

Keely's Secrets: Introduction

by R. Harte

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[The following introduction to Mrs Bloomfield Moore's very valuable essay on Mr Keely's discoveries has been thought likely to interest the members of the T.P.S.] [Page 3]

INTRODUCTION

A short time ago the mining world in America was seized with an inexplicable excitement. The values of gold mines in particular suddenly rose. Mines long since abandoned on account of the expense of working, awoke, and rubbing their eyes made their way again into the stock list. Presently it leaked out that a syndicate of the longest-headed and wealthiest mining capitalists were quietly buying up all the cheap and apparently worthless gold mines they could hear of, and people at once concluded that "something was up". Then everyone of a speculative turn, very knowingly began to buy worthless gold mining shares at ever-increasing prices, and when the little speculators had gorged themselves to the full extent of their financial capacity, they asked: "What next?" No one knew exactly what he was after; and everyone looked to the Syndicate for the next move; but the Syndicate smilingly put its hands in its pockets and whistled! After the fever came prostration. The small fry had not, like the Syndicate, bought to hold, so they got first uneasy, then alarmed, and finally panic-stricken. The tide of credulity turned and began to run out even more quickly than it had set in, and thousands of the unlucky, but greedy little gudgeon of the Stock Exchange were left stranded in a short time by the receding tide of speculation, kicking and gasping in the mortal agonies of financial asphyxia. The panic is easily accounted for by the general laws that govern the movements of the Stock Exchange; but not so the action of the syndicate. The problem remains: Why did the long-headed millionaires buy up worthless mines? That is the point of interest, and the explanation thereof is as follows: —

A few weeks before the panic occurred, twelve "solid men" — millionaires — met by appointment in a certain laboratory in Philadelphia to witness an exhibition of the disintegration of quartz by a new method. They were mining magnates, who had a tremendous interest in getting the gold out of quartz rock quickly and cheaply. The inventor obliged them by simply touching some blocks of quartz with a little machine he held in his hand; and as he touched each block it instantly crumbled into atomic dust, in which the specks of gold it had contained stood out like boulders in a bed of sand. Then the twelve solid men solidly said: "Mr. Keely, if you will in the same manner disintegrate some quartz for us in its natural place, we will each of us give you a cheque for — dollars". So off they all went to the Katskill mountains, and there the twelve solid men pointed out a reef of quartz on the side of a mountain, as solid as themselves; and Mr. Keely took out his little machine and said: "Gentlemen, please take the time". In eighteen minutes there was a

tunnel in that quartz mountain eighteen feet long and four and a half feet in diameter. Then Mr. Keely quietly returned to Philadelphia with his cheques in his pocket, and the twelve solid men went from New York to San Francisco to gather in the seemingly "worthless stock " of mines long disused because of the working expense, thus producing the disastrous effect upon the mining world, which we have just seen. [All these men bound themselves to secrecy; and this is the first time that this incident has been made public.]

How was the quartz disintegrated ? —That is one of Keely's secrets.[Page 4]

The disintegration of rock is, however, a very small and accidental effect of that tremendous force that lies behind the "secret." Indeed, that particular application of the force was a chance discovery. One day the inventor was studying the action of currents of ether playing over a floor upon which he had scattered fine sand, — the ether was rolling the sand into ropes, — when a block of granite, which was used for fastening back a door, disintegrated under his eyes. He took the hint, and in a few days he had made a "vibratory disintegrator".

Who is this man, and what is this force ? to whom, or to which, boring a tunnel into the mountain side is mere child's play ? Surely, were such things true, science would long ago have filled the world with the renown of such a man — the man who has discovered a force in nature compared to which all known motor or mechanical forces are like the scratch of a nail, or the breath of a child. Surely the press, the platform, and even the pulpit would have resounded with the glad tidings of so great a victory over the stubborn powers of nature, a victory which goes so far towards making man "the master of things" in this material plane!

Those who argue like that know but little of modern science and its votaries. An Anglican bishop never ignored a dissenting preacher with more dignified grace than the professor of orthodox science ignores the heterodox genius who has the audacity to wander beyond the limitations which "received opinion" has placed upon the possibilities of nature. The fact is that men of science have persistently ignored, and know absolutely nothing about, the great department of nature into which Keely penetrated years ago, and in which he has now made himself at home. Not long ago a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Major Ricarde-Seaver, went to Philadelphia to convince himself as to the nature of Keely's discovery. He returned, saying that Keely was working with, and had the apparent command over forces, the nature, or even the very existence, of which was absolutely unknown to him, and so far as he is aware, to modern science.

Beyond disintegration lies dispersion, and Keely can just as easily dissolve the atoms of matter as disintegrate its molecules. Dissolve them into what ? Well, — into ether, apparently; into the hypothetical substratum which modern scientists have postulated, and about whose nature they know absolutely nothing but what they invent themselves, but which to Keely is not a hypothesis, but a fact as real as his own shoes; and which ether, indeed, seems to be "the protoplasm of all things". As to the "law of gravity", it appears very like a delusion, in the light of Keely's experiments, or, at least, but one manifestation of a law of very much wider application — a law which provides for the reversion of the process of attraction in the shape of a process of repulsion. One of Keely's little scientific experiments is to put a small wire round an iron cylinder that weighs several hundred weight, and when the "force" runs through the wire, to lift the cylinder up on one finger and carry it as easily as if it were a piece of cork. Not long ago he

moved, single-handed, a 500 horse-power vibratory engine from one part of his shop to another. There was not a scratch on the floor, and astounded engineers declared that they could not have moved it without a derrick, to bring which its operation would have required the removal of the roof of the shop. Of course it is but a step in advance of this to construct a machine which, when polarized with a "negative attraction", will rise from the earth and move under the influence of an etheric current at the rate of 500 miles an hour, in any given direction". "This is, in fact, Keely's "air ship".

Lately, he has applied his force to optics, and by means of three wires placed across the lens of a microscope he makes its magnifying power equal to that of the great telescope in the Lick observatory — the largest in the world. Why don't all our astronomers and opticians run to look through Keely's microscope, and to examine into the process ? Perhaps if Galileo were alive he might express an opinion! [Page 5]

"But", the reader may naturally exclaim, "how long has this been going on, and we to know nothing about it ? Mr. Keely is now over 60 years of age, and he has worked since he was a boy, at times, upon various inventions before his discovery of ether. For the last 18 years he has been constantly employed with experiments upon the ether; for eighteen long years he has worked day and night, with hand and brain, in face of discouragements that would long ago have killed the owner of a less heroic soul; and he has worked almost single handed. Slander, ridicule, open accusations of fraud, charlatanery, insanity — everything evil that it could enter the head of the knave or the heart of the fool to conceive, every mean insinuation, every malicious lie that prejudice, bigotry, ignorance, self-conceit, vested interests, greed, injustice, dishonesty, and hypocrisy could concoct — these have been the encouragement which, so far, the world has bestowed upon the discoverer of the profoundest truths and laws of nature that have ever been imparted to the profane, or even hinted at, outside of the circle of Initiates. And now that it has been proved in a hundred ways, and before thousands of persons competent to judge of the merits of his machines, that he *has* really discovered previously "unknown" forces in nature, studied them, mastered some of their laws, invented, and almost perfected, apparatus and machinery that will make his discoveries of practical application in a hundred ways — now that he has actually done all this, how does the world treat him ? Does Congress come forward with a grant to enable him to complete his marvellous work ? Do men of science hail him as a great discoverer, or hold out the hand of fellowship ? Do the people do honour to the man whose sole entreaty to them is to receive at his hands a gift a thousand times more precious to them than steam engine or telegraph ? It is a literal fact that the world today would tear Keely to pieces, if it had the power to do so, and if he fell exhausted in the terrible struggle he has so long maintained, his failure to establish his claims would be received with a shout of malignant delight from nearly every lecture hall, pulpit, counting-house, and newspaper office in the so-called civilized world! The world has hardly ever recognised its benefactors, until it has become time to raise a statue to their memory, in order to beautify the town". Jealousy, stupidity, the malignity which is born of conscious inferiority, are at this moment putting in Keely's road every impediment which law and injustice can manufacture. Two hundred years ago he would have been burned, a century since he would have been probably mobbed to death, but thank God we are too civilized, too humane now to burn or mob to death those who make great discoveries, who wish to benefit their fellow men, or whose ideas are in advance of their age — we only break their hearts with slander, ridicule, and neglect, and when that fails to drive them to suicide, we bring to bear upon them the ponderous pressure of the law, and heap upon them the "*peine forte et dure*" of injunctions, and orders, and suits, to crush them out of a world they have had the impertinence to try to improve and the folly to imagine they could save from suffering without paying in their own persons the inevitable penalty of crucifixion. "Had it not been for the obligations incurred by Mr. Keely", writes Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, of Jan 20th of this year,

" in accepting the aid of the Keely Motor Company — in other words, had scientists, instead of speculators, furnished him with the means necessary to carry on his ' work of Evolution,' the secrets which he has so carefully guarded would now have been public property, so little does he care personally for financial results. As it is, those who have witnessed his beautiful experiments in acoustics and sympathetic vibration were often too ignorant to comprehend their meaning, and consequently, even after expressing gratification to him, went away from his workshop to denounce him as a Cagliostro, while others, competent to judge, have refused to witness the production of the ether, as Sir William Thomson and Lord Raleigh refused when they were in America a few years since". The company here mentioned has been a thorn in the inventor's side ever since it [Page 6] was organized. It has been "bulled and beared" by greedy speculators, in whose varying interests the American newspapers for years have been worked, the results of which the inventor has had to bear. For many years the Company has contributed nothing towards Mr. Keely's expenses or support, and in the opinion of many lawyers it is virtually dead. How far it is entitled to his gratitude may be gathered from the fact, as stated in Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore's article above quoted, that "when Mr. Keely abandoned his old generator of etheric force, baffled in his attempts to wrest from nature one of her most carefully guarded secrets, harassed by his connection with the Keely Motor Company, some of the officers and stockholders of which had instituted law proceedings against him, which threatened him with the indignity of imprisonment, he destroyed many of his marvellous models, and determined that, if taken to prison, it should be his dead body and not himself".

When the history of his discoveries and inventions come to be written there will be no more pathetic story in the annals of genius than that of John Worrell Keely. The world hereafter will find it hard to believe that in the last quarter of the 19th century a man with an insight into the secret workings of nature, and a knowledge of her subtler forces, which, whenever it is utilized, will relieve mankind from much of the grinding toil that now makes bitter the existence of the vast majority of mortals, that such a man should have been left to starve, because in all the ranks of Science there was not found one man capable of understanding his colossal work — because in all the ranks of religion there was not found one man able to realize the enlarged conception of Deity immanent in Keely's great thoughts — because in all the ranks of commerce, of speculation, of literature, of art, there was not found one man large enough, generous enough, unselfish enough, to furnish money for a purpose that did not promise an immediate dividend.

It is to a woman, not to a man, that the eternal honour is due of having come to Keely's rescue, and saved humanity from once more disgracing itself by doing genius to death with broken-hearted want and neglect. That woman's name will go down the centuries inseparably connected with Keely's discoveries. Probably no more romantic incident ever happened in the history of invention than the connection between this wealthy and large-minded woman and this slandered and persecuted genius, and no stranger one than the way in which she was led, by a series of most unfortuitous events, to offer her aid. From that day this lady has been not only his benefactor, but also his co-worker, trusted friend, and courageous defender. With the exception of this friend, those who have occupied themselves with Keely's discoveries have confined their attention to its commercial value. This was to be expected, for Science now is the hand-maid of trade, and Religion has become the fawning follower of Science. There is, however, a higher aspect to Keely's discoveries, and that is their value as contributions to man's knowledge of Nature and natural laws. So far as that is concerned, Keely's "success" is an accomplished fact. His work, explaining his whole system, is now in the Press, and were he to die tomorrow he will be just as great a figure in the world's history as he would be were a thousand speculators to "clear" ten million dollars apiece by his inventions. Fancy honouring Copernicus or Galileo because the yelping jackals of speculation, who were their contemporaries, grew fat by feeding on their brains !

Whether Keely's inventions will be a commercial success at *present* is another matter. The force, or, rather forces, which Keely handles, are the same as those known under other names in Occultism, and it is the belief of Occultists that these forces cannot be introduced into the practical life of men, or fully understood by the uninitiated, until the world is fit to receive them with benefit to itself — until the balance of the good and the evil they would work is decidedly on the side of the good. Keely himself is persuaded that the world will derive almost unmixed benefit from his discoveries; but an Occultist [Page 7] would prefer to say that inventions and discoveries are disclosed to man, rather than to credit genius with the independent elaboration of ideas — disclosed, that is to say, through the brain of the ostensible inventor by one of the higher powers that guide the destinies of humanity. The discoveries of Keely have an occult side, which perhaps he himself may not fully perceive, but it is upon that side that it depends whether those discoveries themselves are fitted, by reason of "sympathetic vibration" of a still more inner ether than Keely has *publicly* spoken of, to harmonize with the "mass chord" of our present civilization, and manifest in the material life of man. Occultists believe that there are intelligent powers behind the visible things and events of life, which powers alone can say "So far shalt thou go, and no farther"; but they do not believe that these powers act as a *deus ex machina*, for in themselves they are part of the natural order of things, and act in and through material and immaterial nature. We at present in our normal state of consciousness know these powers only as forces and "laws", and when we become conscious of them as intelligent entities, we perceive at the same time that they themselves are governed by higher wills and intelligences, which act through them, as they act through us, and are to them their "forces" and their "laws". [Franck, in *Die Kabbala* says "We learn, by the last three Sephiroth that the Universal Providence, that the Supreme Artist, is also Absolute Force, the all-powerful Cause; and that, at the same time, this cause is the *generative element of all that is*. It is these last Sephiroth that constitute the natural world, or nature in its essence and in its *Active* principle. *Natura naturans*." This passage is quoted in *Isis Unveiled* (Vol 1, p 40), the authoress adding: "This Kabalistic conception is thus proved identical with that of the Hindu philosophy. Whoever reads Plato and his *Dialogue* Timaeus, will find these ideas as faithfully re-echoed by the great philosopher". They are all in fact, echoes of the archaic "Secret Doctrine" of the Occultists; and it is somewhat singular (*pour le dire en passant*) that the newspaper so persistently refers to Theosophy as a new, or "newfangled" religion or philosophy, whereas the ideas now called "theosophical" are the oldest in the world, and may be found, more or less disguised or mutilated, and under many different forms and names, in all the great philosophical and religious systems of antiquity. One is forced to conclude that the complaint, so often heard, that competition now compels young people to earn their bread while they ought still to be at school, applies with a good deal of force to a certain class of writers for the press,] Occultists see in everything the (to us) eternal action of two opposing powers or principles, which are ever seeking equilibrium, and never find it, for behind them there is a definite tendency towards that which we call "progress", which tendency gives the preponderance to one of these powers, and thus prevents the establishment of equilibrium, in other words of stagnation and death. Now all great discoveries are manifestations of one of these powers or forces only, and, however good in themselves, tend to disturb the equilibrium of terrestrial life more than is required for the normal rate of universal progress; and therefore they produce a disproportion of parts, and the opposite power or force gathers strength to resist and check the exaggeration. Already, in the estimation of an ever-growing number of thinking men, the inventions and discoveries of the present century have proved themselves a curse rather than a blessing. They have raised the world's standard of comfort, and at the same time they have lowered the power of purchasing these very comforts, a desire for which they have generated. The advantages that accrue from steam and from machinery have not been distributed, but have become the property of a small minority. Year by year competition is becoming fiercer, and labour more arduous and continual, and men are growing more and more like living machines, and the helpless slaves of machinery and of "institutions". An operative, in these days of steam power, has less liberty than a slave ever had, except in one particular — he has full liberty to starve, or to work himself to death, neither of which privileges an owner would allow him. Keely, however, thinks his discoveries will restore this

"disturbed equilibrium".

The direct effect of modern discoveries and inventions has been the rise of the commercial or economic system; and the inevitable consequence of that system has been to [Page 8] deepen the gulf between the poor and the rich. The natural effect of this is an antagonism between the two poles of society, which has its root deep down in human nature and human passions, and this antagonism is becoming better recognised, and growing in intensity, year by year, in so much that it is almost universally felt that the only possible outcome from it is a social overturning, the date of the actual occurrence of which will depend chiefly upon the activity of the school-boards, and the thoroughness of their work. Hardly a thinking man at the present day but foresees, sooner or later, a great social cataclysm, in which all mere political and financial considerations will be as straws in a whirlwind. Now, it would seem that Keely's discoveries tend to develop power over material nature in the same direction in which that power has been growing during the last hundred years. If it be a power into the exercise of which there enter no moral considerations whatever, then it is applicable alike for good purposes and for evil; and it will be as ready to the hand of the bad man as to that of the good. Were such inventions given to the world in their completeness, the whole of the enormous power they gave over human life and destinies would, it would seem, fall into the possession of the same small minority who at present control the power conferred by our present inventions and discoveries — the capitalists. If so, that section of the community would then, under our present institutions, obtain almost absolute power over the great majority — those who depend upon their labour for their support. The capitalists who owned the tremendous powers implied in a monopoly of Keely's inventions would be practically the absolute masters of the people; and obedience to their will would be far more really, than even now, the condition upon which those who were not capitalists also would be allowed the means of continued existence.

Occultists, as a rule, believe that the world is not yet ready for the appearance of such tremendous forces on the stage of human life. Mankind is too selfish, too cruel, too stupid, too pitiless, too animal, to be entrusted with what, in sober reality, are minor "divine powers". Such powers could not at present be employed for the benefit of mankind and for the advancement of the race; on the contrary, they would tend to the further brutalization and virtual enslavement of the poor, and also to the further materialization and moral degradation of the rich. In a word, the *human* qualities of justice, mercy, love, generosity, unselfishness, have not yet grown strong enough in the race, and the *animal* qualities of revenge, anger, jealousy, tyranny, hatred, selfishness, are still too powerful in man to make the acquisition of almost absolute power over nature, and *over one another*, anything but a curse to mankind. It would be less disastrous to give dynamite cartridges to monkeys for playthings.

For this reason Occultists, in general, do not regard Keely's discoveries as likely to "succeed" in the commercial sense. And at present things have certainly a look that is in accordance with that opinion. The powers that might be expected to intervene in order to prevent Keely's inventions from becoming factors in human life, act, as has been said, through human means, and the stolid stupidity of the scientists in regard to Keely's discoveries, the bovine indifference of theologians, the silly ridicule of the press, the hostility of vested interests, the suicidal greed of some of his largest shareholders, and the paralysing influence of the law, which apparently lends itself in this case to those whose object is simple robbery. All these things seem very like the operation of the higher controlling powers, acting with a consciousness other than our consciousness for the attainment of ends that transcend our narrow calculations.

Be this as it may, Keely's discoveries, and Keely's personality also, have a peculiar interest for Theosophists, for the force with which he is working is without doubt the ether of the ancient philosophers, which is one aspect of the Akâsa, the one underlying great force in nature, according to the Secret Doctrine, a force whose existence has been recognized from time immemorial under various fanciful names, and whose property is [Page 9] *sound*, whether audible or inaudible to us; or, in more modern language, whose characteristics are vibration and rhythm. It corresponds to the seven-fold Vach of Hindu Philosophy, and is the *raison d'être* of spells and Mantrams. It is the basis of harmony and melody throughout Nature. This force is alluded to many times in Madame Blavatsky's "Isis Unveiled". On page 139, vol. I., we read: "The Akâsa is a Sanscrit word which means *sky*, but it also designates the imponderable and intangible life principles, the astral and celestial lights combined together, and which two form the *anima mundi*, and constitute the soul and spirit of man; the celestial light forming his *nous*, *pneuma*, or divine spirit, and the other his *psyche*, soul, or astral spirit. The grosser particles of the latter enter into the fabrication of his outward form, the body". The Akâsa is connected on the one hand with physical matter and on the other with WILL, "that intelligent, intangible, and powerful something which reigns supreme over all inert matter". Of the Akâsa in this aspect we read on page 144, vol. I., of "Isis Unveiled": "The mysterious effects of attraction and repulsion are the *unconscious* agents of that will; fascination, such as we see exercised by some animals, by serpents over birds, for instance, is a *conscious* action of it, and the result of thought. Sealing-wax, glass, and amber, when rubbed, *i.e.*, when the latent heat which exists in every substance is awakened, attract light bodies; they exercise unconsciously *Will*; for inorganic as well as organic matter, however infinitesimally small it may be, possesses a particle of the divine essence in itself. . . . What is, then, this inexplicable power of attraction but an atomical portion of that essence that Scientists and Kabalists equally recognise as the 'principle of life' — the Akâsa? Granted that the attraction exercised by such bodies may be blind; but as we ascend higher the scale of organic beings in nature, we find this principle of life developing attributes and faculties which become more determined and marked with every rung of the endless ladder. Man, the most perfect of organized beings on earth, in whom matter and spirit — *i.e.*, *Will* — are the most developed and powerful, is alone allowed to give a conscious impulse to that principle which emanates from him and only he can impart to the magnetic fluid opposite and various impulses without limit as to the direction." *Isis Unveiled* was published nearly eleven years ago; and in her forthcoming work, *The Secret Doctrine*, the authoress enters more fully into this and other matters only sketched or hinted at in her former volumes.

It is the fact that Keely is working with some of the mysterious forces included under the name "Akâsa" that makes his discoveries interesting to Theosophists. It is the fact that he has shown magnificent courage and fixity of purpose under every kind of opposition, and the fact also that he has been supported all through by the generous belief that his discoveries will be of inestimable benefit to mankind that make his personality of interest. If he can succeed in making his marvellous discoveries *pay dividends*, science may begin to give attention to them; for men of science, like other men, require a "sign" before they can accept as truth the things that are beyond their comprehension, and the "value" of a scientific discovery is now determined by its market price.