

A DREAMER'S TALES. By LORD DUNSANY.

Lord Dunsany's prose is like Baudelaire's. I can only criticise five of these tales; for the others I have not yet read forty times!

"Poltarnees" is the best tale ever written of the lure of the Sea. I wish I could think that my "Anima Lunae" helped to inspire it.

"Bethmoora" and "The Hashish Man" are really one tale. Words really fail me here; if I quote one half sentence all who really understand English will know that this is the perfection of the sublime in its simplicity. "Away we went from that small, pale, heinous man."

"Pore Ole Bill" seems derived from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "the Yarn of the Nancy Bell." Mixed. What could be more ridiculous? Yet I read it again and again, and the oftener I read it the keener does its fascination grip me.

And what shall I say of "The Sword and the Idol"? Only this; that it is true. Lord Dunsany has really beheld the dawn of the Iron Age, and the conquest of the King by the Priest. G. W. Foote ought to publish this tale as an atheistic pamphlet; it is the best ever written. And yet to me "The Silence of Ged" (Oh bold my Lord Dunsany!) came as a voice in the wood at midnight, when the sword-holder raises his steel against Ged. Ged neither hit nor shrank—in the end the sword was laid as an offering upon his knees.

So let the adept sit smiling through all that may befall him; then those that hate him shall wonder at his strength; in the end they shall worship him. And He, an He speak, shall by speaking save; an He yet keep silence, shall by keeping silence, bless. Amen.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

THE MESSAGE OF THUBA MLEEN

I

Far beyond Utnar Véhi, far beyond
The Hills of Hap,
Sits the great Emperor crowned with diamond,
Twitching the rosary in his lap—
The rosary whose every bead well-conned
With sleek unblinking bliss
Was once the eyeball of an unborn child of his.

II

He drank the smell of living blood, that hissed
On flame-white steel.
He tittered while his mother's limbs were kissed
By the fish-hooks on the Wheel
That shredded soul and shape, more fine than mist
Is torn by the bleak wind
That blows from Kragua and the unknown lands behind.

III

As the last flesh was flicked, he wearied; slaves
From bright Bethmoora
Sprang forward with carved bowls whose crimson craves
Green wine of hashish, black wine of datura,
Like the Yann's earlier and its latter waves!
These wines soothed well the spleen
Of the Desert's bastard brother Thuba Mleen.

IV

He drank, and eyed the slaves. "Mwass, Dagricho,
Xu-Xulgulura,
Saddle your mules!" he whispered, "ride full slow
Unto Bethmoora
And bid the people of the city know
That that most ancient snake,
The Crone of Utnar Véhi, is awake."

V

Thus twisted he his dagger in the hearts
Of those two slaves
That bore him wine; for they knew well the arts
Of Utnar Véhi—what the grey Crone craves!—
Knew how their kindred in the vines and marts
Of bright Bethmoora, thus accurst,
Would rush to the mercy of the Desert's thirst.

VI

I would that Mana-Yood-Sushai would lean
And listen, and hear
The tittering, thin-bearded, epicene,
Dwarf, fringed with fear,
Of the Desert's bastard brother Thuba Mleen!
For He would wake, and scream
Aloud the Word to annihilate the dream.