

**THE SCOTSMAN
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POETRY.

The Sword of Song, called by Christians the Book of the Beast. By Aleister Crowley. 10s. Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, Benares.

The most remarkable thing about this volume is the luxury of its material appointment—thick, glazed paper, head-lines and side notes on every page printed in red, while the main body of the book, verse and prose, is in handsome black. This is always something, but it handicaps the poet, and a reader naturally expects something tremendously fine in the way of afflatus to fill all this typographic sail. Well, the poetry here is disappointing. It is not so much that it is absolutely unintelligible; for a poet may talk consummate nonsense, if only he do charm; but the truth is, it is metaphysical, mystical, not to say esoteric; and (to make no bones about it) dull. The one idea of both the verse and the prose essays in the appendix seems to be to discredit Christianity and exalt Buddhism. But when the author annotates one of his lines thus—"This and the next sentence have nineteen distinct meanings," and the reader is not able to make out any of the same, it is almost twenty to one he won't enjoy the book. Sometimes the rhyme and the rhythm suggest an imitation of Browning; but, so far as the thought is concerned, Browning, in comparison with this author, is positively pellucid.