

THE ENGLISH REVIEW AUGUST 1912

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Mortadello, or the Angel of Venice. A Comedy. By Aleister Crowley. Wieland & Co. 10s. net.

The High History of the Good Sir Palamedes. By Aleister Crowley & Co. 5s. net.

Mr. Crowley is an elvish and wayward mortal—if mortal he be. But is he? For our part, we refuse to be dragged into a public discussion of delicate family matters; suffice to say that his genius, be its origin celestial or infernal, is considerably to our liking; he can write angelic poetry and devilish good prose, a cloud of exotic scholarship trailing over the whole, and suffused, every now and then, by lightning-like gleams of mirth and snappiness.

Quite a phenomenon, too, in the way of common sense, when the fit is on him.

But Mortadello was spoilt, for all that. No wonder. The brandies as the Café Riche are responsible for more than one disaster. And then—why, why those Truffles? That was tempting papa Beelzebub.

As to the good Sir Palamede, it makes the heart bleed to reflect that he might have learnt more in three minutes' conversation with Mr. Crowley than in all those wonderings.

“To buss the wenches, pass the pot,
Is now the enviable lot
Of Palamede the Saracen!”

There you are! The intellectual life in a nutshell. And only think of all the pairs of sandals the old enthusiast wore out ere attaining that blissful state. So do many of us, more's the pity.