

THE COURIER
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES
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The Hier Crowley Collection

In addition to collection of the work of Walt Whitman, the recent gift of Frederick L. Hier included a special collection of works by Edward Alexander Crowley, best known by the self-chosen name of Aleister Crowley. This collection was a notable part of the library assembled by Mr. Hier's father, Frederick P. Hier, Jr.

Aleister Crowley, born in 1875, was one of the most eccentric characters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in England. Swinburne declared him to be "authentically a poet," but others called him "The Beast" and a practitioner of black magic. John Symonds, in *The Magic of Aleister Crowley*, declared Crowley to be an extremely enigmatic figure who appeared to most persons as a "sinister charlatan" and "A most entertaining rogue." Some of his critics accused him of being the leader of a satanic love cult; others accused him of being a German spy in the United States during the first World War. Crowley was, in fact, a man of many and diverse activities; he was a writer, poet, traveler and mountain climber. He declared that he had been initiated into mystic rites by the Lamas of Tibet.

When he die in 1947, the Editors of *Time* magazine offered the explanation that in his youth Crowley determined to be "a shocking young man" as a protest against his parents' strict theology as members of the Plymouth Brethren. Aleister Crowley's importance, Symonds believes, lies merely in that he was an eccentric—"the last survivor of the Victorian Satanists" whose *Aceldama; a place to bury strangers in* (London, 1898), *In residence: the don's guide to Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1904), and *Liber CCCXXXIII; the book of lies* (London, 1913) are curious and representative writings. However, Crowley's literary reputation rests on such works as his autobiography, *The Spirit of Solitude* (London, 1929). He was an iconoclast in all senses of the term and an opposing force against the Victorian conservatism of his time.

The Hier Crowley Collection includes fifty books by Aleister Crowley. To this basic collection the Library has added by purchase fifteen other works together with a few original letters.