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BOOKS AND THEIR WRITERS.

Before I opened *The Star in the West*, by Capt. J. F. C. Fuller (Walter Scott. 6s. net.), I must confess never to have heard of Aleister Crowley. The present volume purports to be a critical essay upon his works. You are glad that an interpreter has come forward to assist you in the elucidation of them. If I can gather anything from the preface and forward it is the list of the names of Crowley's books upon which this criticism is based. They have the merit of variety: *Aceldama*; *The Tale of Archais*; *Songs of the Spirit*; *Jezebel*; *An Appeal for the American People*; *Jephthah*; *The Mother's Tragedy*; *The Soul of Osiris*; *Carmen Saeculare*; *Tannhäuser*; *Berashith*; *Ahab*; *The God-Eater*; *Alice*; *The Sword of Song*; *The Star and the Garter*; *The Argonauts*; *Goetia*; *Why Jesus Wept*; *Oracles*; *Orpheus*; *Rosa Mundi*; *Gargoyles*; *Collected Works*, vols. i., ii., and iii.

I cannot agree with Capt. Fuller's estimate of any of the lines and passages which he quotes. Where they have any merit at all it is as cheap imitations of Swinburne. For the most part they are poor verse, showing neither originality nor rhythmicity, expressing in commonplace phraseology the ravings of a mind like an absinthe drinker's. They are not to be compared in merit either of music or word painting or illuminating knowledge with the poems of the late Frank Saltus, the elder brother of the novelist. In the matter of startling phraseology Capt. Fuller easily distances the writer of whose works his admiration is so chivalrous and so profound.

The seven chapters of the book are christened "The Looking Glass," "The Virgin," "The Harlot," "The Mother," "The Old Bottle," "The Cup," and "New Wine." I suppose that there is something at the back of it all, but it is far beyond my comprehension.