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REVIEW OF *THE MOTHER'S TRAGEDY*

Mr. Aleister Crowley is a poet who is apparently under the obsession of an esoteric view of life and human destiny. He endeavours to grapple with the dark problems which exercised the imagination of John Ford. He views the sexual problem from the standpoint of an unconventional student of human nature. His creed is a singular mixture of belief in Osiris and in Christ. The principal poem in his new volume is a powerful dramatic sketch ending in something like a tragic farce. The love of a man for his own mother, not according to a moral but a sexual standard, is not quite a novel idea, but Mr. Crowley handles the subject in a revolting fashion, which the Greek poets avoided, owing to their keen artistic sensibility. Some passages in this drama are really very fine; and "The Fatal Force" is also a dramatic poem of singular power, though the subject is equally horrible. There is scarcely a poem in the entire volume free from morbidity; and yet it is impossible to deny that Mr. Crowley has a claim to recognition as a true poet. Most men who have thought deeply on life's problems recognise that the current religion of nearly all their fellow men is an idle mockery. The relations of men and women, as well as the constitution of states and families, are based largely on organised lies. We cannot shrink from looking behind the veil, and asking ourselves—What is life at best? Is it materialism and obscenity? or is it a sickening comedy in which nobody cares whether the consequences of his actions are injurious to others or not? Mr. Crowley seems to hold that the world is reeking with rotteness—and he is, to a great extent, right. His poems, "Mors Janua Amoris" and "The Whore in Heaven," will horrify the votaries of Mrs. Grundy. At the same time, these daring verses contain a large share of elementary truth. But we live in a hypocritical age, and apparently the author of these extraordinary poems realises the fact, for his volume is "privately printed." The epilogue, "A Death in Sicily," is really a magnificent poem—pagan in its intensity and vividness of colouring; but the prudes who think nakedness impurity and who abjectly fear death will denounce this really gifted poet as "immoral."