CHAPTER III.

A Chronological Survey of Marie Corelli's Fiction.

"I, ... own myself to be but a mere romancist, whose ostensible business is to weave night and day, like the 'Lady of Shalott' - 'A magic web with colours gay', a web of thought - tapestry into scenes and episodes."

---My Little Bit. p.187.

We have already seen that Corelli was a writer from her girlhood days. She had written some stories, some poems and an opera, before the publication of her first 'Romance' in 1886. But when did she begin to think of and write her first book? How many years did she 'wrestle' with it in the 'back drawing-room' of her house? After her school career till her mother's death in 1876, she seems to have led a morbid and lonely life. Her 'effusions' show her unhappiness. Did she begin to think of her 'A Romance of Two Worlds' from the day of her return from the convent school, - the romance which 'was to be published some sixteen years later' as Eileen Bigland suggests? We cannot agree with the biographer; for "A Romance of Two Worlds" is the most valuable literary work of Marie Corelli. It propagates her 'New Creed of Christianity'. It discusses the 'black magic' of the day and underlines the true spiritual progress of man's soul towards God. All her
philosophical doctrines are introduced in a 'crude' way, in this work. Her future philosophical or religious novels explain and give a historical background to her 'New Creed' which is introduced in her first 'Romance'. The attainment of true spiritual knowledge is a process of inner travail and psychological stress. It demands from the individual, sincerity and faith. No body, to-day seems to believe in the 'divine birth' of Marie Corelli. She says herself: "I have been brought into contact with many peculiar phases of thought and feeling relating to occultism and clairvoyance." She was but the "humblest of students in these mystic matters." Again she says in the prologue to The Life Everlasting that the 'Romance' was her first effort; and in the same context, she alludes to some of her 'instructors' in occult knowledge. All these records clearly show that Corelli had read some books and articles on occult science. She must also have met some occultists. Her 'first attempt at fiction lay very close to her heart for she revised and altered it many times and did not show it even to her father until Mr. George Bentley's firm had published it." Her idea of 'physical and spiritual electricity' and her conception of the 'Central Circle' of the

2. ---Ibid--- p.xxv.
universe, set forth in her first 'Romance' were formed perhaps vaguely on the basis of stray articles by theosophists and definitely after the publication of Mme. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* in 1877. No body has, so far, made a comparative study of Corelli's 'New Creed of Christianity' and the contents of the theosophical book *Isis Unveiled*. She has, therefore, remained an 'enigma' all the while. The secrecy maintained regarding the sources of the 'New Creed' and her dogmatic statements about her 'originality' have made her novels and her philosophy, more complex and confusing. The 'sources' of her creed will be discussed in the next chapter.

Corelli struggled, more than eight years, probably with the help of some instructors, to understand the contents and main doctrines of *Isis Unveiled*. She borrowed from the book especially two main doctrines, - the immortality of the soul and the law of compensation or karma. She also traced them as inalienable doctrines in the life and philosophy of Jesus Christ as described in the *New Testament*. This went to make up her 'New Creed of Christianity.' Her creed was thus based on Christian and non-Christian sources. She spent several years on working up a synthesis of the two and to illustrate them through the medium of romance.

*A Romance of Two Worlds* was published by 'R. Bentley Son' in the middle of February 1886; Minnie Mackay's pen name...
"Marie Corelli" was there on the cover of the book.

The book is a mixture of romance and Corelli's "Electric Creed". Her philosophical doctrines are loosely woven into the web of a romantic story. Some of the characters in the novel are the spokesmen of her doctrines. But Corelli tries to dissociate herself from the characters. The heroine of the romance knows that the readers who expect "to find a novel in the acceptation of the term may be disappointed" in her story. The novelist 'purposely' called the book a 'romance'. "In the present narration, which I have purposely called 'romance', I do not expect to be believed, as I can only relate what I myself have experienced." Corelli, being afraid of viewers, denies the identity of herself and the heroine. But from her hesitant remarks a shrewd reader can infer their identity.

Her "Electric Principle of Christianity" includes the theory of internal and external human electricity and her 'new conception of cosmos'. But it should be remembered that "The electricity of soul and body which I speak of is not electricity in any known form', nevertheless it is electricity."

Heliobas - 'the very some of spiritual perfection', says that internal electricity is the "germ of a soul or spirit and is placed there to be either cultivated or neglected as suits the

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2. Ibid, p.2.
the will of man." What he means by 'internal electricity' is the power of the human soul. The soul is a spark of God and is eternal as God is. Its power depends on its progression or retrogression, which depends on the will of man. The soul is "the vital principle of each man's moral and mental well-being." External electricity is of the body; it is the "existence of powerful electric organs in every human being, which with proper cultivation are capable of marvellous spiritual force." Heliobas charged his sister Zara, with this kind of electricity which kept her "young and fresh as a girl of sixteen, at the age when other women lose their bloom and grow wrinkles". It was due to one of Heliobas' 'elixirs' that the bodily charm and youth of Zara were preserved. He had a simple 'pharmacopoeia' of his own, it contained twelve remedies. All were made of the juice of plants and six of them were electric. He cured the heroine's "protracted and terrible insomnia, accompanied by the utmost depression of spirits and anxiety of mind," by one of his electric fluids. It seems that Corelli has in mind here medicinal drinks such as were known in ancient and mediaeval times.

1. A Romance of Two Worlds, p. 110.
2. Ibid, p. 110.
By using his internal electric force, Heliobas liberated the soul of the heroine to experience the other spheres of the Universe. The episode of Zara and Prince Ivan is introduced to show the difference between spiritual beauty and material or bodily charm. Ivan, though he was a handsome and passionate lover, did not recognize the heightened spiritual power in Zara. He was fascinated only by her physical appearance.

The romance was immensely popular. By 1953 it has run into its forty third edition. "The novel caught the fancy of the public, partly because they were tiring of the 'shocking' romances perpetrated by her predecessor Ouida, and partly because there was a wave of interest in the occult at that time.1 Her 'new aspect of Christianity' promised salvation to the whole of humanity. "It has deepened and strengthened my belief in and love to God and has made the New Testament a new book to me!" Learned Brahmins2 scrutinized the new interpretation of the New Testament. The romance also provided the 'secret of eternal youth'. It held out a new hope to the bewildered public.

As a novel, A Romance of Two Worlds is a failure. Critics recognized in Corelli a power of impressive writing but detested her subject and the fantastic treatment of it. Corelli's

1. Marie Corelli - by Bigland. p.76.
2. From A Letter to Corelli: See A Romance of Two Worlds.
3. Marie Corelli by Bigland. p.32
'preface' is full of high seriousness. In its light the book seems less a novel than a treatise on 'electricity'. The book as a romance is 'wild and fantastic' and 'clever and ingenious'. There is a frequent repetition of her 'doctrines' in the pages of the book. The vague references to 'Chaldeans' and 'Sanskrit Scroll' and to other remote things make the romance vaguer still. Even the names Holiobas and Zara have an aroma of the deep-delved past in them. The love episode of Zara and Ivan, the gallant behaviour of the painter Cellini towards the heroine and the experiences of the liberated soul in other worlds hold the interest of the reader. Against the background of disillusionment, a venture into the realm of romance is one way of escape. In a romance, anything might happen; but if the incidents seem probable and convincing in their fantastic surroundings, they add weight to the romance. Oscar Wilde said that Corelli wrote of "marvellous things in a marvellous way." The romance is healthy and elevating. While her predecessors like Ouida were obsessed with the sickening atmosphere of the underworld in their romances Corelli chastened the art and gave it a new orientation. The public read her romance with avidity and enthusiasm. But many of the reviewers brushed it aside as 'pure bosh'.

1. Marie Corelli by Bigland, p.77.
Marie Corelli wielded a facile pen. She was a prolific and industrious writer. At the suggestion of her publisher, Bentley, she wrote her second novel on a popular theme. The plot of the novel was based on fact, a happening in Naples, at the time of the "Scathing visitation of the Cholera in 1864." *Vendetta*! sheer melodrama, was published in the same year, 1866. "It is a powerful story", the publisher wrote to her "and a great stride forward from the first book ... it marches on to its awful finale with the grimness of a Greek play". In this novel, as the title suggests, the husband takes a dreadful revenge on his faithless wife. The hero, Fabio Romani, in his full-blooded vigour, narrates his own life.

*Vendetta* is written by a woman about the infidelity of a wife. Corelli is never reserved and mild in her exposure of the Cressids and Cleopatras of fashionable society. Perhaps no male writer surpassed her in the condemnation of sinful women. Fabio never forgives his wife. His wrath does not subside even after her horrible death; he wants to chase her wicked spirit in hell also. "When my soul is released from its earthly prison, I shall still be doomed in some drear dim way to pursue her treacherous flitting spirit over the black chasms of a hell darker than Dante's:- she in the likeness of a wandering flame, - I as her hunting shadow: - she, flying
before me in coward fear. - I, hasting after her in relentless
wrath, - and this for ever and ever!"¹

In reading this novel, one is reminded of the blood and
horror tragedies of the later Elizabethans. There are some
guisesome and fascinating scenes: they are vivid and melodramatic
in effect. Fabio's struggle in the coffin and his horrid
experience in the dark vault frighten the readers. 'Owl flapped;
it wheeled with its yellow eyes round his head. His
limbs become too numb to be sensible of any fresh suffering.'²
There is the mournful march of the fearless monarch,
Humbert of Italy. "He stepped quietly into the dirtiest hovels
where lay both dead and dying; he spoke words of kindly
encouragement to the grief-stricken and terrified mourners who
stared through their tears at the monarch with astonishment
and gratitude."² The brilliant ball on the wedding day of
'Count Oliva' (Fabio) with Nina (Fabio's wife) who was the
"bride of the day and the heroine of the night" brings before
our minds' eye a parallel situation in Ford's play The Broken
Heart, in which the princess Calantha dies dancing. The last
scene in the vault, between the infuriated husband and the
horror-stricken, faithless wife is thrilling and frightening.
When Nina discovers the identity of her husband, "Her lips

moved but she uttered no work; she shivered as though with intense cold.

A woman can be a man's guardian angel or a hunting devil. When once she falls and begins to delight in her sin, there is no end to her treachery. Her life hovers in a tragic gloom. Marriage was a screen to Nina to hide her sin. When the faith and love of Fabio are shattered to pieces by his former 'sweet heart', his life seems to him dark and humiliated. Life becomes disgusting. Othello strangled Desdemona. Fabio, in a cruder way, almost killed Nina. But when an innocent one dies, others pity the person. When a sinner is murdered, they hate the action, but they do not pity the sinner.

Vendetta is a domestic tragedy. Vendetta thrilled the public. They clamoured for it. They accepted Corelli as a powerful writer. But it failed to draw the attention of the literary pundits of the age. It was either indifferently reviewed or given faint praise.

The "World" remarked: "The book is pure and unadulterated melodrama; but it is cleverly constructed, well-written and a decided thriller." The "Morning Post" alluded to her full-blooded, Turkey-carpet style of writing.

3. Ibid.
The theme of *Vendetta* was dear to Corelli. Since her school days she had loved 'a dreadful plot of love and murder.' The novel provided full scope for her melodramatic art. The power of the novel over the public is artistically illustrated in the statement of a reader quoted in Carr's biography. He read it with a wet cloth round his head and his feet in a basin of iced and camphorated water. Though it made him shudder, he continued to read it.

In her third novel, *Thelma*, Corelli gave vent to her romantic spirit, weaving together the threads of an ethereal romance about a Norwegian peasant girl. In her letter to Bertha she said: "It is my opinion that it will be my best, as it will certainly be my most elaborate work. I mean the best of the three till I write a fourth". It was really the best romance of her idealism and she did not even surpass it in her later works. *Thelma* was published in 1887. It settled her fame and future. This unsophisticated, pure, devoted, and delicate bride of an English nobleman has enthralled two generations of the readers of English fiction. It was 'the novel of the year'. The setting of the novel was the picturesque land of Norway. Corelli, though she had never been to that country, relied on her vivid imagination. 'She planned her

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1. *Miss Marie Corelli* - by Carr. p. 89.
scenes, looking at a map for locality'. She was "so engrossed in her writing that she had not noticed the density of a fog which had settled down, one of London's worst." The fog was so intense that Bertha could not distinguish a penny from half a crown in the omnibus.

The romance is divided into three parts. In the first part of 'The Land of the Midnight Sun' the lovers meet on the coast of a Norwegian Fjord. It was midnight but there was no darkness, there were no stars. The unwearyed sun stood above. It was an atmosphere of dreamy loveliness. In such an enchanting moment the English nobleman sees "a girl of about nineteen, taller than most women, with a magnificent uncovered mass of hair, the colour of the midnight sunshine, tumbled over shoulders, and flashing against her flushed cheeks and dazzling fair skin." The girl's first gesture of hauteur gradually changed to mellowness. Cupid caught them in his trap; there was no escape. Sir Philip Bruce Errington inducing the proud father of Thelma, Olaf Guldmar, in whose veins the blood of the Norwegian sea kings circulated, possesses the old man's incomparable treasure. He returns with his wife to his country, "The Land of Mockery", which is the second part of the book. The jealous and decadent English aristocracy, instead

1. Memoirs of Marie Corelli, p. 77.
of giving a warm reception to the ideal pair, look at the two with a malicious grin. The 'scorned woman', Lady Winsleigh, and the fop, Sir Francis Lennox, determine to arouse a grave misunderstanding between Errington and Thelma. They cleverly take the simple souled Thelma into their confidence and produce before her a false letter indicating Philip's infidelity. The adoring, and innocent Thelma, without asking her husband about the matter, thinks that she is unfit for his love. In her utter disappointment, she departs alone, secretly, to her Norwegian home. It was winter and Norway seemed "The Land of the Long Shadow", which is the title of the third part of the novel. Philip, mad for her love, follows her hurriedly and brings her home.

*Thelma* was Corelli's great adventure into the field of poetic romance. In its six hundred and fifteen pages, she wove the web of her dream of ideal love. Thelma is the symbol of Corelli's ideal womanhood. Her love and life were for Errington's pleasure, he was her heart's choice. She did not blame him when others told her of his faithlessness. Her self-sacrificing nature reminds one of the Indian conception of the ideal wife. Her foil in the novel is Lady Clara Winsleigh. She typifies the sophisticated woman of fashionable society. At the risk of her husband's honour she lives the life of a libertine. She understands her sinful life, only when Lord...
Winsleigh exposes her abominable shame to her very face.

Olaf Guldmar is a symbol of pagon pomp. His titanic and dignified personality compels reverence and awe. He was 'the pride of the Norse maidens' in his youth. Lovisa Esland, being disappointed in her love for him, took vengeance on his wife. His sweet sorrowful memories of his wife, his love for his daughter 'fairy Froken Thelma' and his pride in his ancestry of Jarl dynasty, show the royal blood in him; his life of 'bonde' appears like a life in disguise. His sense of high honour and prestige is seen in his self-willed cremation on his ship Valkyrie — burning and sailing along with his body on the Fjords towards Valhalla. It was his 'Crimson Shroud.'

The pigmy figure of Sigurd reminds one of the man-beast, Caliban in *The Tempest*. His presence in the dark cave, where Guldmar's wife was buried, is ghastly. His slavish devotion to Thelma was not devoid of selfishness. He was a fascinated dwarf. He guarded her for his own sake from others. When he knows that Philip had won the heart of Thelma, his passionate life crackles. "A desolate figure lay prone on the grass beneath her window ... Sigurd had come home; — Sigurd was repentant, sorrowful, ashamed, — and broken hearted."¹ His hideous attempt to kill Philip at the peak of the waterfall and his failure and his wild dance at the extreme edge of the

¹ Thelma. p.186.
rocky platform before his death create an unutterable sense of horror.

The description of 'The Land of the Midnight Sun', and 'The Land of the Long Shadow' are fascinating. The disgusting intrigues of the degenerate English aristocracy, the villainous intentions of parson Dyceworthy and the dark superstitions of life of the village Bose Kop in Norway gave sufficient scope to Corelli to dilate upon. The whole action of the romance moves with a dramatic swiftness. Above all, the graceful Broken-rose-Thelma engenders a spark of divine life in all readers.

'Ardath' was published in 1889. The public, who expected thrilling romances like Vendetta and Thelma, were disappointed by the new book. On the other hand, Corelli was commended for it by some of the great men of her time. Lord Tennyson wrote to her an encouraging letter. The great statesman Gladstone honoured her by visiting her house. He said "Ardath is a magnificent conception, and I recognise in you a great power to move the masses and sway the thoughts of the people." Corelli tossed herself in rapture. The theme of Ardath is "drawn from the Book of Esdras, one of the apocryphal Jewish writings which... are held to be of value for historical purposes and for instructions of manners."  

2. Ibid - by Coates and Bell. p.66.
Ardath is Corelli's second philosophical novel, written with the deliberate purpose of popularising her 'new creed'. In the framework of the romantic love story of Theos and his angel-bride Edris, Corelli introduces her religious doctrines, claiming for them a history of great antiquity, six thousand years B.C.

In the first part of the novel the sceptic English poet, Theos, meets the monk Heliobas, who had already appeared in A Romance of Two Worlds, in a monastery in the midst of Caucasian mountains. The monk convinces him in his trance of the existence of the supernatural and God. On the field of Ardath, Theos meets his twin soul angel-Edris, who reminds him of her long waiting in Heaven for his arrival. Her angelic kiss overpowers him: her mild alluring advice about death, transmigration of souls and their immortality, sows in him the need of faith and love. In the city of Al-kyris, in the second part of the novel, Theos sees his former self-Sah-Luma, the poet-Laureate in the court of Zephoranim. The life of Sah-Luma was soaked in luxurious sensuality. Lysia, the high priestess of the Nagaya Temple, a seductive beauty, had captivated the king, the poet-Laureate and the other handsome courtiers. When the king comes to know the love of Sah-Luma for Lysia, he kills him. Edris again appears before the terror-stricken Theos and consoles him with a tender touch: "Learn from the perils of the Past,
the perils of the Future."

In the third part of the novel, Theos appears as a missionary of Corelli's 'new creed of Christianity.' Her real purpose in Ardath is at work in this section; she tries to give a firm base to her new Christian religion. Theos condemns the doctrines of the Catholic Church and Paulism. He emphasises the fact that real Christianity has not been understood at all through the centuries. The true doctrines of Jesus Christ are yet to be deciphered.

In Ardath, we see also many gorgeous paintings in words. Corelli's powerful style moves the reader. Al-Kyris is elaborately described. The high Priestess's pompous procession in Al-Kyris, the royal banquet for the poet Laureate and Lysia's palatial luxuries, recreate the life of forgotten empires. A large fiery jewel, fashioned in the semblance of a human eye, on the high priestess's bosom, symbolises her carnal appetite; the passage to the tombs is a horrible place of human massacre. The end of all base sinners in the Nagaya Temple in a sudden burst of flame of wide spread fire, and the shrieking of Lysia in the coils of a huge snake reveal the melodramatic power of the writer.

Ardath is based on a vast conception embracing different subjects, but it is not so artistically and leisurely knit as
Thelma. Its narration is not swift. "I have read your manuscript," wrote Mr. Bentley carefully, "with wonder that one small head could hold it all." It is a jumble of romance and doctrine. "One hesitates to acclaim the book itself," writes Bigland, "though Marie & insisted to the end of her life that 'it was her finest book'". Corelli seems to be right in her insistence because it is an 'Ardath' that she expressed all her doctrines in a comprehensive way and enshrined them in the dim antiquity of 6000 years B.C. Ardath is an elaborate manual of the creed which she preached in her first romance. It is also a modified version. Ambiguous terms like 'electricity', 'electric,' are cleverly avoided. Did her spiritual knowledge increase? Why did she remove those phrases? It may be due to her wider reading in mystical literature, and to the adverse criticism which her Romance of Two Worlds received for using such terms in describing occultism. In none of her other 'five philosophical novels' does she discuss her new religion in the manner in which she discusses it here. These writings enlarged her circle of admirers. As a pure romance, Ardath failed to attract the public.

Another minor novel 'My Wonderful Wife', a 'study in smoke', appeared in 1889.

2. — Ibid—. p.104.
Wormwood was published in 1890. It is a sensational melodrama based on the horrid consequences of absinthe drinking in Paris. It created a sensation like Vendetta. Corelli felt greatly relieved when she completed the novel - the story of 'a dreadful Parisian man'.

The hero, Gaston Beauvais, a wealthy banker's son, being deceived by his betrothed girl, grows into an incurable absinthes. With all his roguish enthusiasm he narrates his life of villainy.

Gaston fell in love with the comte's beautiful girl, Pauline - "a flower just bursting into bloom with no knowledge of the world." She did not discourage his courtship. Their parents gladly fixed up the date of their marriage. But in the meanwhile Pauline fell passionately in love with a young man of singular beauty, Silvion Guidel. Silvion was also fascinated by her pretty face. Their mutual love led to their secret union. Pauline confessed, one day before their marriage, to Gaston, of her love for Silvion. She requested him to release her from their engagement. But the animal in him was roused. This was the cause of their tragedy. Gaston in his drunken state, discloses the treachery of her illicit love for the 'sanctimonious young hypocrite' Silvion, at the church, on their wedding day. The tragic gloom covers the members of the
two families. Gaston, being addicted to absinthe, takes vengeance on the unfortunate lovers.

The novel, from beginning to end, unfolds the morbid horror of the hero's life. Nobody gave Gaston good advice. His father rebuked him for his fiendish revenge and deserted him for ever. Heloise, the nephew of Pauline, who secretly loved Gaston, did not try to save him from his moral fall. All left him to his liquor.

The reading public swarmed at the bookshops and libraries for copies and wrote gushing letters to the authoress discussing the shocking adventures of the hero. "Few if any, realized", says Bigland "that the novel was a glorified tract against the evils of strong drink; what thrilled them were the lurid descriptions of Gaston's experiences in the underworld of Paris." 1

Amorous couples wandered under the floating moon, the slum streets were the dwelling places of the fallen runaway women of 'palaces'. Gaston like a devil danced Waltz with the 'black siren of the can-can.' "I snatched her round the waist and whirled her into the throng with so much celerity and violence that she nearly lost her footing and fell." 2 In reading

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such passages the public perhaps might not have remembered the
evils of absinthe. But they would surely have sensed the beastly
dirty life of decadent society. Besides, the novel has not
some sensational scenes in it. The murdered Silvion’s eyes
were not closed; his spirit haunted Gaston in priestly dress.
Gaston’s atrocities, slum life, the rhetorical style and the
sustained gloom contributed to make the work of a good thriller.
"But it might have done something to lower the standard of taste."

The Soul of Lilith, published in 1892, was Corolli’s
third philosophical novel. The mystic monk Heliobas of Ardath,
appears also in this novel. This romance is an account of the
strange and daring experiment of a fantastic scientist El-Rami on the "unseen possibilities of the Hereafter." For his
experiment El-Rami captivates the soul of a dead girl, Lilith, aged twelve years, while yet her body was warm, by injecting
an "Electric Flamma" in her veins. By using such a 'vital
fluid,' the body of the girl was revived. The girl of twelve
years grows to be a woman of eighteen years. The soul of Lilith
was partly free and partly captive. According to the orders
of El-Rami, the soul of Lilith travels in the higher and lower

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1. Modern English Writers by Hamid Williams, p.472.
2. The Soul of Lilith - introductory note.
3. The Soul of Lilith, p.231.
spheres and it brings information about God, Heaven, Hell and Death. El-Rami was proud, for, he had the body and soul of a girl in his possession. But when a passion for the beautiful body of the girl was awakened in him, the soul of Lilith extricated itself from the body and passed on to Heaven. Her body lay withered. The result was a shock to the scientist. He was paralysed. While observing the reflections of other planets on the disc, on a stormy day, another scientist, Dr. Kremlin, was killed by thunderstorm. Mere logic and physical science cannot prove the existence of God and the Hereafter but faith can.

By creating such a romantic atmosphere, Corelli tried to convey the nature of the different spheres of the Universe to the public. The work includes discussions on God, soul, sex, theosophy, Mahatmas, incantation of Mantras, mediums and spiritualists. If there was a 'rapturous welcome' extended to 'The Soul of Lilith', it should have been as with other romances, for Corelli's curious blend of romance, theosophy and social criticism. Corelli's treatment of lofty themes in a melodramatic fashion seemed artificial and superfluous to intellectuals. But her intention was probably to tell 'mystical truths' about theosophical phenomena, to the common reader. "One cannot blame the reviewers for poking fun at Lilith, for the story was wildly incredible."

1. Marie Corelli - by Bigland. p.130.
The Silver Doming, a volume of essays, is a savage satire on prominent contemporary literary and political personages. It was published anonymously in the same year 1892. It created a stir. It was much 'talked about over dinner-tables,' right or wrongly, its brilliant sarcasm was set down to the authorship of Miss Marie Corelli.1

George Bentley "had not the courage to publish a poetic romance which introduced, albeit with a tenderness and reverence unspeakable, so far as my own intention was concerned, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ."2 Hence Barabba or "A Dream of the World's Tragedy" was published by Methuen in 1893. Corelli built a romantic background around the divine personality of Jesus which she conceived mainly on the basis of a study of the New Testament. The book was a 'triumph of religiousness'. "It met with an almost unprecedented success, not only in this country but all over the world."3 In writing this 'passion play in prose,' Corelli raised a nest of hornets around herself by lowering the sanctity of Biblical personages and scriptural authority. She depicted the life of Jesus with all sincerity and reverence. But her introduction of the love

1. Miss Marie Corelli - by Carr. p.81.
intrigues of the high priest Caiaphas and Judith Iscariot, and
her making Judith the cause of Judas's betrayal of his Master,
turned the Biblical story into a tale gross and profane. Al-
Although Corelli follows the New Testament closely in Barabbas
in portraying Jesus, her full faith in His divinity is not
clearly expressed. Jesus was a prophet in his life, and he was
made divine, 'Christ', after his death. Her Jesus looked like
a "dreamy young philosopher". Orthodox Christians objected to
her physical portrait. "The Light of the World cannot be com-
pared to a 'mighty muscular Hercules', without losing some-
thing in the comparison." The divinity is more to be experienced in
our imagination, than to be measured by any geometrical apparatus.
Besides, 'Iscariot' was not the surname of the family
of Judas. St. Peter was not one with Judas in the betrayal.

Barabbas, the former robber and murderer, remain a witness
throughout the whole action of the crucifixion and resurrec-
tion. Jesus's divine face kindles a ray of light in his
dark soul.

Barabbas was Corelli's fourth philosophical novel.
Melchior, in this novel, preaches in as deliberate a manner as
Heliobas does in the other romances. He talks about the 'low

1. See Corelli's discussion on Jesus and her Creed in Ardath
and The Soul of Lilith.
2. Miss Marie Corelli - by Carr. p.103.
A Jewish scribe hints at the possibility of the indebtedness of Jesus's doctrines to some ancient perished creed of Egypt.¹

The style of the novel is laboured and poetic. The descriptions of the crucifixion and resurrection are dramatic and moving. The Dean of West Minister read the description of resurrection in the novel, from the Abbey pulpit, "All paid.

Marie's previous successes pleased before the astounding reception accorded to this new novel."² But the critics did not spare her. "The Silver Domino" had made them more bitter. Her romanticizing of the Biblical story seemed to them "a piece of gutter snipe impudence."³

The Sorrows of Satan was printed in 1895. The novel with its wonderful title, simply swept the public off their feet."⁴ Corelli's melodramatic writing, on esoteric and exoteric themes, characterized by a dogmatic tone, thrilled the hearts of the populace. But the press did not appreciate her novels. She took this as an insult. She became vindictive. She instructed the Methuens never to send any copy of "The Sorrows of Satan" for review. A special notice was attached

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to the book. "No copies of this are sent out for review. Members of the press will therefore obtain it, (should they wish to do so) in the usual way with the rest of the public, i.e. through the Booksellers and Libraries." "The critics roared with laughter and proceeded to ridicule the novel in merciless fashion."¹

Satan, under the guise of Prince Lucio Eijmauez, appears in the novel. His stately figure, beautiful face and attractive manners exercise great influence on everybody. He drives the decadent society, 'whip in hand' to its steep fall. But he never harms the pure ones like Mavis Clare, to whom he bends his head. According to the desire of Tempest, who had suddenly inherited five million pounds a year, Lucio introduces him to fashionable upper class society. He takes him to all the pleasure-hunting spots in London. He shows him the marriage markets of aristocratic families. Tempest works as his tool. He marries the callous Earl's daughter Sibyl, in spite of her frank confession to him about her past. "You must not look upon me as an innocent young girl Geoffrey, - a girl such as the great poets idealised, and sang of, - I am a contaminated creature trained to perfection in the lax morals and prurient literature of my day."²

¹. Marie Corelli - by England. p.156.
The Sorrows of Satan is Corelli's fifth philosophical novel. Satan does not appear here as an eternally condemned devil in Hell. He does his God-ordained duty and longs to achieve his former archangelhood. The minute depiction of the rottenness of upper class society and the simplicity of pure life as seen in Mavis Clare are a contrast that serve to light up the significance of Satan's own work. Corelli's entire conception of Satan is non-Christian and is based on the detailed discussion of the legend of Satan in Isis Unveiled by Mme. H. Blavatsky. The "Sorrows" of Satan are the sorrows of Corelli—springing from her reformist zeal. "The foul and filthy crimes of men, the base deceits and cruelties of women, the ruthless, murderous ingratitude of children, the scorn of good, the martyrdom of intellect, the selfishness, the avarice, the sensuality of human life, the hideous blasphemy and sin of the creature to the Creator—these are my endless sorrows."

W. T. Stead of the Review of Reviews drew the attention of the public to the identity of Mavis Clare—the ideal woman-novelist of the novel to Marie Corelli. Although Corelli tried to deny the identity, the reader who goes through the novel is easily convinced.

Corelli's sincerity and imaginative power are revealed in her exposure of the vulgarity and hypocrisy of fashionable

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society and in vivid scenes like the one of the reception before the marriage of Tempest and Sibyl, at Willowsmere, and of the fall of Lucifer. Some leading Churchmen preached sermons on the book from their pulpits, hailing Corelli as a prophet. This must have increased her confidence in herself.

The Murder of Delicia was published in 1896. The novel deals with the ignoble character of a husband. The 'gallant beauty,' Gifford Carlyon, was the husband of the celebrated woman novelist, Delicia Vaughan. He had no financial resources and he lived on the wealth of his wife. "She was the hiving bee — he the luxurious drone that ate the honey." Gifford neglected his wife within three years of their married life and sought pleasure in the company of women of fashionable society and music hall dances. Delicia's ideal dome of perfect love crumbled down when she saw her husband's beastly life. She felt a 'wide wound' in her heart.

The novel is not convincing. It lacks unity of effect.

The character of Delicia is inconsistently drawn. Corelli transferred some of her own attributes in Delicia. Corelli's condemnation of all men as unworthy of woman's love is unjustifiable.

The Mighty Atom also was published in 1896. Corelli denounced the idea of education without religion in this novel.  

The purpose of the book is suggested in its dedicatory note: "Those self styled 'progressivists' who by precept and example assist the infamous cause of education without religion." The knowledge and love of God is the true foundation of noble living; the denial of it to the children in the schools is a 'worse crime than murder.'

The story of the novel is simple. A delicate boy, Lionel, eleven years old, is brought up on the big volumes on science, philosophy and literature. His father, Valliscourt, is a highly sophisticated, irreligious capitalist. The boy's life runs clockwise in the home library. He was prevented even from playing games and walking in the open air. He broods over theological ideas. Was the Atom the first cause of the Universe? Is it a living being? Does it not feel human sorrows? Where is it? The boy's overburdened sceptical mind tortures itself without a satisfactory answer. Added to this ill-luck he loses his young playmate Jessamine, the angel-like daughter of the village sexton, Neuben Dale. His mother, being tired of her monotonous, dull, and loveless life with her husband, elopes with a fop. The learned tutor could not console the confused, morbid mind of his pupil. Lionel again thinks over the Atom. Who is the Creator? One night he hangs himself to discover the Atom and the life hereafter.
Corelli was fond of children. But she had no intimate knowledge of children and childhood. Lionel seems to be an 'atrocious little prig.' His is an abnormal growth. His sentimental baby talks and metaphysical thoughts fail to create a convincing character. "'Homer' in hand the boy was strolling and meditating Hamlet-wise among the groves of the forgotten dead." This may be true of a prodigy here and there but not of an average boy eleven years old. But Corelli stirred the feelings of the public. Lionel was a pathetic child; he was devoid of parental love. He had sometimes a wild desire to scream aloud, and to jump from the open window. Motherly love was apparent in Miss Clarinda Payne - the owner of the village inn, and in Miss Lucy - the maid servant, but not in Lionel's own mother. The ugly flower-seller had a kind heart but not his own progressivist father. To whom had the boy to pray for mercy? His life ended in tragedy.

Corelli's usual criticism of 'progressive' women is also found in the novel. She condemns the advanced woman roaming on bicycles and reading cheap novels relating to sex. She sneers at women like Ibsen's Nora.

'Ziska' was published in 1897. Corelli deals in this novel with the theory of reincarnation and the union of two destined souls. The spirit of woman, betrayed, pursues its

1. The Mighty Atom. p.56.
betrayer for five thousand years, from one birth to another, bent on vengeance all the while. It is the passionate story of the twin halves which struggle in each other's coils till they become one in spirit by the bond of intense, divine love. Ziska, a beautiful Russian Princess in Cairo, looked like a flesh-clad ghost, - 'so light, so noiseless and so lovely' she was. She was the ancient dancer "Ziska - Charmazel, the favourite of the harem of a great Egyptian warrior, described in forgotten histories as The Mighty Araxes.¹ The famous French painter Armand Gervase is the nineteenth century Araxes, who meets Ziska at the Geairch Palace Hotel, in Cairo. Ziska rejects the proposal of the infatuated, handsome Denzil Hurry. His sister Helen is disappointed in her love for Gervase. The painter follows Ziska with all his awareness of her poisonous beauty; their union was inevitable. The occultist Dr. Maxwell Dean explains to Gervase the course of fate. "You are her fitting mate. In certain men and women spirit leaps to spirit, note responds to note - and if all the world were to interpose its trumpery bulk, nothing could prevent such tumultuous forces rushing together."²

The tempting beauty of Princess Ziska reminds one of the beauty of the ancient Egyptian Queen Cleopatra. It is not

¹ Ziska. pp.64-65. ² Ziska. pp.210-211.
surprising if men like Gervase and Murry are ensnared by her charm. The entrance of the Princess 'clad in gleaming golden tissues,' her wild dance of Thebes, 'raising her arms gleaming with jewelled bangles,' and her mayd passionate cry for Araxes stir the reader deeply. Her speech under the Pyramid: "Tremble, soul, of Araxes! - for hate is eternal, as love is eternal - the veil is down, and memory stings" reminds readers of the heroic tragedies of the Restoration period.

A short novel, Jane, was published in 1900. Jane Belmont, a sweet-looking, old fashioned lady is disgusted with the life of the 'Swagger society' in London and returns to her country cottage, 'Restful Harbour'. Corelli's lengthy 'preface' is more valuable than the story itself as it clearly states her ideal conception of womanhood. She hated 'political termagants.' Nature has given certain unique qualities to women, which men lack. They should be inspirers, helpers and guides rather than rivals. Home is best for them. Corelli like Ruskin, believed in the womanhood of the hearth, not of the sword. The novel is a fictionised moral essay on social conduct.

Boy was printed in the same year. It is another warning to parents who ruin the future career of their children by training them badly in their houses. Corelli's womanly instincts did not get full scope in her unmarried life. She loved
children and longed for their angelic smile and touch.

The child, Robert D'Arcy Muir, had a drunkard father and a lowbred conceited mother. The golden haired, lovable child was neglected in the house. Miss Lotty, an old rich spinster, had taken a fancy for the boy and desired to nurse and educate him herself in order to make him her worthy heir. But the unscrupulous Mrs. Muir defeated her will. The boy grows up in the bitter atmosphere of his home. He was sent to a military college against his will. Ill fate dogged him. Ensnared by bad company, he was discharged from his training. His decaying soul does not hesitate even to deceive the benevolent lady Litty. But her motherly affection and forgiveness prick his conscience. Determined to do something good in honour of his benefactress he joins the Boer War as a soldier. But he gets killed on the battlefield.

Sentimental readers wept over the fate of the boy and wrote congratulatory letters to the authoress for writing such a moving story. The novel is less picturesque in its setting than The Mighty Atom. But it has greater wealth of characterization and satirical power. 'Vicious influences' are complex things. They are the outcome of social, economic and hereditary factors. But Corelli did not visualise and present this
complexity.

*The Master Christian* is Corelli's sixth philosophical novel. It was published in the same year, 1900. It deals with the 'second coming of Jesus Christ,' "in a cloud with power and great glory." He appears in the person of an orphan named Manuel crying at the closed doors of St. John Cathedral.

The saintly Cardinal Bonpre takes the boy inside and keeps him in his own company. His mission was to expose the corruption of the Church and to show the true path of Christ. "The world is not with Christ to-day! - and unhappily it is a fact that Christ's ministers in recent years have done more to sever Him from Humanity than any other power could ever have succeeded in doing." Manuel appeals to the Pope to fulfill his real mission. "Come out with me and minister with your own hands to the aged and the dying." Manuel's passionate exposure of fallen churchmen and his picture of the dangers threatening the very existence of papacy leave the Pope unnerved.

"Why trifl e with the spirit of holy things? Why let your servants use the name of the Most High to cover hypocrisy? Rome like Babylon, shall fall! - and the Powers of the Church shall

be judged as the powers of Darkness."¹ The novel thus contains a severe condemnation of the Roman Catholic Church and its ministers. As Corelli said, her intention might have been one of a general criticism on "all those Churches who quarrel in the name of Christ."² But the novel could still be described as a 'violent attack on the Church of Rome,'³ and it 'caused great offence to Catholics.'

The religious theme of the novel is rendered interesting and intricate by some love episodes. Angela Sovrani was a first class woman painter. She was reserved and intellectual in her demeanour. Her ambitious painting of a large-sized portrait of the 'Coming of Christ' was intended to win her fiancé's heart. But Florian Varillo was a narrow-minded, immoral rogue. Instead of taking pride in her art, he stabs her in the back in a fit of jealousy. But fortunately, she was not killed.

Comtesse Sylvie an 'Austro-Hungarian of the prettiest and most bewitching type,'⁴ was a wealthy young woman. She refused to marry a man of her class, for everyone seemed licentious. Though it compromised the supposed 'dignity' of her family, she marries the religious reformer, Aubrey Leigh. Theirs

¹. The Master Christian. p.442.
². -Ibid- The Dedicatory note.
³. Marie Corelli - by Bigland. p.158.
⁴. The Master Christian. p.159.
was the sacred union of two souls. In another episode, Marguerite, having gone mad in her love affair, kills her priestly seducer and tightening his corpse in her arms jumps into a river.

In his review of the book, W.T. Stead said: "If any one wants to know what *The Master Christian* is like, without reading its six hundred and thirty pages, he will not have much difficulty if he takes Sheldon's *In His Steps,* Zola's *Rome* and any of Marie Corelli's previous novels in equal proportion." The book is less a novel than a powerful, "immensely wordy sermon." She condemned the Papian Church and its decadent priests, and demanded a universal church of the close followers of Jesus Christ. The Rev. Abbé Vergniad, a character in the novel, preached from the pulpit of Notre Dame, such non-Christian doctrines as the theory of Reincarnation and the Law of Compensation.

The interest of the book is kept up throughout by the introduction of love stories and melodramatic scenes like the one about the firing of bullets at Abbé Vergniad by his illegitimate son, the consummation of Florian Varillo in a Church with a mad monk and the death of Marquis Fontenelle and the actor, Miraudin, in a duel.

Temporal Power was published in 1902. Its first edition alone created a record even in the gigantic sales of Corelli's novels. The public had been stimulated by the slashing attack on the Roman Catholic Church in The Master Christian. The title of the new novel intrigued them. 'Temporal Power' was "not issued to the Press for review, but no less than three hundred and fifty journals - big and little - paid Miss Corelli the compliment of purchasing the book in order to comment on its plot and characteristics."

The main action of the novel centres round the king who, playing the part of a royal dummy reveals his heroic and diplomatic spirit by joining in disguise of revolutionary socialist party in his capital three years after his coronation. By mixing with the common folk he understands their difficulties and demands. He detects cleverly the corrupt administration of his Cabinet. Exposing their shame and corruption to his country, he conquers the hearts of his subjects and re-establishes his monarchical power.

Temporal Power is a Gothic romance. From the literary point of view, it can be considered as Corelli's greatest achievement. Its conception is vast, the plot is complicated. It is more grave in its environment and more serious in its tone.

1. Marie Corelli - by Coates and Warren Bell. P. 244.
than the simple, tender and somewhat sad and sweet action of 'Thelma'. The latter ends in comedy while the former closes in tragic gloom. If there is a grotesque exposition of fashionable society in Thelma, Temporal Power recalls to our minds royal and political personages who were contemporaries of the author. Though Corelli denied it, the novel undoubtedly contains caricatures of prominent persons of her day. W.T. Stead, who had taken up a hostile position with regard to Corelli, wrote a four page review of the novel in his 'Review of Reviews'. It is a tract for the guidance of the King. The fact he continued, 'that her pages reflect as in a glass darkly in an exaggerated and somewhat distorted shape the leading personages of the English court, and in contemporary politics, may be one of those extraordinary coincidences which occur without any intention on the part of the authoress of the book.'

The portrait of the king in 'Temporal Power' bore the "oddest resemblance to Edward VII; the prime minister was definitely a twisted caricature of the aged Marquis of Salisbury, the colonial secretary of the day. Joseph Chamberlain appeared as the Secretary of State, Carl Perouse, of the novel, and the

cold irresponsible Queen was Queen Alexandra.

There are two love episodes in the novel along with the main plot. The king's personal life was loveless and dry. When he sees the self-sacrificing, divine love of Lotys - a low born woman - but the moving spirit of the 'revolutionary socialist party,' - for his counterpart, Pasquin Leroy, the king loses self-control. Forgetting his royal dignity, he begs her to be his. But Lotys does not yield to him. When she knows that the person she loved was no other than the king himself, she mildly affectionately rejects his offer and reminds him of his royal responsibilities.

Another pair of lovers are Prince Humphry and Gloria, the most beautiful daughter of a fisherman. The Prince, under the guise of a sailor, secretly marries the girl. When the king upbraids him and tells him that their marriage could be morganatic and that he should make a speedy alliance with a Princess, Humphry strongly refuses to do so and sticks to his love.

The action of the novel moves grimly but swiftly. Melodramatic and romantic scenes and events like the adventures of the king at night or the observation of the 'Day of Fate' at Serguis Thord's house or Lotys' 'sailing to the infinite', hold
the reader to the end in breathless suspense. Whether the reign is of the King or of the Pope, it is temporal and temporary. Divine love alone is the eternal power. The novel is a good example of Corelli's art.

*God's Good Man* was published in 1904. Miss Maryllia Vancourt returns to her Manor House after a period of nearly twelve years in the village of Riversford. Her parents were dead and she was lonely. She had travelled widely and she knew well the life of fops in society. As she met no noble-minded person, her dream of a perfect romance did not materialise. Her desperate searching eyes rest at last on the handsome, intellectual bachelor, Rev. John Walden, of her village church. The 'vague sadness' of her eyes appeals to him.

It is the simple love story of a spinster and a middle-aged man, who find in each other the fulfilment of their ideal love. The novel is steeped in sentimentality. Corelli could not forget the dryness in her own life, her frustration and sense of loneliness. In Maryllia's brooding over her past life there are echoes of the writer's own heart. Corelli was not loved by any man truly since her father's death. "They have admired me and flirted with me, - many of them have wanted to marry me, in order to get hold of Aunti Emily's fortune with
Her characterization of God's good man, Rev. J. Walden, try do for a Maryllia. But he seems to be more mundane than divine. Though he is a churchman of over forty, he blushes before unmarried women. His hidden romantic feelings are more picturesque than those of young love. The rural setting and the season of summer, full of different flowers, give a lively colour to the romantic story.

But this 'simple love story' is nicely honeycombed with libel on the opposite party of the 'Stratford-on-Avon Controversy.' Stratford appeared in the novel as Riversford. The agent, Oliver Leach, is snubbed for his order to chop down the "Five Trees" which were supposed to be the relics of village antiquity. The novel sold like hot cakes; but it added to her unpopularity in the town. Corelli tempted the reviewers of the Press in her Author's note: "Gentle Reviewer, Be Merciful to Me. May an honest Press deliver me!" But within a few months an entertaining skit came out entitled "God's Good Woman" by Carrie Corelli." It upset her.

The Strange Visitation—a Christmas story, was published in the same year, 1904. In this novel, a wealthy materialist, Josiah McManus, is taught the meaning of charity through a horrible dream.

The Treasure of Heaven or A Romance of Riches appeared

1. God's Good Man P. 266
in 1906. Till the publication of this novel, Corelli had never allowed her photograph to be inserted in her works. When she saw her libellous portrait in an illustrated daily paper in London, she permitted a genuine photograph as a frontispiece in *The Treasure of Heaven*. She wrote a dignified introduction explaining why this was done.

The novel "contained her usual mixture of sticky sentimentality, castigation of the immoral folk who throned London Society, and sympathy with the poor, down-trodden middle and working classes, while the three R's she always championed, religion, romance and reform, were well to the fore."

The old and wealthy David Helmsley, being disillusioned in life, journeys on foot in the guise of a poor peasant towards the countryside, in search of a selfless, loving soul. Many days he wanders in this dejected mood like King Lear in storm, lightning and rain. One day he falls exhausted down a hill and swoons. Mary Deane, a lonely spinster living nearby, carries him to her cottage and nurses him in his illness with all her womanly devotion, without any ulterior motives, as if she were his daughter. In her heart lay the treasure of Heaven.

This pathetic story of a rich, oldman moved the hearts of men and women, especially the old generation who had been

bewildered by the 'New Age of Interrogation'. Corelli's old
neighbour, George Meredith, finished reading the book with
tears in his eyes. "It is a delicious story", wrote Father
Ignatius, "your story is such an immensely original one, and
has such a strange sweetness and restfulness about it, and it
touches so many chords in the silent chambers of the soul."

*Holy Orders* appeared in 1908. It 'did not sell as it
should'. Corelli explained the main outlines of the novel in
the 'Author's Note'. The novel is the tragedy of the 'quiet
life' of the Rev. Mr. Everton. He was young and energetic, and
quite interested in his missionary work. With the help of
his adoring wife he tried to save the village, Cotswold, which
had sold its soul to the devil, Drink. 'A roar of men's 
rowdy laughter capped by a feminine scream or hysterical giggle
was the usual sight of the drunken village at night. In his
priestly work he roused the anger of a drunkard, Don Kierman.
Don Kierman became desperate when his beautiful young mistress
deserted him forever by eloping with a fop to London. Rustics
degenerate into bestiality in matters of sex. In his inflamed
jealousy Don Kierman took vengeance on Mrs. Azalea Everton. She
was shot dead.

Corelli was undoubtedly a gripping writer. She had gauged the mind of the public. The novel is full of fascinating scenes and it moves with dramatic swiftness. The wanton girl Jacynth's beauty was confounding. Even the Rev. Mr. Everton, when he saw her first, had become like a 'beaten hound, or a drowned rat.' By marrying an old and rich Jew, she became a reigning beauty in the fashionable society of London. Her pleasure trip with her lover, Claude Ferrers, in the 'Shooting Star,' in the air, was a novelty and it was also her death signal.

*Note. Wootwood is a 'Parisian drama'; but Holy Orders presents the rural scene of Great Britain. The powers of drink proved more potent with the parishioners than the power of Christ.'

The Devil's Motor was published in 1910 with sketches by Severn, the artist. It describes "the adventures of the Evil One, who, at the steering-wheel of a diabolical motor-car, rides furiously over the world crushing mankind beneath his grinding wheels."[2]

Corelli's seventh, and last philosophical novel, The Life Everlasting appeared in 1911. She summed up her philosophy with a lengthy prologue which, more than the romance itself, gives her doctrines in a nutshell.

As in her first 'Romance,' here also the heroine narrates...
the particulars of her training in psychic knowledge, under the guidance of the monk, Aselzion, whose 'House' was situated at the remote and mountainous corner of the Biscayan Coast. Along with her spiritual knowledge the heroine gets one more reward, her twin soul, Rafel Santoria. In her brimming pride she says to the public: "I am able to hold and keep the treasures of life, love and youth, which the majority of mankind are forever losing."\(^1\) Corelli lost them herself in her lonely terrestrial life.

The romance is full of a sticky sentimentalism. Glances meet, hands touch and soul rushes to soul. The heroine raised her "eyes to his and with one glance saw in those clear blue orbs that so steadfastly met mine a world of memories — memories tender, wistful and pathetic, entangled as in tears and fire."\(^2\) Ten years had elapsed since she had published her sixth philosophical novel, The Master Christian. Revising the principles of her creed, she now reissued them to the public. For a detailed study of her creed, the first three philosophical novels A Romance of Two Worlds, Ardath and The Soul of Lilith, are more important than the later ones. Corelli had lost her former vigour while writing The Life Everlasting.

\(^1\) The Life Everlasting, p. 134.
\(^2\) --Ibid-- p. 121.
Innocent was published in 1914. The book is remarkable in two ways. It is far more moving than any of the works immediately preceding. Secondly, in no other novel did Corelli put so much of herself as in Innocent. She deals in this novel with the theme of the illegitimacy of a girl, Innocent, and shows what a cruel and tearing effect it had made on her sensitive mind. Innocent loved all the while the farmer Jocelyn as 'her Dad' and was so happy with him. She had taken a keen interest in the ancestry of the Jocelyn family and Briar Farm. She had studied in manuscripts the poetry of the foregone knight, Amadis De Jocelin. The dead French knight had become her spiritual prince lover. This reminds one of Corelli's own dream of a perfect romance. But when the old farmer told her of her unknown birth before his death, the girl received a severe blow. Her idea of her own high birth crumbled down.

"Why was I ever born?" sighed a trembling voice—'Oh, dear God! Why did you let it be!?' She was a 'nameless nobody'. "A wretched sense of utter helplessness stole over her." Later in her literary career in London, Innocent met a painter, who bore the name of her ideal French Knight. In her intensity of love, she placed her heart at the feet of the painter. But being a refined debauchee he played with her tender feelings.

1. Innocent. p.68.  
2. Innocent. p.73.
and rejected her at the end.

In Innocent's love-affair, Corelli recalled her own relationship with the painter Severn. The description of disappointed womanly love echoes her own wounded feelings. "The impression he had made on Innocent's guileless and romantic nature was beyond analysis." When once, a girl, passionately in love, becomes disappointed, she seldom heals her wounded heart. Frustrated love is an "eternal loss coupled with an eternal sorrow."

The frustrated, tortured and maddened Innocent rushes from London to Briar Farm where her former nurse Priscilla and her true lover, Robin, lived, on a stormy, rainy and frightful night. She gets mental peace and rest through their kindness and affection. But her rest on that night, at Briar Farm, was also her eternal rest. She was a corpse on the morrow.

Eyes of the Sea, a minor work, was published in 1917.

The Young Diana or 'An experience of the future' appeared in 1918. In this pseudo-scientific romance an aged spinster, Diana May, taking the beautifying and energising fluid prepared by Dr. Feodor Dimitrius, becomes the ruling Venus of fashionable society. But though her physical charm was that of a pretty girl in bloom, her soul and mind remained as before

l. Innocent: p.264.
nature and disillusioned. This experiment of a mysterious and fanatical scientist revealing the triumph of a new discovery, Elixir, as the extract of 'condensed sunlight', seems to be the fantastic or 'prophetic truth' of the author. Although there is a vague explanation of the mechanism of the laboratory, the book is not a 'real scientific romance'. One does not find in her work the air of probability that permeates the scientific romances of H.G.Wells. But the romance is said to have the "absorbing quality of modern science fiction." Dr. Feodor is not a modern scientific doctor. He is a new 'Helioses' man in the garb of the modern scientist. He speaks more about soul, man, love, woman, marriage and death than about his own experiment.

My Little Bit was published in 1919. It is a collection of articles, most of them written during the period of the First World War. In 1917 Corelli was convicted for food hoarding. But it was a vindictive judgement and the Bench at Stratford-on-Avon cannot be said to have done justice in the matter. "The whole story and why Marie could not appeal to Quarter-Sessions is given by her" in this book.

The Love of Long Ago and Other Stories was published in 1920.

1. The Young Diana - Preface.
The Secret Power, another pseudo-scientific romance, appeared in 1921. Corelli was embarrassed by the scientific progress of her time. The First World War brought to light deadly missiles and new kinds of aeroplanes. Corelli saw the destructive power of science. She had no scientific knowledge, but she had the "deepest sympathy with the scientific spirit and much intimate knowledge of new scientific ideas."¹

In The Secret Power, a woman-scientist, Morgona, discovers the capacity of radioactivity as a motive power to run airships. She keeps her discovery secret. A man-scientist, Roger Seaton, produces a tremendous destructive weapon, but preserves the secrecy of its formula. The writer refers to the 'sound-rays' through which the men from 'Brazen City' spoke to Morgona on the earth. One more curious element in the novel is that Morgona demands the union of mere souls at the expense of their physical bodies. Sexual union is "animal like."²

The scientist, R.A. Gregory, explained to Corelli later that there could be no 'sound-rays'. He also wrote to her regarding her views on sex: "To refined minds the intimate relations which result in child-birth may seem gross, but they are as much a part of our nature as creative thought or spiritual.

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aspirations, and their realisation may be the most supreme moment of life.\(^1\)

The 'ultra-scientific productions' of Morgona and Roger ended at last in disaster. These scientists discovered their powers independently and kept them 'secret'. If they were destroyed, there could not be perhaps any loss to scientific progress! Because science cannot be the property of one person. On the conclusions of the past scientists, living scientists base their work. This besides Morgona and Roger seem to be pseudo-scientists. If the romance is a 'parable'\(^2\) it may be said to point to the conclusion that modern scientific progress is moving towards the destruction of human civilization.

*Love and the Philosopher*, the last of Corelli's novels, was published in 1923. The book is a 'study in sentiment.' In this novel, there is a highly sophisticated philosopher who ignores and condemns the sentimental love of a girl, Sylvia, for himself. He liked her company, but he was indifferent to her excessive womanly feelings. But the passionate girl, seeing his coldness, turns her mind towards the adoring but common Jackass. However a gradual change takes place in the

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The philosopher. He himself grows sentimental. In the meanwhile Jack dies on the battle field. The "positively winning smile" of the 'new philosopher easily attracts the attention of the girl now. The novel set out, in a way to teach the truth that life without sentiment becomes dry and mechanical. But the sentimental side of man should be restrained. Otherwise it checks his progress towards Divinity.

It is an interesting message, but conveyed through an unusually silly poor story.

In her long literary career of about thirty seven years, Corelli published, in this way, twenty nine works of fiction and a collection of poems, besides some books and numerous pamphlets on social life and on literature. Her posthumous works, the *Open Confession to a Man from a Woman*, a record of her love-affair, and *Poems* were published in 1925 by Bertha Vyver.