

THE OFFICIAL DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY OF
ALEISTER CROWLEY

THE
GREAT
BEAST



Aleister Crowley

By *John Symonds*

Before his death in December, 1947, Crowley entrusted his private papers and journals to Mr. Symonds, his literary executor.

The Press described Aleister Crowley as:—

- *“The Wickedest Man in the World”*
- *“A Man we'd like to Hang”*
- *“The King of Depravity”*
- *“A Cannibal at Large”*

Crowley, the Poet, Mystic, Mountaineer, Exhibitionist, Drug-addict, Diabolist, “The Beast with the number 666,” was reviled by the World's Press, expelled from Italy and France because of his notorious black magic masses and sexual orgies—and yet gathered about him a devoted following who believed him to be a Messiah.

This biography, based on Crowley's private papers and journals, is the intimate account of a fascinating, bizarre, almost unbelievable life. Those who are interested in the eternal problem of Good and Evil will see how these forces struggled in the breast of a man who, on any showing, was larger than life. The reader will be enthralled by this incredible story of a truly unique personality.

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No man of our times was more violently attacked during his life, nor more slandered after his death, than the late Aleister Crowley. Yet no one has ever denied, not his worst detractors, that Crowley was the foremost occult scholar and perhaps the last practising magician of the West. His knowledge of magic, mysticism, religious mania and symbology was as encyclopaedic as it was clear, accurate and objective. What Blavatsky did for the Eastern Esoteric Tradition, Crowley did for the Western, but with a vengeance! He revealed all the secrets jealously guarded by minor initiates of local orders—and gained thereby their everlasting hatred and malice.

This book was written in 1918 and represents the high water mark of Crowley's magical, spiritual and practical Wisdom. It has existed in typescript copies among a few daring admirers of that strange and wonderful "wicked" man, and these old faithfuls have often urged its publication in book form. The author accordingly tried to publish it twice before: each time, strange obstacles prevented its appearance. The last time was in 1947, when the printing was nearly complete, and Crowley died (and presumably went to hell) before the book could be bound and issued.

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