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SECRETS OF A SOCIETY

DOINGS OF A MYSTIC SECT.

The secrets, rituals, and ceremonies of the mysterious "Rosicrucian Order of A.O." are to be disclosed to the public as the result of a decision the Court of Appeal. The order is a modern revival of the famous Rosicrucian Order, which is believed to have been founded in the fifteenth century and which possessed so much influence in Germany. The present order was instituted in 1888 by Comte Liddell Macgregor of The Avenue, Peckenham, who is its head; Dr. W. Wynn Westcott, and the late Dr. W. R. Woodman.

The appeal in question was brought by Mr. Aleister Crowley, an expelled member of the order and editor of the "Equinox" magazine, who was recently ordered by Mr. Justice Bucknill not to publish the secrets of the order in the March number of the "Equinox." Mr. Crowley contended that Comte Macgregor, who obtained the injunction from Mr. Justice Bucknill, had no cause of action, and this was upheld by the Court of Appeal.

Comte Macgregor is a man of remarkable appearance, with long grey hair. He showed signs of displeasure at the evident amusement of the judges when counsel read the following extracts from an affidavit made by him:—

I am the chief of the Rosicrucian Order. It is an order instituted in its modern form in 1888 for the study of mystical philosophy and the mysteries of antiquity. The order is upon the lines of the well-known institution of Freemasonry. The exclusive copyright of the rituals, ceremonies, and manuscripts of the order is vested in me, I being founder and compiler of them, and I claim such an interest in the same as will entitle me to restrain any infringement of my rights therein. On November 18, 1898, Aleister Crowley, having duly qualified himself, signed the preliminary pledge form, to which it is requisite intending candidates for membership should subscribe their signatures. After compliance with the necessary formalities he became a member, and thereupon ratified the obligation of his

signed pledge form by a solemn obligation in open Temple of the Order.

Comte Macgregor added in his affidavit that Mr. Crowley had committed "the grossest possible breach of the obligations," and had violated the oath of secrecy by disclosing secrets of the order in the September number of the "Equinox," under the heading, "The Temple of Solomon the King."

Sir F. Low, K.C., M.P., who appeared for Comte Macgregor, asked the judges to read another article entitled, "The Pillar of Cloud." They did so, and appeared to enjoy it keenly.

"The article is simply material which Comte Macgregor obtained from old books," Mr. Waltey, who represented Mr. Crowley, contended. Comte Macgregor can have no copyright in such material."

"But," Sir F. Low argued, "if the initiation ritual is published in the March number, as Mr. Crowley proposes, the damage will be irreparable—the cat will be out of the bag."

"I think it is a dead cat," Lord Justice Farwell remarked amid laughter.

"Perhaps there is a second cat," Sir F. Low retorted.

The court decided that the injunction granted by Mr. Justice Bucknill could not stand, and that Mr. Crowley was free to publish the secrets.