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(page 10)**

Review of *The Star in the West*

"The Star in the West," by Captain Fuller, is a critical essay on the poetical works of Aleister Crowley, and the name will sound familiar in the ears of any who pride themselves on having more than a bowing acquaintance with modern letters. Mr. Crowley has over thirty volumes to his credit, and the sheer art of his verse should rank him high amongst modern singers. He has, however, deliberately preferred to write for the few, and the course he has mapped out for himself includes the consideration of questions which the majority are content to shuffle into the background. Captain Fuller writes with a generous enthusiasm that it is pleasant to find in these degenerate days, but one wonders if he was the best guide along a very difficult path. His pen slips too readily into rhetorical glorification of his hero, and this kind of writing does not help us much to a critical appreciation of a poet's work.

I here offer this work to my readers as a twisted clue of silk and hemp to guide them safely through the labyrinthine mysteries of poetry and magic, whose taurine crags hug the blue sky, amorous as the kisses of Pasiphae, across the Elysian fields of myrtle and asphodel . . . to the cool groves of Eleusis childlike dreaming in the bosom of silvery Attica by the blue Ægean Sea.

The volume is a curious mixture ranging from fine lyrical poetry to an exposition of "Crowleyanity" which Captain Fuller assures us begins where agnosticism and scientific Buddhism end. It will not please all tastes, nor is it suitable for all, but verses like this—and there are scores as good in the book—are too rare to be the property of a few:

The spears of the night at her onset
Are lords of the day for a while,
The magical green of the sunset
The magical blue of the Nile;
Afloat are the gales
In our slumberest sails,
On the beautiful breast of the Nile.