

# The Lamp

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"Allons! after the great Companions, and to belong to them!"

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF LIFE.

There never was a time in the world when all the good people were so intent upon the salvation of their neighbours. Religions, fraternities, societies, orders, brotherhoods and individuals alike seem determined to fill the part of keeper to their brethren. But a little while ago everyone was looking after his own eternal interests; now the idea that these are wrapped up with those of other people has swung the thinking world round to the other extreme, and the impression has gone abroad that, provided one plays the saviour for others, it is quite legitimate to play the devil on one's own account.

As a general result, the men with halos on their heads are still largely restricted to the church windows. We have all been hoping for more than this. Halos were expected to have been as common as policemen's helmets. Sanguine and unsophisticated folks believe that it is the modesty of the owners that prevents their appearance, but virtue of that order would warrant a rainbow. A halo would be inadequate.

While most people and all religions talk about salvation, and it is understood that this has something to do with the soul, there are only about two men in a million who have the faintest glimmer of an idea as to what the soul is. In a general way people identify their souls with themselves; but as they change every year, and would not change back to be themselves of any former year, it is clear they have little knowledge of what it is they wish to have saved. Fifty years after they die they are unheard of and unthought of, and posterity is unani-

mous that there was nothing of them worth preserving—or it would have been preserved.

Salvation, whatever it may be, is particular to a man's self. No other can achieve it for him. He can only be helped to help himself. Everybody wants this unknown good, and many for a while seem to have grasped it; but presently it is seen that they, too, suffer and grieve with the rest of the world, and are not consoled. There are those who neglect, or scorn, or are utterly unaware of such an idea as salvation, or the soul, or halos. But none of these attitudes of mind affect facts. And there appears to be a solid foundation of fact to the belief of the ages in these respects.

This boon has been promised to men as a future reward which they should receive in heaven, or in another life in another planet, or when we are reborn to live on the earth after the rest of death and the heaven-world; but all these futurities are more or less unsatisfactory. I believe that what the heart of men is aching for is a very present help in the time of trouble, a salvation that will be effective here and now, a gift that will fire the heart, and stir the brain, and ennoble the body, till men see in the streets of their cities incarnate souls, and deem it fitting.

None who sincerely desire it can be shut out from a knowledge of the soul. More have gained that path than the world knows. There is a revelation of silence beyond that of speech.

The Tsar of all the Russias, at his coronation, takes the crown and sets it upon his own head. They who advance from among the listeners, to become