

**THE UMPIRE
MANCHESTER, LANCASHIRE, ENGLAND
28 NOVEMBER 1909
(page 5)**

HE WAS FOND OF HIS TARTAN.

**Respondent who Adopted
Titles to Please Himself.**

“LORD BOLESKINE” DIVORCE.

A gentleman whose self-accorded title of Lord, Laird, Count, or plain “Mr.” varied according to his whims and surroundings, was held in the Court of Session at Edinburgh to be no fit mate for his wife, Rose Edith Kelly or Skerrett or Crowley, residing at the vicarage, Camberwell, London.

This was done at the lady’s asking, the husband, Alister Macgregor Crowley, of Boleskine Foyers, Inverness-shire, Scotland, and residing in London, offering no defence.

The plaintiff, a woman of 35 years, in her examination by Mr. Jameson, said she was the daughter of the Rev. F. F. Kelly, vicar of Camberwell. She married in 1897 Captain Frederick Thomas Skerrett, who died in August 1899. In 1902 she was staying with her brother, Mr. Gerald Kelly, an artist, and there made the acquaintance of Mr. Crowley.

Was he then calling himself Alister Crowley?

Knew Him First as “Count.”

No, he was then Count Skellet. I knew, however, his real name was Alexander Edward Crowley. Later he called himself Macgregor to identify himself with Scotland.

In July, 1903, she went to Strathpeffer, and while there she met Mr. Crowley. He was then calling himself Alister Crowley Macgregor. She knew he bought Boleskine before 1900, and that his home was there—the only home he ever had. He was much attached to Scotland, and tried to identify himself with it as much as possible.

He used to wear the kilt and all that sort of thing, and always gave himself out as a Scotchman. At Strathpeffer on August 11 he asked her to marry him, and she consented. They

were married next day in Scottish fashion, because he told her he was a Scotsman. The marriage was registered in the usual way, and in the certificate he gave his name as Macgregor, but his father's name was given as Edward Crowley. After the marriage they went to stay at Boleskine, which was a large house with two or three farms on the property.

"Lord Boleskine."

Shortly after the marriage he assumed the name of Lord Boleskine. This was, he said, because people in Scotland took the names of their property.

Counsel: I think he is a little eccentric?—Oh, yes.

In June, 1904, a child was born, which died twenty-one months later. For a year they travelled about the East together, and in 1906 she and her husband were at Hong Kong. Her husband left her there to return home by America, telling her to go straight home to be confined. She was very annoyed at being left in that condition. She came back to England, and joined her father in June, 1906. At her father's house she was confined in September, 1906, and was suing for the custody of that child.

They then lived at Chiselhurst for two years, and in March, 1908, she went to stay at Warwick-road, where the house was taken in her name, as her husband wished to avoid responsibility for the rent. He was becoming a little bit impecunious. He stayed there until the summer of this year, and she left on July 21, because he had been treating her cruelly. He had been frequently bruising her.

On 5th August she learned from the charwoman that her husband had a woman staying with him on the previous night. Some time before that Mr. Crowley has asked her to take care of a child for one of his most intimate friends, and from what he said she thought he was a friend's child. She, however, accidentally opened a letter addressed to the respondent, which gave the address of the mother, a Miss Zweek, and she went to see her. She learned that the defendant was the father of the child, and she thereupon raised that action.

Replying to Lord Salveson, Mrs. Crowley said Boleskine still belonged to the respondent, but it was let for five years. Later she stated that it was bonded.

What is your nationality?—My father says he is Irish. I was born in England.

Laughter at Midnight.

Witness added that she had seen Miss Zweek, and she had seen the child at King's Cross Mansions. Mr. Crowley was so fearfully interested in the child that he asked her to go to Scotland with it and take her own also, but she did not go. Miss Zweek was a milliner in the Burlington Arcade, and when they found she was in a certain condition they turned her out.

When she taxed her husband after reading the letter, he said it referred to his friend, whom she thereupon thought a beast, and would not have him about the house. When she learned the truth she asked the friend why he did not tell her, and he said she was worrying herself.

Mrs. Dauby, Fulham, a charwoman, stated that she stayed the night at 21, Warwick-road after Mrs. Crowley left in order to finish some work. Mr. Crowley, about midnight on August 4, rang for two cups of tea, which she took up to the library. There she saw a short and dark woman, who was gaily dressed and wore a lot of jewellery. She heard a lot of laughter during the night, and in the morning took up two cups of tea to Mr. Crowley and his companion.

Charles Randle, Chelsea, chauffeur to a peer, said Miss Zweek, who was a friend of his wife's, boarded with them. Mr. Crowley whose portrait he identified, frequently visited her.

Lord Salvesson (looking at the photograph): He looks as if he belonged to the stage.

Mr. Jameson: He is a very literary character. He rather effects the artistic.

How He Became a "Peer."

Gerald Festus Kelly, artist, brother of the plaintiff, said he became acquainted with Alister Crowley in Cambridge during the witness's first term, about August, 1897. They were both undergraduates. Since then they have been intimately acquainted. The year after leaving Cambridge he went to Paris to study art, and Mr. Crowley was a frequent visitor at his studio, where he met his sister.

The respondent was very proud of having Scottish blood in his veins, as he thought, and in 1900 or 1901 bought Boleskine to be his permanent home. He had curious ideas of how to fit up a house. He had a room covered with mirrors, which he called a temple. He was a Cabalist, and studied ancient MSS. He took Boleskine in order to suit his own tastes.

Abroad and in London he lived in hotels, and Boleskine was the only home he had. When he got there he took the name of Macgregor to identify himself with Scotland. When he was travelling abroad he sometimes signed himself Crowley and sometimes Macgregor.

He changed his name from Alexander to Alister, because it was Scottish, but he retained the name of Alister Crowley for literary work. He got some mark of distinction from an Indian chief, and he announced his intention of calling himself "Lord Boleskine."

Mr. Jameson: That is the history of how he became a peer.

In every way he tried to identify himself with Scotland?—He took his title from Scotland.

"Perpendicular Land."

Boleskine is a good estate?—Oh, yes.

There is a good deal of land about it?—Yes, but it is perpendicular, the most of it. (Laughter.)

Boleskine was a big house, and Mr. Crowley's many objects of art were stored in it. He added that when he went with the defendant to Strathpeffer in 1903 he was appearing in the complete Highland costume, and the Macgregor tartan was very, very bright.

Lord Salveson: Personally, I never could get up any admiration for the Macgregor tartan taken from an artistic point of view, although its associations were romantic.

Replying to his lordship, Mr. Kelly said he knew very little about the respondent's people. He was very secretive. The witness believed that his father was an eminent Plymouth brother. Crowley had a lot of money. He did not know what Boleskine cost—he should think about £4,000. From a friend he learned that the place was not worth what was paid for it. He was a very stupid man about money affairs. The defendant was a great traveler and great climber.

Lord Salveson: You say he is a writer. Does he make anything by it?—Certainly not.

Lord Salveson said he thought that the domicile had become Scottish, whatever it was originally, and seeing also that marriage took place in Scotland, he thought there was sufficient ground for granting decrees. He also granted custody of the child to the plaintiff, with ailment at the rate of £1 per week.