

THE OCCULT REVIEW AUGUST 1910

Review of *Ambergris*.

AMBERGRIS. A Selection from the Poems of Aleister Crowley.
Elkin Mathews. Price 3s. 6d. net.

We have lately received this book of poems by the talented author, Mr. Aleister Crowley, the high-priest of a cult as sacred as any which the Sufis cherish in their perfumed gardens, and having glanced in our usual casual manner at the contents, we were immediately drawn to peruse the whole with avidity. Nor did we regret our labours, for, suffering from one of our slight attacks of depression, the optimistic spirit which pervades the poetry of this author left us in an unusually contented state of mind. Here is the conclusion of a poem called *Astrology*:—

So shalt thou conquer Space, and lastly climb
The walls of Time,
And by the golden path the great have trod
Reach up to God!

Yet are we not surfeited with this spirit, for the author shows himself not altogether unsympathetic with those who sometimes see a darker side. He can touch with a hand that soothes without repelling those subtle wrinkles of the brain which draw us into the depths without our being able to analyse them. Perhaps it is worth while here to quote the whole of the last stanza from a *Song* taken from *The Tale of Archais*:—

All the subtle airs are proven
False at dewfall; at the dawn
Sin and sorrow, interwoven,
Like a veil are drawn
Over love and all delight.
Grey desires invade the white.
Love and life are but a span;
Woe is me! and woe is man!

This seemed to us to carry some of the spirit of Swinburne and reminded us of *The Forsaken Garden*, especially the stanza beginning:—

Here death may deal not again forever.

The author assumes a certain mock modesty in the preface, but we do not think he need fear any "widely-spread lack of interest." The book contains between fifty and sixty poems, all with an exuberant style and showing great technical skill in metre. The lines flow in rhythmical waves and one is carried along by the sound as well as the sense. Space compels us to close with the following stanza, which carries with it a haunting memory:—

She laughs in wordless swift desire
A soft Thalassian tune;
Her eyelids glimmer with the fire
That animates the moon;
Her chaste lips flame, as flames aspire
Of poppies in mid-June.

PERCIVAL ROBERTS.