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Crowley Is Hailed As Poetic Genius

ALEISTER CROWLEY, The Man, The Mage, The Poet; a biography by Charles Richard Cammell; University Books; 229 pages; \$6.

Aleister Crowley, known as the "great beast" by many, has been viciously attacked both during his lifetime and after his death for his attitudes toward sex, his practice of ceremonial magic and his denunciation of the Christian church.

In this volume, however, Charles Richard Cammell, a fellow poet, turns the stem of criticism and hails Crowley as a man of great poetic genius, calling libelous many things which have been written of him.

Although his case is not entirely a convincing one, Cammell does present what appears to be an objective review of Crowley's life, talents and travesties. Not without criticism, his picture of the great mage is at times frightening, then revolting, then again extremely sympathetic in view of Crowley's poetic achievements. He and Aleister Crowley were close personal friends for many years before Crowley's strange prideful nature alienated the two.

Cammell has included examples of Crowley's poetry to reinforce his opinion of the man's great lyric genius. He even goes so far as to say a combination of Crowley's poetry, personality and life make him the most extraordinary figure of his age (1875-1947), and one of the most extraordinary of any age.

While Cammell's discussion of Crowley is certainly debatable, it does present a fascinating insight into the world of theosophy, Spiritism and astrology. Those who remember the storm of abuse heaped upon Crowley while he was still living, and those who find Crowley's prolific output of verse as high as does Cammell, will, I'm sure, find the book interesting and enlightening.