

**THE MORNING LEADER
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(page 5)**

SUB ROSA.

I have before me a circular across which is printed in large type these rousing and attractive phrases:

The chance of the Year!
The chance of the Century!!
The chance of the Geologic Period!!!

It is not a betting circular; it has nothing to do with lotteries or money-lenders; it is in no way concerned with the Spanish prisoner, American School of Science, the Segno Success Club, or any of the ordinary requests to people to make a fortune in five minutes, and to live happily ever afterwards. The appeal is to all those who have literary ambition—a good working majority of mankind.

The Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, of Bole-skin, Foyers, Inverness, are the authors of this offer of a "Career for an Essay," and they remark with justifiable confidence:

Everyone into whose hands this pamphlet may come is sure to know somebody ambitious to make a name in Literature. Here is his opportunity. BEGINNERS with BRAINS have a better chance than professional critics who are perhaps palsied by prejudice.

I make no comment on that glancing allusion to professional critics—indeed, as I meet some of them very often it would be indiscreet for me to say anything to increase their natural irritability. But the writer of the circular is on safer ground when he mentions the fact that everybody knows somebody ambitious to make a name in Literature.

Let me turn to Mr. Dooley on this point—and I may say that Mr. Dooley and Shakespeare (I apologise to Mr. D. for even suggesting that he has a rival) have said something about everything. This universality of literary ambition has impressed the American genius, and led him to say:

In thousan's iv happy homes some wan is pluggin' away at th' romantic novel or woalin' out a pome on th' typewriter upstairs. A fam'ly without an author is as contemptible as wan without a priest. Is Malachi near-sighted, peevish, averse to th' ends an' can't tell whether th' three in th' front yard is blue or green? Make an author iv him! Does Miranda prisint no attractions to th' young men iv th' neighborhood, does her over-skirt dhrag, an' is she poor with th' gas-range! Make an authoreen iv her!

From this the reader will be able to gather that in this market the supply of raw material is always equal to the demand. The only people now without literary ambition are the very few who know how to write.

It may be that by this time the reader is as anxious to know what is the offer made by the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth (of Boleskine, Foyers, Inverness), as some of us are to know what is the "offer" of the colonies which is alleged to have been revealed to Joseph in a dream. Well, leaving that colonial proposal on one side, I may say that society offer

A Prize of One Hundred Pounds for an Essay
upon the Works of Aleister Crowley.

Now, I hope that my readers will not pretend to know all about Aleister, because I imagine that most of them had not seen his name before to-day. I may warn those who feel inclined to thumb furtively the pages of the Dictionary of National Biography of the Century Cyclopædia of Names, or the Encyclopædia Britannica, that such a search will be fruitless, for Aleister is unmentioned in those works.

Yet, Mr. Aleister Crowley wrote, or is alleged to have written, quite a large number of books, and some of them sold (supposing that they did sell) at quite respectable prices. Here is a list of his works, with prices:

"Aceldama," 21s.: "The Tale of Archais," 5s.:
"Songs of the Spirit," 5s. 6d.: "Jezebel," 21s.:
"An Appeal to the American Republic," 1s.:
"Jephthah," 7s. 6d.: "The Mother's Tragedy," 5s.:
"The Soul of Osiris," 5s.: "Carmen Saeculare," 2s.
6d.: Tannhäuser," 7s. 6d.: "Berashith," 5s.: "The

God-eater," 2s. 6d.: "Alice," 21s.: "The Sword of Song," 10s.: "The Star and the Garter," 1s.: "The Argonauts," 5s.: "Goetia," 21s.: "Why Jesus Wept," 21s.

It will be seen that Mr. A. Crowley was a versatile man—perhaps I ought to use the present tense, for it may be that Aleister is alive, and if that be the case I trust he is in good health and spirits, and I offer him the usual greetings of the season.

How many of my readers feel competent to write an essay on these works? The essay, according to the published conditions may be "either hostile or appreciative," and though I am quite without personal malice in regard to the author, I recommend hostile treatment. I am not a "professional critic palsied by prejudice," but I know enough about the business to be aware that it is more easy to assail than to praise when one is not well-informed as to the topic in hand. Further conditions are that

In awarding the prize, the following essential points will be taken into consideration:

- (a) Thoroughness of treatment.
- (b) Breadth of treatment.
- (c) Excellence of prose style.
- (d) Originality.
- (e) Scholarship.

The competition is open to all the world. Competing essays must be written in English.

It is hoped that the last condition will not be enforced too rigidly, for many of those who are inspired, nay inflamed, by literary ambition, do not include the use of English in the list of their accomplishments.

Probably all that is meant is that the use of foreign and alien tongues is ruled out. I regret this, as it seems to me that Mr. Crowley's works could be criticized very happily by those familiar with the Coptic, Ethiopian, Mæso-Gothic, Russian, Illyrian, or Runic alphabets—but, after all, the society is offering the prize, and is, therefore, entitled to draw up the conditions regulating the competition. Moreover, it ought not to pass the wit of man to produce an appropriate criticism of the works in question in good, plain English.

The reader who has observed the prices of Mr. Aleister Crowley's works may shrink from so large an outlay, and so I have pleasure in drawing attention to a very handsome offer made by the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth. They are prepared to sell Vol. I, of the works in question ("Acelandama" to "Tannhäuser"; extra crown 8vo., pp. 300 circa, on Indian paper, wrappers) for 5s. only, to bona-fide competitors. That is to say, you can have for 5s. books which were published at £3 19s.—and you have the chance at a prize of £100, and the opportunity of making a name in literature thrown in.

The cynic may feel inclined to say that the object of the offer is to encourage people to buy a stock of books for which there has been no very great demand of late. I mention such a suggestion only to dismiss it with contempt. There are people who might stoop to such an unworthy device, but the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, Boleskine, Foyers, Inverness, is above suspicion.

There is another reward to be enjoyed by the winner of this competition, for the circular contains this encouraging proviso:

The rights of the prize essay are vested in the society, which undertakes to publish the winning essay at its own expense, on terms of half profits.

Who can say how large an income may be derived from half the profits on the best essay on the works of Aleister Crowley? There may be a mansion, motor-cars ad lib., fur-coats, diamond studs, and all the other insignia of success. And in addition to this material pomp and circumstance there would be the more honorable distinction of being the man who knew all about Aleister Crowley—or who, at least, knew more about him than was known by others. It may encourage the timid if I state that I am not competing, and thus one formidable obstacle is removed.

S. L. H.