

THE BIRMINGHAM DAILY GAZETTE
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BOOKS OF THE DAY.

VARIETIES IN VERSE.

The Soul of Osiris. By Aleister Crowley. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co. Limited.) 5s.

It is not often that one is able to close a book of modern verse, and by a hitherto unknown author, with the feeling that here is the promise of a new poet. Of course, the occurrence must be, of necessity, of extreme rarity. In "The Soul of Osiris" there is no doubt that there is the fairest promise of not only good but great work to come, and one can only hope that the author will go on from the achievement of this volume to higher achievements in the near future. When we reflect on the considerable bulk of the book and the equality of its several poems, we are assured of the justice of our first impression, and it is therefore with some feeling that we announce it. In "The Soul of Osiris" we have a human document, and we can only compare it with those which Charles d'Orleans, Francoise Villon, and Paul Verlaine have given us. Everyone who is a student of the personal note in art knows what these great masters have given us, the value and the truth of it all. To such the work to be found in "The Soul of Osiris" will be a joy. Our comparison is, of course, limited: we are not dealing with the whole work of a poet who has passed away and comparing it with the whole work of other poets; we have but the beginnings of a body of work, but the spirit is present, and the achievement accomplished in this first fragment is such as warrants us in making our somewhat bold comparison. The spirit of it is entirely akin to the suffering which was part physical but in greater part mental. It was the stress of poetic emotion, an emotion which was so keen as to be a part of every waking moment of life, that renders all such poetry so poignant, and there is this poignancy of emotion in "The Soul of Osiris." And yet there is joy in the book: joy over accomplishment. The accomplishment of a great travail resulting in the birth of something fine and lovely, travail because of the immensity of the problem and the doubt

of its complete solution. Solution there is, however. Mr. Crowley had the prophet's vision when he wrote at the end of the book, "The Epilogue is Silence." That chapter of his life is securely ended and he wakes to new things, and we shall be glad indeed to witness his solution of those also, as we have participated in the solved problem he has already presented in verse worthy of the greatness of his theme. As poetry this book reaches a high technical excellence: there are some small inequalities, but they are not worth calling attention to, for the general level of the verse is so high. Mr. Crowley seems to possess all the attributes of a true poet, and we sincerely trust that the promise of this—as far as we know his first volume—will be speedily followed by its successor.