

THE WESTMINSTER REVIEW  
JUNE 1901

REVIEW OF *THE SOUL OF OSIRIS*

Religious poetry is not always poetic. This cannot, however, be said with regard to the volume of verse entitle *The Soul of Osiris*, by Aleister Crowley. There is much in the volume which will excite admiration, and much that will perplex and irritate the uninitiated reader. The poet is, indeed, a mystic, and veils a morbidly exaggerated Catholicism under an ultra-Egyptian passion for death. Take as an example of the sickly mysticism of these poems the following:

"I stood within Death's gate,  
And blew the horn of Hell;  
Mad laughter echoing against fate,  
Harsh groans less terrible,  
Howled from beneath the vault; in night the avenging  
thunders swell'd."

This is the opening of a poem called "Cerebus."

"Nature is one with my distress,  
The flowers are dull, the stars are pale,  
I am the Son of Nothingness.  
I cannot lift the golden veil.  
O Mother Isis, let thine eyes  
Behold my grief, and sympathise!"

There is a lack of virility in poetry of this sort, but it cannot be denied that Aleister Crowley is a true poet—a poet of the school of Baudelaire and Poe.