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"Written in Friendship"

"Written in Friendship" by Gerald Cumberland, handles Grub Street's gods a little less courteously. Mr. Cumberland having sold many copies of a previous book about celebrities, entitles "Set Down in Malice," continues his iconoclastic career with every promise of selling even more copies of the sequel. He is introduced to W. B. Yeats.

"This," said Miss Mary Gonne, "is Mr. Cumberland. He's come to Dublin to write about us all."

Mr. Yeats did not share her enthusiasm. Eyelids with beautiful eyelashes hid his sight, and he bent down and did something to the fire with a poker. Then assuming an exquisite pose, with a wrist on his knee and one of his famous hands depending therefrom slimly and whitely against the black of his trouser-leg, he began to talk of fays, fairies, folk-lore, Fenians, Phoenix Park, and other things beginning with F. . . . It was pure monologue; just talk. . . .

And at the end of 300 pages of Cumberland's entertaining gossip we come again to the Café Royal, to meet Aleister Crowley.

He was a heavy, dark man, and he sat in a conspicuous place looking as picturesque as Nature would allow him. He discussed poetry with me. He was bewilderingly esoteric. I did not understand anything he said, but that did not prevent me from arguing with him. I could see that he was "out" to impress me. . . . He had the air of one who is familiar with secret things. He spoke with the authority of one who has been told.

I remained unimpressed. At least, I did not react to his personality in the manner intended. I found him a bore.

This, be it remembered, is "Written in Friendship." One hesitates to think what Mr. Cumberland might write about any one of whom he has grown thoroughly fond.