him. The heir apparent, Prince Humphrey, had secretly contracted a marriage with a beautiful commoner; and as he rebelliously insisted upon the validity of the



marriage being recognised unless the voice of the people should condemn it, he was ordered by the king to leave the country.

Meantime the revolutionary society was gaining in strength, which was largely owing to the strange influence of a young woman by name of Lotys, an adopted child of Thord, and—let us note—one of the ideals in Marie Corelli's gallery of heroines. She was a modern platform woman, openly preaching revolution against the State and the established Church. Being the virtual leader of the revolutionary committee, she indeed restrained its members from cold-blooded murder, but she advocated the lawfulness of assassinating political enemies upon six months' warning.

The popular discontent rapidly increased and led to an attempted assassination of the king. In this case, the assassin was not, as we should expect, a revolutionist, but an ultramontane; while the king's rescuer was no one else than Lotys, who had thrown herself heroically upon the dagger aimed at the sovereign. The would-be assassin was captured; and the scene in which the Jesuit, "Monsignor" Del Fortis, hears his confession, will ever stand out among other similar pieces as an exceptionally foul misrepresentation of the Sacrament of Penance and its administration as known to history and the experience of the untold millions of Catholics of all ages. What little pains, by the way, Marie Corelli took in reading the vast literature concerning the Jesuits, she herself betrays by her ignorance of the most commonplace details relating to them; as when she habitually speaks of Jesuit Monsignors, monasteries, Vicar Generals, etc., and makes much ado about the combination between the Jesuits and the Jewish press.

Finally the revolutionary committee convened a meeting to devise a plan for a number of assassinations and

an uprising of the people. Lots are drawn for the selection of the assassins, and to Leroy falls the task of doing away with the king. He cheerfully accepts the charge; but, in the speech which he addresses to the conspirators on the occasion, he breaks to them the astounding news, that he not only resembles the king exteriorly, but that he is actually the king in person. He had all along concealed his identity and taken part in their proceedings in order to learn the needs and wishes of his people. This declaration at once effected a reconciliation, and he was hailed with tremendous applause as the people's own king. And after a short deliberation he put himself at their head and marched them, or was marched by them, to the House of Parliament, where he cleared out the government, proclaimed a new order of things, and framed a new constitution on thoroughly democratical lines.

But now comes the romance. While Humphrey, the recalcitrant heir-apparent, is telegraphed for to India with the promise, on the part of the people, of a triumphant reception for himself and his plebeian wife, the Patriot King, i. e. the king of the democracy, becomes a victim to his affection for his deliverer, Lotys. He debases himself so far as to sue for her love; but in this he is nobly rejected by her. Hereat the jealousy of Thord is excited to such a degree that he takes her life. Circumstances lead to the general conviction that it is a case of suicide, the king ascribing it to her remorse for having refused him. Among her effects there is found a note requesting the favour of being buried at sea. We give the entire wording of the request, as it shows that in this, the fifteenth work of the series, the spiritual perception and vaunted Christian sense of Marie Corelli have degenerated to such a degree that she enrolls among her heroines a woman who doubts the immortality of the soul :—

"To those who shall find me dead: I pray you of your gentle love and charity, not to bury my body in the earth, but in the sea. For I most earnestly desire no mark, or remembrance of the place where my sorrows, with my mortal remains, shall be rendered back to nature; and kinder than the worms in the mould are the wild waves of the ocean which I have ever loved! And there, at least to my own thoughts,—*if any spiritual part of me remains to watch my will performed*,—shall I be best pleased and most grateful to be given my last rest. Lotys."

Accordingly the corpse is put on board a vessel and this sent adrift into the ocean, just while a violent storm is springing up. The king, however, has managed by private arrangements to reach and board the vessel alone. But coming to the corpse, he finds one other person watching it, viz., Thord. All is soon over. Thord upbraids the king and immediately shoots himself; and in a few minutes more the raging sea engulfs both Lotys and her frenzied lover, the Patriot King.

*Temporal Power* instils into the hearts of the masses, for whom it is especially intended, hatred of all authority civil and ecclesiastical. It is a book on which the most hare-brained democrat, socialist, or anarchist could hardly improve.

## XVI. GOD'S GOOD MAN.

PUBLISHED in 1904. This is a love story about John Walden, one of Marie Corelli's ideal clergymen, and Miss Vancourt, a young lady of atheistical propensities, belonging to his spiritual flock. The authoress prefaces the story with an ironical apology to reviewers for its short-comings, and with a defiant snub to the press generally for its dishonest criticism of her works. To make the expression of her piqued feelings more stinging, she couches her grievance in words parodying the

litany of all saints, and sets them forth in very large type and spacing. From this exhibition of profanity she abruptly passes, on the very next page, into a pious mood, by seriously quoting a verse from holy writ to enforce the dedication by which she holds up the portraiture of her clerical hero, John Walden, as a lesson for all clergymen.

The novel itself shows plainly that, when the manner and style of Marie Corelli are not aggressive, they are dry and stale ; and that, in proportion as she writes with composure, she becomes insipid.

God's good man, John Walden, is a clergyman after Marie Corelli's own inconsistent fancy. It is disappointing, at the outset, to find that for her clerical hero she must apply to one of the Christian denominations, all of whom she habitually decries as having lost the spirit of Christ. Walden is in holy orders, but holy orders she everywhere discountenances in her previous works. But worse, Walden is an Anglican and professes due submission to his bishop ; whereas hitherto Marie Corelli has declared all assumption of ecclesiastical authority as a mockery of the spirit of Christ. Her inconsistency and flippant trifling with principles and sacred institutions can also be seen from a short review of the various classes of the professedly ideal clergymen whom her prolific fancy has produced for the spiritual edification of the sin-laden world, of whom—as she continually urges,—only “few will be saved.” There is the parlour apostle, Heliobas, in *Romance of Two Worlds*, flitting about the world on his stealthy, and mystifying travels to reach the very few souls that might understand his electrical economy of salvation. Then there is the spiritual-sensual type of apostle, Theos, secluding himself far away in the mountains in the blessed company of his “celestial twin soul, Edris,” writing poems under her inspiration for the

conversion of atheists. Next follows, in *The Master Christian*, the street-ranting Leigh, who, as far as definite doctrine, ecclesiastical authority, and sacraments are concerned in his "ideal" system, is a mere salvationist. Lastly, in the sixteenth of Marie Corelli's works, comes John Walden, specially favoured of God.

Now, what there is good and true in John Walden existed nineteen hundred years before Marie Corelli claimed the merit of having produced it all in her fancy, and it still exists in thousands upon thousands of zealous, faithful, Christian clergymen, whose disinterested, noble and heroic ministrations command the admiration of many millions of their fellow-men in spite of the persistent attempts of Marie Corelli to belittle their deeds, traduce their motives, and blacken their character. But what there is of sentimentality, inconsistency, and doctrinal ignorance and error,—that is the invention of Marie Corelli. For instance, the scenes in which Walden and Brent, the Anglican bishop, exchange visits and literary correspondence, to pour out their hearts to each other with a view of mutual consolation and spiritual comfort in their dire tribulation of an unfortunate love-match, are bathos steeped in the ridiculous, though Marie Corelli intends them for pathos bordering on the tragic.

For the rest, Marie Corelli's two ceaseless fads of atheism and what can justly be called her fancy of Christ's redeeming mission, "drag their lengthening chain" also through this novel. Walden's set sermon (ch. xviii, p. 343-348) on the text: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—is a typical example of her characteristic habit of mistaking statement for proof. To find, in her works, an important moral or religious topic thoroughly and conclusively discussed upon philosophical or theological grounds, would be as hopeless a



task as to find a needle in a bottle of hay. And when she does commit herself to the task of giving a reasoned account of such a question, shallow assertiveness, frequently based upon her imagination, is the outcome. Stet pro ratione imaginatio !

One more important quotation, to conclude. It not only corroborates the above, but will serve as what can be looked upon in all the works of Marie Corelli as the clearest and fullest profession of her own faith. It is the declaration of the faith which Walden made to his intended when he thought to win her for God and himself. It runs verbatim as follows : "I believe this :—that Christ was born into the world as a sign and symbol of the life, death, and destined immortality of each individual human soul. Into the mystery of His birth I do not presume to penetrate. But I see Him as he lived,—the embodiment of Truth—crucified ! I see Him dead,—rising from the grave to take upon Himself eternal life. I accept Him as the true manifestation of the possible Divine in man—for no man before or after him has had such influence upon the human race. And I am convinced that the faithful following of His Gospel ensures peace in this world, and joy in the world to come !"

#### XVII. FREE OPINIONS FREELY EXPRESSED.

PUBLISHED in 1905. *Free Opinions* is a collection of disconnected articles published in various journals and periodicals of England and the United States, the majority of them having been written for an American publication syndicate. They are twenty-seven in number and treat of social, literary, and religious topics. Following this division, we propose to give a very brief summary of the contents of the single papers, and to follow this up with our general impression of them.

##### SOCIAL TOPICS.

*The Death of Hospitality*—as noticed at dinner-parties, receptions, and other modern social functions.

*The Vulgarities of Wealth*—illustrated by the exposure of certain aristocratic “sets” in general, and of the late Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Carnegie in particular.

*American Women in England*, and *The American Bounder*, are two companion skits, being for the most part echoes of what is said of American upstarts in a number of her fictions.

*Coward Adam*, and *Accursed Eve*, are two other companion pieces, detailing severally the foibles and faults of both sexes.

*The Advance of Woman* is a review of the progress in the status of womankind since the accession of Queen Victoria.

*The Palm of Beauty* is a comparative estimate of the praise for beauty due to the women of some European nations.

*The Madness of Clothes*. Here the love of finery is well described as a riotous waste, and an ugly disease of moral principle, ending at last in the disgrace and death of many a woman’s good name.

*The Decay of Home-life in England* contains some very sensible observations.

#### LITERARY TOPICS.

*A Vital Point of Education*. This is a laboured attempt to prove that so essential a feature of education as intelligent reading is sadly wanting not only among the million, but also “among the majority of ‘educated’ persons in Great Britain, and I think I may say America; and especially among these of the ‘upper’ classes of both countries.” What seems to be its secret drift is the regret which Marie Corelli expresses at seeing how this incapacity of the reading world chills the ardour of “those men and women who feel the divine afflatus and would rise to higher realms of imagination and enchantment.” That this regret is a

personal one concerning her own case, we must infer from "a personal reminiscence," as she puts it, "of the wilful misrepresentation made to a certain section of the public of a novel of mine entitled 'Temporal Power.'"

Throughout the article, slang, abuse, and presumption are much in evidence. It opens with a sneer at the legislators of County Councils and Parliament; and it closes with the following flippant snub which will explain itself: "Dear Sir or Madam,—read! Don't skim! Learn your letters! Study pronunciation and meaning of words thoroughly first, and then you may proceed to sentences. Gradually you will be able to master a whole passage of prose or poetry in such a manner as actually to understand it. That will be a great thing! And once you understand it, you may even possibly remember it! And then,—no matter how much you may have previously been educated,—your education will only have just begun," (p. 13). Now, this quotation calls for comment of a special kind. We ourselves have, in reviewing the preceding sixteen works of Marie Corelli, refrained from censuring the many instances which we noticed of ungrammatical language, inaccurate speech, and slipshod style. For we hold it a leading canon of criticism to point out first the excellences of a work, and then to disclose the blemishes that seriously mar the former. But in this case we must depart from our rule. Here Marie Corelli poses as the instructress of high and low in the elements of a child's course of reading. This self-imposed task of universal school-mistress would by all laws of propriety and modesty require that she herself understood the elements of a child's course of learning before she undertook to teach them. But that she overrated her qualification for such task, the following class-room animadversions will

show. In the passage under review she enumerates several tasks for ladies and gentlemen to perform. Of these she numbers the second as the "first." The phrase "thoroughly first" is a puzzling combination, and is also misplaced in the sentence. The expression "*Gradually you will be*" involves an impossibility. For the notion of being excludes gradation: everything either exists entirely, or not at all. But the gradations between one and the other are expressed in English by the word *become*; and therefore Marie Corelli should have written: *Gradually you will become*. In the sentence: "And once you understand it," the pronoun *it* can by rule of grammar and approved usage refer only to some antecedent in the preceding sentence, preferably to the subject. But here this elementary rule of a child's course of education is not observed, and so the reader must travel back two sentences to spell out the reference. Then she says: "You may even possibly remember it." Here she should have omitted the word *possibly*; it is entirely redundant, because the idea of possibility is expressed in *may*. In the sentence, "no matter how much you may have previously been educated," correct writers would place *previously* after the first auxiliary *may*. Some of these faults may in themselves appear trifling ones, but, being here committed by one in the very act of flouting "educated persons" for backwardness in the same matter, they savour of effrontery.

*The Responsibility of the Press*. Here Marie Corelli informs the world that "the Press is a greater educational force than the Pulpit;" and to make it come up to her expectations she overwhelms it with some sapient advice, more abuse, and still more twaddle.

*Imaginary Love* contains some sensible thoughts about the love of the ideal, as the inspiring force of the artist.

*The "strong" book of the Ishbosheth* is a denunciation

of impure literature, and takes Zola to task in particular.

*The Vanishing Gift.* This paper of twenty pages treats of the nature of imagination as the creative power of genius, and then of the fact and causes of its decay. On the whole, a thoughtful and brilliant essay; but it is a thousand pities that even this, perhaps the finest one, is not free from the irrepressible spirit of protest and aggression.

*The Power of the Pen*, i. e. of literature. Some fine thoughts, but over-strained. Her repeated references to herself would be more pleasing if they were less frequent and less depreciative. She again indulges in sallies against "cultured society," and says literally: "responsible editors will accept and publish magazine articles by women of title and fashion, who prove themselves as ignorant of grammar as they are of spelling." On the other hand, she vindicates the crowd. "In my opinion," she says, "nothing is too good for the public. They deserve the very best they can get." It would appear that she is bidding for popular favour as the authoress of the democracy.

*The Happy Life*, viz., of a man of letters. Its joys and its drawbacks. Concerning the first, we quote only two characteristic passages: "Chiefest among the joys of the life literary are its splendid independence, its rights of free opinion, and its ability to express that opinion." "The author who is careful to hold and to maintain all the real privileges and rights of authorship is a ruler of millions, and under subjection to none."

*On the Making of Little Poets.* In this production the authoress makes it her task to pronounce, with strained humour and much verbiage, the doom of "the motley crowd of little poets" of a hundred years ago. She pointedly says of them: "it is seriously open to question, whether their loss would not be an advantage to



society in the abating of a certain measure of boredom." Only Byron, Shelley, and Keats find mercy at her judgment seat, because of "their God-given genius, their inspired lips, their divine things, priceless and imperishable." But she makes some kind of amends for ranking Byron among "the three greatest geniuses of the era." For the fluency of her pen hurries her into the happy contradiction of denouncing in the little poets just those faults which were most characteristic of her idol, Byron, viz., coarse metaphor, versed pessimism, "pruriency and lewdness."

#### RELIGIOUS TOPICS.

*The Glory of Work.* Contents: 1st the divine necessity of work; 2nd no degradation in any work suitable to one's calling. Drift: The working people are the people indeed—the people whose word, if they will only utter it, must inevitably become law.

*The Soul of the Nation*, a garble of vagaries, fallacies, and contradictions, made worse confounded by her workmanship, which in several instances jumbles four to five pages into a single paragraph.

*Society and Sunday.* The causes of the neglect of Sunday, not by the people, but by the upper classes, are: "gambling, guzzling, motoring, and incapable clergymen."

*Un-Christian Clerics.* It is enough for Catholics to know that, in this repulsive paper, Marie Corelli insults the memory of the late venerated Cardinal Vaughan for inhibiting the burial of Sir George Mivart.

*The Social Blight.* The authoress thinks she has solved the entire social question by attributing the decadence of the human race to irreligion. Heresy and schism, as the natural and historical stepping stones to irreligion, never enter into her calculation.

*Thanksgiving of the M. P.'s Wife.* This is worse than a failure. It is supposed to be humour, but to readers with a genuine sense of religion it is a protracted piece of vulgarity and irreverence. The whole scrap of six pages is made up of the travestied prayer of an M. P.'s wife addressed to "the Blessed Deity of surplus cash and social advancement."

*The Prayer of the small Country M. P.* This is a specimen of profane humour similar to the preceding.

*Pagan London.* Written in protest against the verdict passed in these two words on the religious state of London by Archdeacon Sinclair. She retorts the charge of paganism upon the clergy. "If London," she says, "is indeed a pagan city, as Archdeacon Sinclair has solemnly declared from under the shadowy luminance of his own big 'fairy lamp,' St. Paul's Cathedral, then the clergy, and the clergy alone, are responsible. On their 'ordained' heads be it! For pagan people are merely the natural outcome of a pagan priesthood."

"*A Question of Faith* (propounded to all whom it may concern)." This lengthy paper may be said to contain Marie Corelli's profession of faith and her code of morality. She discards all religious denominations, yet calls herself a Christian, and that with great emphasis. Whatever she may believe in her heart, a study of the present volume of essays, together with all her novels, goes to show that, as for externals, her Christianity is below the level of even the Salvationist; for these practise at least church-going, while she in her system does not.

With regard to morality, she teaches, and will brook no contradiction in the matter, that Christian faith is characterised by the spirit of poverty, humility and love. Now, her ideal of poverty and humility, especially as concerns the clergy, harks back to Lollardism, a social-religious revolutionary movement which proved

a fiasco in the fourteenth century, and which for its musty old age appears all the more farcical in its modern Corellian cast. What she says of the spirit of love defeats its own end. She enforces her precept by a tirade against the Catholic Church which, while it is exceptionally virulent in general and personally aggressive against the late Cardinal Vaughan, of venerable memory, and the Duke of Norfolk in particular, is, like so many of her writings, self-contradictory in certain points, and born of gross ignorance of things Catholic.

By whatever name the authoress calls her religious persuasion, her works show her to be an out-and-out Protestant, a relentless leveller as to traditional doctrine and ritual, so self-centred in her destructive criticism that she seems unable to rise even to the bare notion of the corporate character of the Church as the visibly organised body of the faithful.

The apologetical character of many of these papers shows plainly enough that they were intended as a vindication of Marie Corelli's fictions. However this may be, the general impression which we derive from the essays is a very unfavourable one. There are certainly a number of happy thoughts, original turns of expression, and even an occasional brilliant page, scattered up and down the book ; for in what volume written on such weighty and inspiring subjects are there not ? But these few bright spots are practically lost to sight, scattered as they are among many large and ugly blotches. The chief of these blotches is the extraordinary want of womanliness in the tone of the entire book. The task of addressing the English-speaking public on so many grave subjects as religion, literature, sociology, with their allied topics, is in itself so formidable that many men of world-wide experience and eminent intellectual capacity would not have the

assurance to undertake it. It is therefore doubly surprising that a woman—*rushing in* “where angels fear to tread”—should grapple wholesale with questions for the treatment of which she shows herself lamentably deficient in qualifications. For in very many cases the spirit with which she approaches the most momentous questions is not that of wholesome doubt and cautious inquiry, but that of bland assertiveness; and her apparatus of scientific proof is not reason and argument, but fancy and verbiage. And what is still more unwomanly is that, though she takes her stand on such flimsy unscientific ground, she not only treats with whimsical contempt and vulgar rant persons held in the highest esteem by millions of her fellow-men, but also subjects to the haughty tribunal of her own individual likes and dislikes, as their last court of appeal, sacred traditions and institutions that are, and have been for ages, objects of the deepest religious veneration to the greater part of Christendom. Such excess of boldness and self-assurance, such conceit and effrontery, would be unworthy of a strong man; in a woman it reaches that climax of unnaturalness, that perversion of feminine nature, which has forced more than one conscientious critic to stigmatise Marie Corelli, generally, as a woman-writer unsexed.

#### XVIII. TREASURE OF HEAVEN.

*The Treasure of Heaven*, being “a Romance of Riches,” was published in 1906. At the present day, when thousands upon thousands of novels are in circulation, any Catholic reader who knows the duties of his faith, will be guided in the choice of his reading not only by what good there is in a book, but also by what evil there is in it. If subjected to this test, *Treasure of Heaven* will be found a mischievous book. There is no doubt that the fiction contains some fine things; for what book

does not? But when among these, the reader finds in the very first quarter of the volume that venomous spirit of hostility against all organized, authoritative religion with which her other works are ingrained, his religious sense will make him spurn whatever tinsel of style or sentiment may help to sugar the poisoned pill of bigotry.

There is this peculiar feature about the bigotry of *Treasure of Heaven*, that it is dragged into the plot by head and shoulders. The whole character of the Ritualistic parson, the Rev. Arbroath could be cut out of the fiction and yet no one would miss anything. But, as it is, his presence is frequently thrust upon the attention of the reader, and that in a light which is as untrue and unpsychological as it is odious and even criminal. As in so many of her works, when treating of the clergy, whether Catholic or Protestant, with views and consciences of their own, she seems also in the present volume to forget all decorum, and allows herself and her approved characters the vulgar liberty of applying to Arbroath expressions like the following:—bullet-head—churlish priest—rat-brown eyes—walrus—pig-eyes—paunchy Arbroath—as different from our good old parson as a rat is from a bird—with the feline assistance of Mrs. Arbroath. On meeting with such ugly bursts of temper, of which there are very many in the text, one can hardly realise that a person of culture, nay, a woman, can write thus; and to gain assurance one turns to the frontispiece which is graced with a photogravure of the authoress. Quoth Hamlet—with an apology to Shakespeare for one word of adaptation:

“Look here, upon this picture, and on this;

The counterfeit presentment of two *sisters*.”

Now, turning from her pictorial presentment to her literary one, we would emphasise the fact that it is a



cheap and disingenuous kind of polemic to make a foul caricature of an exceptional individual and then treat it so as to leave on the minds of the uninstructed the slanderous impression that that individual is a fair representative of a whole class.

But she has not yet done with Arbroath. In her hands he must make himself so ridiculous and odious that the very scum of the people think it their duty to flout him. Finally she gets him into the newspapers for scandalous conduct with a girl, and, to seal his doom, has him received into the Catholic Church "with all his sins forgiven." This last stroke of misfortune, the worst that could have befallen him, he richly deserved. For as Ritualist he had been assisting to introduce the Romish "secret service" into Great Britain "and had, with a shameless disregard of true patriotism, been using his limited influence to put our beloved free country under the tyranny of the Vatican."

We may now consider the plot as it appears without that sting of religious animosity which we have endeavoured to analyse above. A certain multi-millionaire, David Helmsley, an unbeliever at the time, has reached the age of seventy after an unhappy married life. His wife had proved unfaithful to him, and his only two sons had grown up to be profligates ; and all three were now dead. Having no other relatives alive, the old man casts about for some heir to his immense property, but he is determined to confer the favour only upon some person who satisfies his ideal of true unselfish love.

The first competitor to enter the field is a very young lady, who with an heroic disregard of his forty-five years' seniority sets her cap at him. But with all his experience of life, it is not difficult for him to see through her motives ; and he frankly tells her that she

loved, not him, but herself and his money. Being equally disgusted with the many other society ladies in his environment, he resolves to seek for his ideal on the highways and byways of life.

Accordingly, after giving instructions to his business agents and solicitors in view of a year's absence, he sets out secretly from London. Having reached Somersetshire unobserved, he adopts a suitable disguise and takes to the road as a tramp. Within a week he comes to grief. In a lonely stretch of country he is overtaken by a violent rain-storm which makes him sink benumbed and senseless upon the road-side. When he recovers consciousness he finds himself in a cozy cottage room at Weircoombe, being nursed by a kind-hearted woman. This charitable person had discovered him in his distress and brought him to her home, where she was living alone as an old-maid and earning a scanty livelihood by millinery work. The nursing went on for months, and during this period the aged patient gradually came to the conviction that he had found his ideal of love, "the treasure of heaven," in this poor woman, who lavished so much unselfish devotion upon a supposed tramp.

During his convalescence he happened to pick up a struggling journalist and author, whom he soon came to esteem for his sterling character. He was instrumental in bringing about an acquaintance, and presently also a promise of marriage, between this Mr. Reay and his ideal nurse, Mary. By this time he felt that his own days were running out; and having secretly fixed upon Mary as his heir, he entrusted to her the original copy of his last will and testament, with the strict injunction to present it immediately after his death to certain solicitors in London. That same night he succumbed to an attack of heart-disease. Going to London, she hears of the true character of her bene-

factor, but is horrified at being told that she is now one of the richest persons in the world. She immediately employs the solicitors to draw up her own testament in which she unconditionally makes her entire fortune over to her intended husband, Mr. Reay. With this she returns home to him, but the news of her sudden fortune so shocks him that he instantly breaks off the engagement. Hereupon she too, with equally unreasonable haste, takes steps which seem wholly incompatible with her character. She writes a letter addressed to Reay, informing him that she had already in London declared him her sole heir of Helmsley's millions. This she leaves on the table, and then rushes out to the sea-side. She is just on the point of throwing herself into the waves when Reay comes upon the scene, snatches her from certain death, and with a few words effects a lasting reconciliation.

In point of style, the novel presents several new features of a favourable kind. It is the first in which there is a display of humour deserving the name. Were it not for this one production, it could be safely said that Marie Corelli is wholly innocent of humour. She also introduces a number of country-people, such as farmers, market-women, the shrewd peddler Peke, and gypsies, all of the back-country in Somerset. And she adds much to the vividness of their portraiture by making them speak the broad dialect of those parts as the vehicle of their refreshing unsophisticated views. But it is unfortunate that their talk is much too much about religious feuds: a great deal of it loses its artistic relish and merit by lapsing into stinging satire, coarse invective, and even narrow-minded bigotry.

---

## XIX. XX. CAMEOS, DELICIA, ETC.

*Cameos*, 1896 ; *Delicia and other Short Stories*, 1907. In an Introductory Note to *Cameos*, the authoress first indulges in a fling at those whom she calls "my enemies" in general, and then inflicts upon her readers a long account of a petty quarrel of hers with the Pall Mall Budget—which quarrel, as she declares with needless emphasis, "I warmly commend to the shrewd consideration and comprehension of the public."

Of the stories themselves she remarks that "their merits are slight, their defects are numerous." In this opinion we fully concur. They contain a quantity of grain amid as much or more unmistakable chaff. Thus *The Silence of the Maharajah* is a piece of protracted sentimentality on the part of the Maharajah, culminating in his suicide. In *The Hired Baby*, likewise, the suicide lacks sufficient motive : Liz in her despair is not made to use all her chances of rescue. The story, *An Old Bundle*, is forced and artificial, and the higher the pretended pathos is wrought, the colder it leaves the reader.

But apart from these glaring failures in her art of story-telling, what chills and even repels is the tone and the tendency of the fictions. We mean her everlasting moralising, teaching and preaching, intermeddling and fault-finding, and her flippant contempt of any class of people who do not satisfy her expectations. Of the twenty stories before us there are only four that do not deal with some picture of human misery, vice, or crime. Instead of finding what might soothe, cheer, or elevate his mind, the reader is constantly taken aback by the unabashed licence with which Marie Corelli carps at and denounces any person or institution in State or Church that comes in her way.

In *Hoskins, Artist*, she pillories the entire body of contemporary American painters at Rome as an incapable and fraudulent set. In *Angel's Wickedness* she ventilates her unreasoning dislike to the clergy. In *Kittums*, "titled noodles" and wealthy Jews come in for their share of spiteful scorn and ridicule. In *The Distant Voice*, the despairing Denver spurns the service of his parson, but sees himself miraculously cured in body and reclaimed in soul by a nondescript Russian artist, who for all that concerns spirituality is neither fish nor flesh nor good red herring.

One instance more, showing her manner of making a daub of beautiful Catholic truths. Her story of *The Despised Angel* is based upon the Catholic belief in guardian angels. But her allegorical rendering of it ends in a doctrinal absurdity. The guardian angel has been disobeyed and rejected by her mortal charge, and the latter is therefore cast out by God for ever. His irrevocable doom is emphasized in these words: "And Justice cannot change itself for all the pleadings of the saints and seraphim." And still, only eight lines below, we read the concluding sentence of the scene and story: "Nevertheless the despised Angel waits!" An angel expecting God to reverse a final decree! Marie Corelli's fancy must have mistaken this angel for Dicken's Micawber transplanted to heaven, and even there "waiting for something to turn up."

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

As the principal result of the preceding detailed inquiry into the works of Marie Corelli, we give the following summary estimate of their respective value. Fourteen out of eighteen are seriously misleading or even pernicious in their moral and religious respects. They are: *Romance of Two Worlds*, *Thelma*, *Ardath*,



*Lilith, Wormwood, Barabbas, Sorrows of Satan, The Murder of Delicia, Ziska, The Master Christian, Temporal Power, God's Good Man, Free Opinions, The Treasure of Heaven.* The remaining four are good and harmless on the whole, but with incidental faults mostly of a literary kind. Thus *Jane* is a mere skit upon the second of Corelli's great fads, the smart set. *Boy*, being no more than a sketch, lacks the art and interest of a fully developed novel. *The Mighty Atom*, though good in its proposed tendency, fails to realise that tendency inasmuch as it brings about Boy's ruin more by unnatural school drudgery than the influences of unbelief. *I endetta* is marred by the impossible character of such a woman as Nina and by the unsatisfactory catastrophe of Romani spending the remainder of his days in a state of stony un-Christian despair. The two latest works, Nos. 19 and 20, can be described as merely worthless.

Her literary art, which is frequently sacrificed to polemical tendency, is very unequal, faulty and defective, at times even lapsing into the inaesthetic and repulsive. Ideal aspects of life are coupled in her works with others that can only nauseate and injure the reader's mind. The soul-struggles of her heroes are in some cases depicted true to nature; in others they are given in sketchy outline, or in fulsome caricature, or are brought to a premature close by some kind of deus-ex-machina. The sentiments of her approved characters range from what is truly noble down to rant, vulgarity, and very billingsgate. But this stricture has no reference to purity of morals. On the contrary, we must in justice to Marie Corelli observe with emphasis that all her fictions come from a mind that has a high regard for morality in this respect. Far from meeting with any indecency, we are not seldom warned by her against impure literature, while she

positively inculcates the virtue by noble examples of it in her novels.

A few words remain to be said about the externals of her style, i. e., the expression as distinguished from thought and sentiment. As truly as there are many gems of rare poetic thought in her various volumes, so truly are there also many passages of exquisite external finish. There are, for instance, masterful descriptions and narratives of scenes and actions ; strong and original comparisons, and striking contrasts ; and many well-contrived plots. Against these excellences must be set many of those faults and deficiencies that characterise hasty work. Such are the numerous instances of grammatical errors, one thickset crop of which the reader will find discussed in the article on *Free Opinions*. Moreover, she does not seem to know that since the days of Lord Macaulay, the great master of sentence and paragraph structure, the long-winded unperiodic jumble of sentences has been stigmatised more than ever before as bad writing ; and that the neglect to arrange the sentences of each paragraph in a clear and logical order is also a mark of incompetence in writing. In short, so general is this slipshod handling of sentence and paragraph that, together with her other predominant faults in thought and expression, it makes large passages in numbers of her books appear, by the side of dozens of contemporary authors, in no better light than so much trash.

As the art, so does also the genius, or literary character of Marie Corelli rest upon very unequal and defective powers of mind. Her great forte is an exceptionally vivid and fertile imagination. But, as this is not duly balanced by other mental endowments, it becomes an irrepressible force and plunges her into the realms of the unreal, monstrous, mawkish, and untrue.

Another feature of her genius is shallowness. The one great ideal which the authoress is enforcing, in and out of season, upon the whole world, is her phantom Christ. Now, it constitutes a phenomenal fact in literature that the seventeen works which she wrote in support of her position are absolutely bare of history, classical scholarship and archæology ; and that her dabbings in theology, philosophy, and other sciences very frequently betray her ignorance and prejudice.

The third feature is her bigoted intolerance. The mind of the real poet or artist, is, as the phrase goes, aglow with *furor poeticus*, poetical fire ; Marie Corelli's powers are ablaze with *furor polemicus*, the rage for polemics,—a rage which spreads its unpoetic lurid glare over all her works. So that, with her ill-proportional literary endowments, and her shallowness and aggressiveness, it would be hard to name another female writer who is her like in unwomanliness.

Let this, then, be our last word. Marie Corelli's works on the whole can only do harm. They do so intellectually, because they cannot give the mind what they themselves do not possess, that is, truth and sound thought ; morally, on account of the venomous, vulgar and disingenuous tone of aggression prevailing in them ; religiously, because they are instinct with fierce, unscrupulous, and insidious hatred against every Christian denomination and especially against the Catholic Church. By reading them the Catholic would be desecrating his mind in the contemplation of their countless heresies, blasphemies and vile misrepresentations directed against his Church. He would be exposing his faith to danger. He would be giving moral and pecuniary support to their authoress, a declared enemy and scoffer of Christianity. And even if he confined himself to the reading of the four more or less harmless of her books, he would thereby be affording her the

grim satisfaction of understanding that by these innocent-looking baits she succeeded in luring unwary Catholics on to read those others of her voluminous series in which she maligns their Church and denounces the noblest of their co-religionists among the living and the dead.

[ FINIS. ]







BOSTON COLLEGE



3 9031 01330909 1

12155

Boswin

PR4505

.B74

Boston College

The Library

Chestnut Hill 67, Mass.

Books may be kept for two weeks unless a shorter time is specified.

Two cents a day is charged for each 2-week book kept overtime; 25 cents a day for each overnight book.

If you cannot find what you want, inquire at the delivery desk for assistance.



