

THE O. E. LIBRARY CRITIC
WASHINGTON, D.C.
AUGUST—SEPTEMBER 1935

Is "AMORC" Associated with Aleister Crowley?

In a 128 page book just published by Dr. R. Swinburne Clymer, head of the Randolph Rosicrucians, and entitled "*An Expose of the Imperator of A.M.O.R.C. His Pilfering Charlatanism and His Connections with Aleister Crowley, Notorious Black Magician*", etc., evidence is presented in the form of facsimiles of various documents apparently indicating that H. Spencer Lewis, Imperator of AMORC, is a member in high standing of Crowley's objectionable organization O.T.O. (*Ordo Templi Orientis*), that Lewis published a charter from the same to AMORC, and that he is using the insignia of that order in connection with his own organization.

Aleister Crowley, it may be remembered, was the editor of *The Equinox*, the suggestive motto of which was: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", and which was largely devoted to magic of the black variety, to describing and to an extent justifying, the use of drugs for obtaining psychic experiences, and to describing gorgeous and complicated magical rituals and ceremonies calculated to benumb the innate spiritual instincts of those participating, and showing a pronounced erotic tendency. I am not squeamish, but *Equinox* was on the whole the most utterly abominable collection of occult literature that ever came into my hands. Crowley is a man of intellect and by no means a mean person, for he describes himself (page 107) as "The Most Holy, Most Illustrious, Most Illuminated, and Most Puissant Baphomet X° Rex summus Sanctissimus 33°, 30°, 96°, Past Grand Master of the United States of America, Grand Master of Ireland, Iona, and All the Britains, Grand Master of the Knights of the Holy Ghost, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Order of The Temple, Most Wise Sovereign of the Order of the Rosy Cross, Grand Zerubbabel of the Order of the Holy Royal Arch of Enoch, etc., etc., etc., National Grand Master General *ad vitam* of the O.T.O." Also, Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona and all the Britains, Grand Master of the Temple, Custos of the Illuminati in the United States of America.

Notwithstanding all these potencies, which should have placed him little below the Almighty, Crowley was forced to

leave America because of scandals, involving women, connected with his mystical and magical rites and ceremonials, and including a police raid on his temple in Detroit. Crowley's later course in Europe was equally erratic, but somewhat obscure. After starting an occult center in Sicily, I believe, he brought a libel suit in London against some disgruntled disciples, which he lost, owing to the disgusting nature of the evidence presented against him.

Baphomet, by the way, is the man-goat or rather woman-goat whose picture you will find in Eliphas Levi's *Transcendental Magic*, and which, no matter what may be said in the way of mystical interpretation, is more suggestive of the Witches' Sabbath than of lofty aspirations. It is this man-goat whose name Baphomet, Crowley assumed.

Dr. Clymer presents portraits of Aleister Crowley and of Emperor Lewis which are worthy of careful study. That of Crowley, apparently a photograph, is reproduced from *The Equinox*, Vol. III, No. 1, page 197. It is signed Baphomet X° with his special seal, and shows a typically Mephistophelian or black magician face. That of Lewis, seemingly a painting or drawing, is reproduced from Lewis' *American Rosae Crucis*, February, 1916, and bears a somewhat modified Baphomet seal on an apron. Of this portrait, which I hope is a poor one, the most charitable thing that can be said is that it suggests a poor sap with an overfondness for beer. A comparison of the two leaves but little doubt as to which would be the master.

Incidentally, one cannot why it is that writers so often accompany what they have to say with their portraits which, in many cases, do them no credit. The rule is not infallible, but in general character, or the lack of it, tends to register itself in the face. Hence the value of a full beard, especially if white—it lends an appearance of dignity, and hides indignity: hair is quite impersonal and any rogue can use it as a mask. Hence also the value of a string of titles; like the patriarchal beard they may hide a paltry soul.

Dr. Clymer presents photographic documentary evidence that the Emperor has copied *verbatim* large portions of easily accessible and not costly books, such as von Eckhartshausen's *Cloud upon the Sanctuary* and Dr. Franz Hartmann's *With the Adepts; An Adventure among the Rosicrucians* (acknowledged by the author to be a dream or psychic experience) in the form of private lessons to advanced members of AMORC, claiming them to be Rosicrucian teachings and issuing them at \$2.00 a month. Emperor Lewis is also charged, the documentary evi-

dence being presented in facsimile form, with claiming that there is today a great Rosicrucian university and library at Basel, Switzerland, at which Paracelsus studied and taught, whereas according to other evidence no such Rosicrucian university exists or ever did exist at Basel. We are also given a facsimile of a part of one of Lewis' lessons, asserting that H.P. Blavatsky and Dr. Franz Hartmann labored together at Basel in the preparation of her manuscripts and that it was at Basel the H.P.B. first met her Masters, all of which any student of theosophical history knows to be untrue. Lewis also claims (page 18) to have been many times in Basel, and describes it as a city "high up in the Alps," which anyone who has been there knows to be untrue.

Finally, an abstract is given of the Batchelor letter to Lewis, referred to in the July Critic. The great value of the book consists in its presentation of photographic facsimiles, of which there are over thirty, and which are far more convincing than mere unsubstantiated charges.

To be fair to Emperor Lewis it must be pointed out that his lengthy quotations in his advanced lessons from the books referred to above are made with acknowledgement of the source and that, as appears from the facsimiles, they are practically correct. Further, while Dr. Clymer takes the Emperor to task (pages 23, 35) for deleting the word "theosophical" from "Theosophical Monastery", a chapter heading in Hartmann's book, and charges that he did it to make it appear Rosicrucian, it is a fact that this omission is actually made in an edition of the book in my possession, an edition which was published in 1910 and which the Emperor might well have used. The portrait of Lewis bearing the Baphomet seal was published by him in 1916, whereas the Crowley certificate or charter, or whatever you wish to call it, is dated 1921. Was Lewis actually a member of Crowley's O.T.O. before 1921, or did he simply adopt this sign as his own without authority, because he took a fancy to it? Further, while the inverted triangle is actually a sign of black magic it might have been used by the Young Men's Christian Association. Still, it is abundantly evident from this and other publications of Dr. Clymer that the Emperor had a way of gobbling titles used by others and claiming them to be his exclusive property. One gets the impression that the Emperor, like the ostrich, swallowed everything which came to his attention, careless of whether it was good, wholesome food, or nails or penny whistles. There are many less conspicuous and often well-meaning persons who do much the same.

But the capacity for digestion varies. We do not blame the ostrich: he was born that way. Perhaps we may excuse the Emperor by saying that he was born an occult ostrich.

The book may be obtained free from Dr. R. Swinburne Clymer, Beverly Hall, Quakertown, Pa.