

TRUTH
23 FEBRUARY 1905

THE CHANCE OF THE YEAR!
THE CHANCE OF THE CENTURY!!
THE CHANCE OF THE GEOLOGIC PERIOD!!!

With reference to a paragraph that appeared in TRUTH of the 2nd inst., I have received a letter from Mr. Aleister Crowley, the delay being accounted for by the fact that the writer is in Switzerland. It may be remembered that Mr. Crowley is an author, and that a Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth—inaccurately referred to in my paragraph as the "Society for Promoting Religious Truth"—has been inviting members of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to compete for a prize of £100, to be given for the best essay on Mr. Crowley's works, a cheap edition of which was offered for the convenience of competitors. Mr. Crowley explains that the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth are his publishers, and that their interest in him is purely commercial. I cannot help thinking that Mr. Crowley would do well to restrain, if he can, the commercial enterprise of his publishers, for this method of advertising and stimulating sales, however suitable to soap or hair-wash, is hardly with keeping with the nature of literary wares, and is likely to do more harm than good to the unfortunate author who is exploited in such a way.

Mr. Crowley is a modest man, but also a little unreasonable. His modesty prompts him to confess that he is unknown, his unreasonableness leads him to impute this fact to me, because, though all his productions have been sent to TRUTH for review, none of them has ever received a notice. As a journalist I cannot afford to be modest; but when Mr. Crowley implies, as he does, that a notice in TRUTH is the sole avenue by which an author can become famous, regard for strict veracity, which is another characteristic of journalists, compels me to observe that, though all the other journals in Britain may not be able to do as much for an author as Truth, yet, collectively, they can do something to make a man known.

Besides, it may be the fault of the reviewer quite as much as the editor of a paper if an author's works remain unnoticed. Not that I am going to blame my reviewer in this instance. After reading Mr. Crowley's letter, I caused search to be made

among books which have not been noticed in TRUTH, and one of this gentleman's slighted volumes was brought to light. It was a little poem. So far as I am a judge of the article, it was rather good poetry—of a sort. But if all the rest of the author's works are of the same sort, the reason why newspapers have not made the author famous is pretty simple and obvious. Judging by this sample, one would hardly select this gentleman's writings for special study at Oxford and Cambridge; and many people would be disposed to speak unkindly of a publishing firm whose commercial instincts led them to offer a prize with such an end in view. In this case the publishers style themselves the "Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth." That a body with this sanctimonious title should issue the particular work to which I have referred, and adopt this particular means of pushing the sale, is one of the strangest things I have heard of for a long while. The names of the parties forming this singular "society" deserved to be publicly known, and as Mr. Crowley is probably familiar with them, I suggest that he should favour me with the information.