STRANGE HOUSES OF SLEEP. By ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE. William Rider and Sons, 12*s*. 6*d*. net.

I have always held Arthur Edward Waite for a good poet; I am not sure that he is not a great poet; but that he is a great mystic there can be no manner of doubt.

"Strange Houses of Sleep," conceived in the abyss of a noble mind and brought forth in travail of Chaos that hath been stirred by the Breath, is one of the finest records of Mystical Progress that is possible to imagine.

I may be biased in my judgment by this fact, that long ago when first my young heart stirred within me at the sound of the trumpet—perchance of Israfel—and leapt to grasp with profane hands the Holy Grail, it was to Mr. Waite that I wrote for instruction, it was from him that came the first words of help and comfort that I ever had from mortal man. In all these years I have met him but once, and then within a certain veil; yet still I can go to his book as a child to his father, without diffidence or doubt; and indeed he can communicate the Sacrament, the Wafer of his thought, the Wine of his music.

And if in earthly things the instructions of his Master seem contrary to those of mine, at the end it is all one. Shall we cry out if Caesar for his pleasure commandeth his servants to take one the spear and the other the net, and slay each other? Is not service service? Is not obedience a sacrament apart from its accidents?

However this may be, clear enough it is that Mr. Waite has indeed the key to certain Royal Treasuries. Unfortunately, just as to face the title-page he gives us the portrait of a man in a frock-coat, so within the book we have the Muse in a dress-improver and a Bond Street hat. Never mind; even those who dislike the poetry may love to puzzle out the meaning.

Detailed criticism is here impossible for lack of two illusions, time and space! I will only add that I was profoundly interested in the final book, "The King's Dole." No mystic who is familiar only with Christian symbolism can afford to neglect this Ritual.

Vale, Frater!

A. C.