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Review of *Konx om Pax*

KONX OM PAX. By Aleister Crowley. London: Walter Scott.
7s. 6d. net.

If the reader wishes to be shocked, he might do worse than read *Konx om Pax*, or *Essays in Light*, by Aleister Crowley. But let him not turn upon the OCCULT reviewer afterwards for what he reads therein. The title of the volume, if we may believe the author of *The Lords of the Ghostland*, means "Go in Peace," and was the word of dismissal used to the participants after the ceremony of the Eleusinian mysteries was completed. But the only word we are able to recognize is the Latin "Pax," which seems somewhat inappropriate in a Greek ceremonial. The book consists of a series of skits, blasphemous, profane, profound and humorous. Sometimes it is occultism that is parodied; sometimes it is the politician who is caricatured; sometimes it is the follies and foibles of the human race generally that are held up to ridicule.

Take this for instance, on politics:—

As yet however, the country was not irretrievably doomed. A system of intrigue and blackmail, elaborated by the governing classes to the highest degree of efficiency, acted as a powerful counterpoise. In theory all were equal; in practice the permanent officials, the real rulers of the country, were a distinguished and trustworthy body of men. Their interest was to govern well, for any civil or foreign disturbance would undoubtedly have fanned the sparks of discontent into the roaring flame of revolution.

And discontent there was. The unsuccessful cheesemongers were very bitter against the Upper House; and those who failed in examinations wrote appalling diatribes against the folly of the educational system.

The trouble was that they were right: the government was well enough in fact, but in theory had hardly a leg to stand on. In view of the growing clamour, the official classes were perturbed; for many of their number were intelligent enough to see that a thoroughly irrational system, however well it may

work in practice, cannot for ever be maintained against the attacks of those who, though they may be secretly stigmatized as doctrinaires, can bring forward unanswerable arguments. The people had power, but not reason; so were amenable to the fallacies which they mistook for reason and not to the power which they would have imagined to be tyranny. An intelligent *plebs* is docile; an educated *canaille* expects everything to be logical. The shallow sophisms of the Socialist were intelligible propositions of the Tory.

The verses, of which there are a good many, are very forcible and realistic. A fair sample of the author's style is this, quoted from the "Stone of the Philosophers": —

You would not dally with Doreen,
Because her fairness was to fade,
Because you know the things unclean
That go to make a mortal maid.

I, if her rotten corpse were mine,
Would take it as my natural food,
Denying all but the Divine,
Alike in evil and in good.

The book shows genius, but a genius that might have been better directed; many passages are quite unquotable. If Mr. Crowley would content himself with calling a spade a spade it would be well.

The volume is bound in a black and white cover that one cannot look at without blinking.