

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

November 1911

BOOKS

Hail Mary. By Aleister Crowley. Wieland and Co.

We crave for poetry in England, but we do not like poets, unless they are exceeding conventional when we can laureate them, because in the national search for what is called character we condemn the vagaries which are the attributes of genius. Every school-girl reads Shelley, yet how badly we treated him! Byron is not allowed to rest in Poet's Corner. We treated Swinburne as if he were Crippen. And we have treated Mr. Aleister Crowley in much the same way. Yet Mr. Crowley is one of our few real poets. He has written things in Ambergris which will never die. Some years ago a little book of verse appeared, called *Amphora*, which being anonymous was attributed to an actress. It bore a strong religious note, an ecstatic sense, and it was at once recognized as genuine poetry. Now it has come forth, retitled *Hail Mary* and signed Aleister Crowley. We hope it will be widely read, and serve as an introduction to some of Mr. Crowley's other works of poetry. Particularly we hope the Church will look at it. They will find a religious sense that will astonish some of them. The real trouble about Mr. Crowley is this: he is a true poet—he cannot compromise. The persecution of silly and unkind men has wounded him. It is for literary men now to come forward and stand by him. Hear this—

We in the world of woe who stray
Lift up our hearts to Thee and pray:
Turn all our pain to virgin might,
And all our sorrow into light!

May his enemies learn from these words to "lift up" their hearts with him.