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LITERARY NOTICES.

"Jephthah and other Mysteries, Lyrical and Dramatic," by Aleister Crowley. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co. Limited.

Mr. Crowley has issued an ambitious volume, beautiful with wide margins and rough edges, and enriched with the wealth of a boundless vocabulary. It is dedicated to Algernon Charles Swinburne, "most sacred soul, most reverend head," and both in the lines of this dedication, and in other portions of the book, the mighty influence of the "Master" can easily be traced. There is considerable technical skill in all the pieces; indeed, Mr. Crowley appears to have a natural gift of rhyme, and seldom fails to use it effectively, even in his most involved stanzas. And some of his stanzas are involved. What meaning can be extracted from such verse as this, with its four or five metaphors:—

"Yea, with thy whirling clouds of fiery light
 Involve my music, gyring fuller and faster!
Yea, to my sword lend majesty and might
 To dominate all tumult and disaster,
That even my song may pierce the iron night.
 Invoking dawn in thy great name, O Master!
Till to the stainless heaven of the soul
Even my chariot-wheels on thunder roll."

Or what is to be understood by—

 "so swift a fire
Shall burn, that fire shall not be comprehended."

Notwithstanding these defects, and much bombastic diction, there is undoubted merit and considerable promise in many of the pieces. In "Jephthah" there are many fine thoughts admirably expressed, but here Mr. Crowley had the Scripture narra-

tive to guide him, and was not under necessity of taxing his own imagination. In other pieces, however, where he has not such assistance, he displays the true poetic spirit, as, for instance, in "The Honourable Adulterers," "De Profundis," or "The Five Kisses."