

Literary Guide and Rationalist Review
London, England
1 May 1908
(pages 76-77)

A Wandering Star

Frankly speaking, we do not know what to make of Mr. Crowley. We feel that ordinary rules of criticism are inapplicable to a writer of so marked an individuality. Mr. Crowley submits to conventions, and laughs consistency to scorn. Fleshy and spiritual by turns, he defies that which the Philistine abominates, and mocks at the objects of the common adoration. He is a grovelling decadent, yet a lofty idealist. He revels in unclean innuendoes, and sings like a lark at the gates of heaven. In his latest work insight and wit go side by side with savage grossness that revolts and a triviality that is tedious. *Konx Om Pax* is the apotheosis of extravagance, the last word in eccentricity. A prettily-told fairy-story "for babes and sucklings" had "explanatory notes in Hebrew and Latin for the wise and prudent"—which notes, as far as we can see, explain nothing—together with a weird preface in scraps of twelve or fifteen languages. A clever piece of fooling called *Ali Sloper; or, The Forty Liars*, is sadly vulgarised by a sort of play-bill, which has neither wit, sense, nor relevancy. The best poetry in the book is contained in the third section—*The Stone of the Philosophers*. Here is some fine work, but so mingled with prurience and puerility as to dash our admiration. Altogether, Mr. Crowley has produced a singular volume, attesting alike his poetic genius and his lack of sober judgment.