

# THE BOOKMAN SEPTEMBER 1899

## THE BOOKMAN'S TABLE

JEPHTHAH and Other Mysteries Lyrical and Dramatic. By Aleister Crowley. 7s. 6d. (Kegan Paul.)

The verse of Mr. Aleister Crowley hovers fitfully between poetry and fine language. In no case is it very readable, and yet we own it is impressive. Firstly, its sound is good—he is an apt student of both Swinburne and Shelley. Next, his form is far above the average. And then, too, his mind dwells habitually in lofty regions. Only something is wanted—less vagueness, more conciseness, more power of vivid suggestion—to make him a very considerable poet indeed. We do not advise him to come down from his heights. Where he does so, in the so-called “mystery,” entitled “The Poem”—which is about a charming mild-mouthed young man, whose father stabs him for writing poetry, and whose lady-love dies in consequence, but first of all finishes his incomplete great poem—the result is sheer nonsense. But in “Jephthah” there are fine lines, and the poem is built on a noble conception of the central character. The song, too, descriptive of the maiden’s going to her death, has true pathos in it—

She goes, our sorrow's sacrifice,  
Our lamb, our firstling, frail and white,  
With large sweet love-illumed eyes  
Into the night, into the night.  
The throne of night shall be withdrawn;  
So moveth she toward the dawn.

Mr. Crowley is a man of ideas. He has fluency to express them. He may yet win to a more convincing and a simpler style.