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**Jephthah, and Other Mysteries,
Lyrical and Dramatic
By Aleister Crowley
(London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.)**

The peculiar story of Jephthah has been often treated by poets, but never, as it seems to us, so effectively as by Mr. Crowley. His adoption of the Greek form, in which the chorus takes a leading part, was well advised. The chorus lends spring and power to the progress of the tragedy, which consists in the sacrifice, through accident, of the virgin daughter of Jephthah, who never dreamed that his vow would lead to such a catastrophe. The verse is bold and beautiful, and the whole piece is certainly very striking. While not of course intended for the stage, it seems to us that with proper condensation it would offer an admirable subject to the composer who wished to distinguish himself in the region of oratorio. One characteristic of Mr. Crowley's book cannot fail to strike the commonest reader—the eminently Swinburnian tone of its music. The younger poet calls the elder his master, and addresses to him a dedication which is not altogether unworthy of Mr. Swinburne's earlier muse. It is full of large patriotic ideas expressed in far-rolling and fervent language, in which the spirit of the master breathes. Something of the same kind may be said of Mr. Crowley's "Prelude," which contains passages that would certainly make little Christians shiver should they happen to read them. We do not quite see what purpose the poet means to serve by such an outburst of chaotic verse. It is like the roar of an idol-breaker who is in danger of breaking his own head. The next considerable piece after "Jephthah" is entitled "The Five Kisses," which contains some fine lyrical verse. "The Poem, a little Drama in four Scenes," is a very nothing and might be called silly. "The Legend of Ben Ledi" is admirably spun out, and is one of the best lyrical effusions in the book. It is in fact a capital ballad. An "Ode to Poesy" is a fine production: several of the sonnets should have found no place in such a work—especially "A Sonnet of Blasphemy." Happily, there are many

redeeming lyrics, and "In the Woods with Shelley" is one of them. It is simple, yet beautiful. Mr. Crowley's volume is in some sense a remarkable one; but it would be more pleasing if the poet were less given to certain wild flashes, as in the two sonnets written "At the Hour of Eclipse, Wednesday, Dec 28."