

THE CAMBRIDGE REVIEW
2 NOVEMBER 1899

THE PAPER-KNIFE.
SHORT NOTICES.

Review of *The Tale of Archais*

'The Tale of Archais.' by a Gentleman of the University of Cambridge. 1898. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.) It is scarcely to be deplored that the public shews little taste for such spurious romanticized mythology as the author of this little book has (in spite of his University training) dished up. Mr Swinburne indeed set the fashion for this class of poetry, but it is a vein which, in the nature of things, cannot be at once extensively and successfully worked. If this is a typical result of its working, the sooner would-be poets turn their energies in another direction the better.

A stanza from this poem stands upon the front page of *'Songs of the Spirit'* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.), by Aleister Crowley, so that we may fairly infer an intellectual kinship between the two authors. If so, this is unlucky for the author of *'Archais,'* as Mr Crowley does not reach a very high level. His work is redolent of blood and God and kisses, sharp swords, lilies and fire—all the furniture of mysterious eroticism. Fortunately Cambridge, among whose sons apparently Mr Crowley is to be numbered, has produced better poets than him. But whatever his shortcomings, he is at least an original observer. We suppose that the Trinity dance is the occasion upon which he remarks of the Cam that

Foul censers, altars desecrated, blight
The corpse-lit river.

Elsewhere he sings—

So glad of life am I,
If an angel came to call me I'm sure I should not die.

Perhaps it is a pity that there is little chance of his assurance being put to the test.