

UNKNOWN
Circa April, 1911

Law Announcement.
"The Rosicrucian Order."

Curious Explanations In The Witness-Box.

Kings Bench Division.—Mr. Justice Scrutton
and a Common Jury.

The hearing, begun on Tuesday, was concluded yesterday of an action for damages for alleged libel brought by Mr. George Cecil Jones, consulting chemist, of Great Tower Street, E.C., against the proprietors, editor, and printers of The Looking Glass, a weekly journal.

Counsel: For the plaintiff, Mr. Simmons; for the publishing company, Mr. Schiller; for the printers (Messrs. Love and Malcolmson), Mr. Rowlands. The editor, Mr. West de Wend Fenton, appeared in person.

The statements complained of were contained in a series of articles which dealt chiefly with one Aleister Crowley and a connection with a sect styled the Rosicrucians Order. There was the statement, "By their friends ye shall know them." and a passage which stated that two of Crowley's friends and introducers were still associated with him—"one the rascal sham Buddhist monk Allan Bennett . . . ; the other a person of the name George Cecil Jones."

The defendants said that the words complained of were not capable of bearing a defamatory meaning, and also pleaded fair comment.

The plaintiff in his evidence said he became acquainted with Crowley in 1898. He had never known or seen anything wrong in connection with him.

"MACGREGOR."

One of the witnesses called by the defense styled himself MacGregor, and his full name being desired he recited a list of Christian names and the surname Mathers. Crowley, he said, was expelled from the Rosicrucian Order in 1905 because he had circulated libel against the witness, who was head of the

Order, and because he was working against the interests of the Order. Mr. Simmons, cross-examining, asked the witness whether his original name was not Samuel Liddell Mathers?

The Witness: Undoubtedly.

Did you subsequently assume the name of MacGregor?—The name Mathers dates from 1603. At the time the name of MacGregor was forbidden on pain of death, and there is no single person of the name MacGregor at the present day who has not had another name in the interval.

Your name was MacGregor in 1603? (Laughter.)—Yes, if you like to put it in that way.

You have called yourself Count MacGregor of Glenstrae?—Oh, yes.

The witness denied that he had asserted he was Cagliostro.

Have you ever suggested that you had any connection with King James IV of Scotland?—Every Scotsman who dates from an ancient family must have had some connection with King James IV, as well as with the other Kings.

Have you ever asserted that King James IV of Scotland never died?—That is a matter of common tradition. The old tradition of that nature in Scotland forms the basis of one of Allan Cunningham's novels.

Do you assert that James IV of Scotland is in existence today?—I refuse to answer your question.

And that his existence today is embodied in yourself?—Certainly not. You are confusing me with Crowley's aliases.

Do you believe that the Count de St. Germain is living?—The witness referred counsel to traditions in the St. Germain family. Then we have two people who are supposed to be dead, and who are not dead?—I am not responsible for traditions.

Mr. Justice Scrutton (to counsel): The "Flying Dutchman" is a third, if you want to pursue this subject. (Laughter.)

The Witness: And "The Wandering Jew". (Laughter.)

Mr. Simmons (to the witness): Have you any occupation?

The Witness: This is as you like to take it. For a man of no occupation I am probably the most industrious man living. (Laughter.) The witness, further questioned, refused to say how many members the Order had; a great many; there were more than 200 with whom he was actually in touch. He was lead of the Order. There were secret chiefs. Counsel asked for the names of these chiefs.

The Witness: I am sworn not to give them. He added that he exercised the power of expulsion. He refused to say how

many people he had expelled: he had expelled as many as fifteen at one time.

Mr. Justice Scrutton: This trial is getting very much like the trial in "Alice In Wonderland." (Laughter.) Mr. William Migge, a City merchant, said he attended the first of a series of performances given by Crowley. It was described in the Looking Glass as the proceedings of "the Amazing Sect." He paid 1 pound; 5 5s. for the series. He did not like the performances, and asked for the return of his money. The performances were supposed to be rites and rituals based on the mysticism and of the planetary spirits. The first performance had something to do with the planet Saturn. During part of the time the room was in darkness. Mr. Shiller: Was one of the characters taken by a lady called "The Mother Of Heaven"? The Witness: Yes.

And another taken by a small girl called "The Daughter Of Heaven"?—I don't recollect that. There was so much incense I couldn't see much.

Cross-examined by Mr. Simmons, the witness said he was induced by a lady clairvoyant to attend the performance. What did you expect to get for your money?—Clairvoyant manifestations of some character. The witness said he did not expect to see—nor did he see—any improprieties.

MEMBER OF THE ORDER.

Dr. Berridge, practicing at Gloucester-terrace, Hyde Park, said he was a member of the Order. He heard rumours as to Crowley, which he did not want to state specifically, as there were ladies in the court. Mr. Justice Scrutton: Any ladies remaining here are probably beyond scruples of that sort.

After some further evidence, four questions were left to the jury, who by their answers, found that the words complained of as defamatory statements were in fact substantially true, and that the statements so far as they consisted of opinions were fair comments on the facts; further, that the publication caused no damage to the plaintiff.

On these findings judgment was entered for the defendants. Solicitors: Bullock and Co., for the plaintiff; Mr. Gottlieb, for the defendant publishing company; White and Leonard, for the printers.