

THE ACADEMY
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LIFE AND LETTERS

We are glad to see that our contemporary *Vanity Fair* is shedding, or, at any rate, toning down some of its more violent Socialistic and Anarchical opinions. On the other hand, it has lately broken out into a perfect torrent of rather dubious poetry. This week the editor prints an effusion by a Mr. Aleister Crowley, entitled "After Judgment," which combines the qualities of blasphemy and silliness in a quite remarkable degree. This is how Mr. Crowley addresses the Deity:—

For this I curse Thee! She was fair
As day and brighter than the moon,
And all the gold sung in her hair,
And all the dawn of May, of June,

Kindled her cheeks; her eyes were blue
As all Thy skies, as all Thy seas.
Her mouth—oh, God! Her mouth, that slew
Imagination's ecstasies!

For while I praised the pearl-clear skin,
The bright lithe body's supple growth,
By God! I could not even begin
To say one word about her mouth!

Later on Mr. Crowley lashes himself into the following beautiful exhibition of fine frenzy:—

With corn and wine; Thou hast made Thee man;
Thou hast loved and suffered, died and risen;
But—hath Thy mouth grown white and wan,
Sucked out into that strange sweet prison?

Nay, Thou hast never kissed the mouth
Of Dorothy! As I—as I!
Thou hast never felt its eager growth
Upon my Lesbian ecstasy.

Therefore I curse Thee not, accurst,
Who art in that one flower foregone—
And I, the last, match Thee, the first,
When that red mouth I fasten on.

Farewell! O God, in endless bliss
Crowned, with Thine angels singing by;
I go to hell, with her last kiss
Yet tingling in my memory.

Nay, start not from Thy throne! I go
At Thy black damning to the deep.
Thou canst not follow me! I know
This thing I had, and this I keep.

God! I have loved! I love! I love!
And shall love through Thine ageless hell.
Thou hast the kingdom of the Above,
And I, her memory. Fare Thee well!

To Thine I am—supreme exclaim,
The total of all that may be said!
I answer from the abyss of flame;
Dorothy! And her mouth was red.

It is quite obvious that if one were to allow oneself to take a serious view of this sort of writing, the only thing to do would be to shout for the police, or even to requisition the aid of the Fire Brigade in an attempt to quench the ardours of Mr. Aleister Crowley's "Lesbian ecstasy." It is perhaps fortunate for Mr. Crowley that his frantic yelpings after the tremendous produce, along with disgust, a certain amount of laughter. It is impossible to take seriously a man who can write such unspeakable balderdash. One thing is certain, nobody but a tom-fool editor would print it. We venture to think that Mr. Frank Harris has allowed his editorial judgment to be unduly influenced by the knowledge that Mr. Crowley is an admirer of his novel, "The Bomb," a momentous fact which was revealed to the listening earth some weeks ago in an advertisement of that work which appeared in the most prominent part of the body of Mr. Harris's paper. We have noticed that ever since Mr. Crowley expressed his admiration for "The Bomb," he has been allowed to spread himself all over the pages of *Vanity Fair* the obvious detriment of such of the lies as still continue to read that wonderful

journal. This is a pity from Mr. Harris's point of view, as tending to show that the sort of people who admire "The Bomb" are not the kind of persons for whose judgment in literary matters one can entertain respect. "The Bomb," by the way, according to the ever-recurring advertisement which Mr. Harris with characteristic modesty continues week after week to cause to appear among the reading matter right in the middle of his paper, is still in its second edition. We can understand Mr. Harris's pride and joy in the fact, but surely his readers are now sufficiently informed on the point, and might not further announcements be postponed till it has reached a third edition? At present the announcement that, after all the combined roars of approval from Mr. Frank Harris's admirers, "The Bomb" has got no further than the second edition, which it reached at least six weeks ago, cannot be regarded as either exhilarating or important from the point of view of Mr. Harris, whatever effect it may produce on those who do not happen to be enamoured of the great work. Having reached a second edition, *j'y suis, je reste* seems to be the motto of "The Bomb." We do not repine; quite the contrary.