



Sympathetic Vibratory Physics

Can Will Power Run Motors?

by Gaston Burrige

The Rosicrucian Digest, May 1955

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John Keely, 1888

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John Keely, 1888

Did John Keely will his engines to run? Was he a human being possessing that strange facility to such a degree that he could actually experience 'mind over matter'? Could he make his engines turn at times, but did he fail to make them do so at other times? Did he realize he possessed such ability or were his failures to make his machinery operate at all times as baffling to him as were his successes to others?

These and many others are important questions. Probably, we will never be sure of their answers. Too many unknowns surround Keely and his experiments. Too much time has passed since. Many of the puzzle's pieces have been lost in the interim – or never had their part in the whole picture printed clearly.

More than 60 years ago, John Worrell Ernst Keely set the then scientific world speculating – speculating whether he had discovered a 'new force' or whether he was a fake. Keely kept that world guessing for years. After his death, in 1898, there were investigations. The result of these appeared to satisfy immediate problems, but left many questions to ponder. New developments in science have only added more questions.

It has been said that a man one year ahead of his times is progressive and respected. A man five years ahead of his times is a radical and dangerous. A man 20 years ahead of his times is a 'nut' and is shunned. Sir Isaac Newton's ideas were ridiculed for a considerable time before they were accepted. Galileo almost felt the fire!

The mystery-cloaking of Keely would have been even more clouded had it not been for the almost heroic efforts and generosity of a woman – Mrs. Clara Bloomfield-Moore. Without this woman's ability as a writer, her interest in esoteric matters, and her willingness to finance Keely's experiments, it is quite probable there would have been no historically interesting Keely! He would now be covered deeply beneath 'forgotten earth.' Some are inclined to ponder how much of Keely was Keely, and how much may have been Clara Bloomfield-Moore.

One thing is certain. Whatever klieg light may eventually come to rest on John Keely's name, close beneath it will be discovered Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore's. Her writings on Keely's accomplishments, experiments and philosophy, are about the only 'pro' Keely material we have today. Undoubtedly, she made him. Therefore, she deserves the light. Her book, Keely and his Discoveries, is now a collector's item. Published in London in 1883, this 375-page volume covers all of Keely's activities to that date.

In Chapter 10 – "The Coming Force," H. P. Blavatsky in The Secret Doctrine has much to say regarding Keely and his motors and philosophy. H. P. B. does not say that Keely had discovered a new force, but she does say, if he has, it is quite unlikely that he would be able to put it to general use – and that he would not be able to pass on his secret after death so that those left would be able to use it. There is more than a hint here that she considered Keely's engines were

run by a force transmitted to them by his will. At least, more than 60 years have borne out her predictions.

There are a few, today, who claim knowledge enough of Keely's motors to know they will produce power. However, they produce no samples! Those who claim to have the correct diagrams say Keely's engines will produce power. Thus they exonerate Keely, scientifically, of any fraud, but, in addition, they state that these motors will not produce power efficiently, nor in large quantities, in their present state of development. Even a motor, so built to Keely's specifications, which would no more than turn itself, would exonerate Keely scientifically to a far greater extent than can be done by words. Keely made his engines turn. Who has done it since? Until it is so accomplished, can we definitely rule out that Keely turned them by will?

In his book, *Wild Talents*, Chapter 32, Charles Fort takes a look at Keely. Characteristically, he finds Keely no more insincere than General Booth! Fort definitely states the possibility that Keely's motors might have been self-motors, that is, driven by power transmitted to them through Keely's willing. He also wonders if Keely was always able to make them turn when he wished. He doubts Keely could perform so well. Fort hints Keely may not have realized what it was that he possessed in the way of strange ability. This lack of knowledge may account for several of the strange positions taken by Keely during his lifetime.

John Worrell Keely lived most of his life in Philadelphia. His parents died while he was still an infant. His academic schooling is not supposed to have progressed farther than that acquired by the time he was 12. There are stories of his being a circus performer in late boyhood and early manhood. It is known he developed a keen enough ear, musically, to become director of a small orchestra while still a young man. Somewhere along the road of life, Keely learned the carpenter's trade and progressed in it to a journeyman status by 1872, when he gave the first demonstration of his new force.

Energy and Sound

Keely was always attracted by machinery of any sort. He predicted the airplane, but he saw it powered with apery – the name he gave his new energy – instead of with gasoline.

From Keely's own writings we find he had no idea that he had discovered 'perpetual motion' – nor was he searching for such. One of the ways he claimed his energy came was from the 'dissociation of the hydrogen and oxygen atoms making up a molecule of water.' Theoretically, if the supply of water were great enough, his motors, once set in motion, would run until the water supply ran out or the bearings gave out!

Of course, there is some force holding the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen together to make the molecule of water, just as there is some force holding any atoms together to make anything. It would appear Keely was thinking in terms of molecular force, or a force holding molecules of a compound together, rather than atomic force, or a force holding the atoms together. It is interesting to note that the element hydrogen was involved in this thinking. Hydrogen! The very thought of splitting its atom sends chills up the backs of many an occultist. And, no doubt, for good reason!

Keely said he set his machines in motion by sound. He accomplished this by drawing a bow across a set of tuning forks, or by plucking a series of chords on a zither. Sometimes he varied the tones by playing on a mouth organ. Those who have studied sound, and are inclined to look favorably upon Keely's work, say he had discovered how to strike the 'harmonics' which would cause the molecule of water to disintegrate. As the disintegration took place, Keely siphoned off and captured the energy so liberated, turning it to power his motors.

Those inclined to be skeptical of Keely, noted that his machinery either started or stopped when Keely played different notes, or combinations of notes. In other words, the apparatus did not always respond to the same set of notes in the same way. This, they said, was just another proof that Keely was a hoax. They may have been correct.

However, it might be well to bear in mind it was possible that Keely had invented a combination, or series of them, to baffle those who watched, in order to better protect his secret. Again, if Keely were running his motors by willing them to so move – and especially if he did not realize such a circumstance was taking place it is quite possible he was as much puzzled as anyone else, but was keen enough not to show it, thus playing for time and further research. On the other hand, if Keely did realize he was willing his machines to move, but did not know how he was accomplishing it, his search would be as great. There is some evidence pointing to his belief that he came to the conclusion he possessed a 'self-motor' – this, from the fact he refused to allow Thomas A. Edison to examine his apparatus, saying he did not think Mr. Edison 'understood the principles under which his motor operated'!

Keely claimed to tap energy also from 'the ether.' He claimed there was vast 'free energy locked within the ether,' and that his engines unlocked and used it.

The question of what the ether is, or whether it is or not, continues to be a matter each must decide for himself. There is much orthodox writing on the subject, all quite as abstract as orthodox thinking believes occult matters to be. Suffice it to say, if one has decided that there is no such thing as ether, then one cannot follow Keely on this portion of his philosophy.

We know the sun alone radiates millions upon millions of horsepower each hour which none of its satellites pick up. This energy has to do something, do somewhere, be absorbed somehow. It just does not cease to exist all at once! Therefore, Keely, and others who seek to tap the Cosmos for power, have a good basis, it would seem, for believing there was some there.

Keely said one of his problems was to release this etheric energy in small enough quantities at a time so it would not do bodily harm to him or his machines. Whether this problem manifested itself through, shall we say, slide rule logic or whether from actual experience, we are not sure. Perhaps both. Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore says, in one of her articles on Keely, that he suffered several accidents, minor but painful, through the improper handling of energy so released. Keely's detractors pooh-pooh such stories, saying the accidents came to him as they might come to anyone handling and working with machinery.

Here again, is it not possible that Keely may have lost mental control over his apparatus, momentarily, or for a longer period? This loss of control may have been a factor in his suffering the accidents, especially if the machines were in motion at the time of control loss.

Early in Keely's experimental life, The Keely Motor Company was formed to take advantage, business-wise, of any patents or discoveries Keely might make, and to provide Keely with funds with which to carry on his research. As often happens in such arrangements, The Keely Motor Company and John Keely became at odds. The rift widened until a situation of bankruptcy faced each. It was here that Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore stepped in with financial help, thus averting any possible disintegration.

She provided Keely with funds to pay his bills and carry on his research. As she was a wealthy widow with considerable prestige in Philadelphia, her sponsoring of Keely relieved the pressure temporarily in the Company also. This sponsorship of Keely was continued until 1895, or about 15 years.

A Guarded Secret

Keely had been working under this arrangement about a year when he announced a new discovery. One different from that used in his work over which the Keely Motor Company had control. This announcement fomented action on the part of the Company's directors. They immediately brought suit against Keely in an effort to force him to reveal the secret under which they felt he had worked for them. Keely refused to do this, saying he had not yet completed it to the extent that it could be protected by patent; hence, any public revelation of its nature would expose it to others for their research and might result in loss of all patent rights to the Keely Motor Company and himself. This did not satisfy the directors and trial was held. On the stand, Keely refused to answer those questions tending to reveal his secret. Finally, an impasse was reached, whereupon the trial Judge took over the questioning of Keely himself, in an effort to bring an end to the stalemate. Keely continued his refusal to answer. The Judge pointed out that refusal to answer direct questions from the Bench constituted contempt of court and that if Keely continued to do so, the Judge would find it necessary to confine him to jail until he changed his mind. Keely went to jail!

This brought about a most unsatisfactory situation all around. None of the parties concerned were getting anything they wished. Again, Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore came to the rescue! Through her efforts, it was arranged that the Court appoint a competent engineer, satisfactory to all. This engineer, sworn to secrecy, would visit Keely and there be advised of the difference between the two principles that Keely had discovered. After the engineer had satisfied himself, he would write a report which would explain the difference, yet would not reveal the innate secret of either principle.

This was carried out. The report must have been satisfactory because Keely was released and the Company dropped its suit.

Those inclined to call Keely a fake, point to Keely's verbosity, his admitted super-ability to 'talk well' where his inventions were concerned, his strange use of common words and phrases tending to cloud rather than clear the issue. They contend that the success of Keely's release came from these factors rather than the genuineness of his principles. They may have been correct in this view. It is possible the report would not stand in a court of today – as mentioned. However, it must be considered that any information upon which it would be judged today would also have gone into its writing, hence the end-results could well bring about the same balance.

The above incident could indicate, at this point of his experiments, that Keely was not certain of the cause of his successes or failures. It is quite evident, if he knew his machines turned through his willing them to do so, he could not testify to such in court. To have done so would have meant immediate confinement in a mental institution! Undoubtedly, he figured that his chances of getting released from jail on contempt-of-court charges would be much better than his chances to be released from a mental institution. We must admire his sagacity.

Truth is like a ruby – it takes an expert to tell whether it is genuine; and when experts disagree, then laymen get their views!

From the confusion surrounding Keely's death – immediately before and after – we are led to believe that he was not interested in any sort of deathbed confession. Nothing he did shows any hint of desiring to clear the greatly befuddled condition propagated during the last 25 years of his life. In fact, we can only conclude that he had a definite desire to befuddle it more. Why? We can only guess.

There is little question that he realized he was going to die some time before he did. If he were a faker, a swindler, his being such did not appear to prey upon his mind. Instead of being 'drugged by remorse,' his always active mind was working to further hide the reasons for his successes, to further bury the ones for his failures.

During his last short illness, Keely was visited by a Dr. Chase of Boston. Chase is reported to have been an 'old and trusted friend.' What the conversation may have been between them, we will never know, unless Dr. Chase's diary is found and published.

Upon Keely's death, as rumor has it, Dr. Chase went to the Keely laboratory workshop and removed several 'key' pieces of apparatus and some documents. These he took to Boston 'for safekeeping.' What became of this material no history appears to record. It may be collecting dust in the cellar storeroom of a museum, forgotten and unlabeled. It may be in possession of some high closet-shelf in a private home or barn, known or unknown. Again, it may be the basis of current claims that Keely had something! More probable, it found a junk pile long ago.

Whatever may be the correct answer, we do know that the investigations of Keely's work after his death lacked much in the way of physical evidence. Under such circumstances, it seems proper to conclude that the investigations were not entirely satisfactory, nor should they be given more than their share of prominence in arriving at overall conclusions regarding Keely and his work.

If John Keely were a fraud, we must conclude that he was a good one. Few have surpassed him. If he was insane, as some contend, then he was one of the exceptional cases of history, and should be studied for any knowledge such a case must be able to reveal.

If Keely were deluded by some cavorting fancy, some quirk of fate, then surely we never have had a stranger case. If he touched the right wire and actually tapped the Universal Force, then he was too much ahead of his times. Had he worked out the equation, he might have upset the whole world. Perhaps it was best that it ended as it did.