

## Vanity Fair 9 December 1908

"Amphora." By Aleister Crowley.  
(Burnes and Oates)

To the ordinary mind passion has no relation to penitence, and carnal desire is the very antithesis of spiritual fervour. But close observers of human nature are accustomed to discover an intimate connection between the forces of the body and the soul; and the student of psychology is continually being reminded of the kinship between saint and sinner. Now and then we find the extremes of self and selflessness in the same soul. Dante tells us how the lover kissed the trembling mouth, and with the same thrill describes his own passionate abandonment before the mystic Rose. In our own day, the greatest of French lyric poets, Verlaine, has given us volumes of the most passionate love songs, and side by side with them a book of religious poetry more sublimely credulous and ecstatic than anything that has come down to us from the Ages of Faith. We are all, as Sainte-Beuve said, "children of a sensual literature," and perhaps for that reason we should expect from our singers fervent religious hymns.

We have published recently in *Vanity Fair* a good many poems of Mr. Aleister Crowley, we do not need to tell our readers that he is a master of verse, who sings of the delights of the body with a pagan simplicity and directness. Now he sends us a new book, 'Amphora,' a volume of religious verse: it contains song after song in praise of Mary:—

O Mary! Of Thy Motherhood  
To all thy worshippers,  
Bring us to thy beautitude  
Whose sweet inspiration stirs  
The soul lethargic unto good,  
The slaves to ministers!

Here is another poem which seems to have the true lyric passion in it:—

Be still, my soul, and let the sense  
Of her intuitive influence  
Steal like the whispers of young rains  
Upon thy bleak and barren plains

By many a mental martyrdom  
Our sterile souls to Mary come.  
Who passeth through the surge and fire  
At last shall win to his desire

\*\*\*\*\*

Be still my soul, whate'er avail!  
Through Mary they shall not prevail;  
And thou resigned in peace await  
Her peace at Her appropriate date.  
Amen.

We know no better way of praising these hymns than by  
simply transcribing them: -

Queen of Mercy, Queen of Might,  
Bring us to Thine ardent light!  
We are weak and violent:  
By Thy mystic sacrament  
Bring us to Thy power and peace,  
To the passionless release!

Queen of Splendour; Queen of Love,  
Bring us to Thine House above,  
Wherein love and splendour dwell  
All the saints that praise Thee well.  
Bring us to their great content  
By Thy mystic sacrament!  
Amen!