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## REVIEW OF *THE STAR AND THE GARTER*

Mr. Aleister Crowley's volumes succeed one another with a rapidity that almost takes one's breath away. *The Star and the Garter*, hitherto only accessible in a privately printed edition, is now offered to the public at the low price of one shilling. The *Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth* has assuredly no connection with the S.P.C.K. or kindred bodies; but, whatever its aims may be, it may be congratulated on the *format* of its publications. But more than wide margins and bold type are needed to make *The Star and the Garter* understood of the people, which, like much of the author's verse, is symbolical and introspective. In form it bears outward semblance to Tennyson's *Maud*, but in spirit it is akin to the *Poems and Ballads* of Mr. Swinburne. Baudelaire and W.E. Henley are discernable literary influences in this feverish riot of soul at odds with flesh in an atmosphere charged with erotic emotion. The physiological explanation of love, in Canto XII, beginning with

"To and fro  
The motor axis of the brain  
Hits on the cerebellum hard,  
Makes the medulla itch;"

and so on to thirteen lines, may be technically correct, but it certainly fails to constitute quintessential poetry. Occasionally Mr. Crowley startles us by prosaic metaphor, as

"Then let not memory shrink abashed,  
Once started on this giddy whirl!  
Hath not a lightning image flashed  
Of my divine boot-button girl?"

Farther on he vouchsafes a quaint explanation of this epithet:

"Her face is round and hard and small  
And pretty—hence the name I gave her  
Of the boot-button girl."

We like him best in lyrical passages such as:

“And who is then the moon? Bend close,  
And clothe me in a silken kiss,  
And I will whisper to my rose  
The secret name of Artemis.”

It would, doubtless, be unjust to tax Robert Browning with having been intentionally cryptic in his utterances, but no one assuredly would venture to gainsay the poet's vindication of his poetry, that he did “not write for the smoking-room.” To the end of time