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**THE DIARY OF A DRUG FIEND.**

The Diary of a Drug Fiend. By Aleister Crowley. Collins. 7s. 6d. net.

Aleister Crowley began publishing poems as far back as 1898 and he has gone on writing remarkable prose and verse ever since. But you cannot buy his books in any shop and I do not suppose even he himself has a complete collection. Yet I have no hesitation in saying that he is one of the greatest poets England has ever produced. I daresay he has written fifty volumes, some solid masses of sonorous and beautiful verse like "Orpheus," others poisonously bitter pamphlets like "Chicago May." He is mystical, obscure, frankly indecent, but almost always arresting. He is for ever attracted by magic as witness the twelve ponderous volumes of "The Equinox." He has studied drugs. Perhaps by their help he once hoped to attain ecstasy:

"Not by the pipings of a bird  
In skies of blue on fields of gold,  
But by a fierce and loathly word  
The abomination must be told.  
The holy work must twist its spell  
From hemp of madness, grown in hell."

To-day he would appear to have found out the folly of such false fantasies as drugs may momentarily give and he has written a novel, "The Diary of a Drug Fiend," which not only shows the foolishness of doping, but is also a careful study of its effects and gives a hint as to how the habit may be cured. The book is divided into three parts. Paradiso which describes the ecstasies. Inferno which pictures the horrors of the reaction and Purgatorio which tells how the hero and heroine are gradually weaned and regain sanity.

Crowley draws a sketch of himself in King Lamus, not exactly the same sort of man as the villain described by Somerset Maugham in the "Magician," though in a sense more true to life, and his portraits of Lou and her husband Peter are full of ge-

nus. Crowley is a complete master of English and his vocabulary is stupendous. He also has a great and cruel humour, therefore the book will hit the reader hard. Which is exactly what Crowley wants. It is not a great novel but it is a fine piece of literature. No one can do good work unless they know their subject, and few people have studied the effects of drugs upon the mind with the industry and intelligence of the man who writes this book. Crowley is not only a poet of the first rank but he is also a student of the mind. When he was living in London he gave queer parties and would serve the guests with drugs and ask them to write down their experiences carefully. The Chinese like opium and I have never seen that, taken in moderation. It has had a bad effect upon them. Some Mexican tribes like anhalonium. Here, in London, the police believe cocaine and heroin are largely fashionable. Each land has its own mental stimulant, and those who are strong enough to stop before they have had too much don't suffer. Humanity needs a stimulant and only fanatics forbid wine, beer, spirits, opium, tobacco, morphia and cocaine, and only those without any self-control are injured by stimulants. The present prosecution of poor creatures who drug is sad. They should not be imprisoned but cured. Crowley has some sound things to say on this point.

The book will largely be read not only because it is well-written, but because it deals with a subject so many people discuss, and because the author knows his subject inside out and has the art to make it vivid. Crowley has been in every part of the earth, read everything, and studied everything, therefore, even those who have long since become bored with the drug craze will find astonishing passages which will make them think, and pen pictures of people and places which will make them laugh. Some of them may even visit "Telepylus." Then Crowley will laugh.