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MYSTIC FARCE IN COURT.

SECRET RITES OF THE "ROSCRUCIANS."

"ALICE IN WONDERLAND" TRIAL.

LONDON, May 5.

"Are you Cagliostro?"

"Are you James IV. of Scotland?"

These are samples of questions put by counsel to a witness in the Law Courts during the hearing of what Mr. Justice Scrutton described as an "Alice in Wonderland" case.

Mystic rites in darkened rooms, the secret of perpetual life, clairvoyant manifestations, a Buddhist monk, the influence of the planets, and Rosicrucian ritual were among the subjects discussed. It only remained to introduce the Jabberwock and the question "whether pigs have wings" to complete the entertainment.

The action was brought by Mr. George Cecil Jones, a consulting chemist, who claimed damages for libel from a newspaper called the "Looking Glass." The alleged libel was contained in a series of articles headed "An Amazing Sect," in which gave charges brought against Mr. Alister Crowley, the "high priest" of the sect.

One of the articles stated:—

"Two of Crowley's friends and introducers are still associated with him—one, the rascally sham Buddhist monk, Allan Bennett, whose imposture was shown up in "Truth" some years ago; the other a person of the name of George Cecil Jones, who was for some time employed at Basingstoke in metallurgy, but of late has had some sort of small merchant's business in the City."

Reference was also made in the articles to the Rosicrucian Order, and Mr. Samuel McGregor was called by the defence to show that Mr. Crowley had been expelled from that order. He described himself as "Comte McGregor of Gleestrae, External and Internal Head of the Rosicrucian Order."

In reply to Mr. Simmons, counsel for Mr. Jones, he admitted that he was registered at birth as Samuel Liddel Mathers.

"The name of Mathers dates from 1603." he explained. "At that time the name of McGregor was forbidden on pain of death and every one the name of McGregor at the present day have had another name in interval."

"Have you asserted that you are Cagliostro?" inquired Mr. Simmons.

"No was the answer.

Or that you were connected with James IV. of Scotland? — Every Scotsman of ancient family must have some connection with the kings.

Have you asserted that King James IV. of Scotland never died?—There is an old tradition of that nature in Scotland, and it forms the basis of one of Allan Cunningham's novels.

Do you assert that James IV. of Scotland is in existence to-day?—All I say is that there is that tradition.

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

Do you believe that Count de St. Germain is living?—I refer you to the traditions of the St. Germain family.

When was he supposed to have died?—In 1780.

You believe in the traditions?—That is my private business.

"The Flying Dutchman is a third," suggested the judge, "if you want to pursue this subject."

"And the Wandering Jew," added Mr. McGregor.

"Have you any occupation?" inquired Mr. Simmons.

"I have given the best years of my life to the Rosicrucian Order," answered Mr. McGregor, who added that there were more than 200 members, but could not disclose the exact number.

There are secret chiefs?—Yes.

Who are they?—I am sworn not to discuss the matter with you.

"How many persons have you expelled from the order?"

"I shall not say," declared Mr. McGregor loudly: "I refuse to answer any more questions."

"I do not want this court to be turned into a place of amusement," declared the judge. "This trial is becoming very like the trial of 'Alice in Wonderland.' "

Mr. William Migge, a City merchant, said he attended a séance given by Mr. Crowley in the hope of obtaining some clairvoyant manifestations. He paid five guineas, but did not appreciate the rites, and asked for the return of his money.

"It was ritual under planetary spirits," he explained. "The first rite was the invocation of Saturn, and the room was in darkness."

"What was Saturn going to do for anybody?" demanded Mr. Justice Scruton.

"I do not know," replied Mr. Migge. "Each performance had a bearing on certain planets."

"Was there one character, taken by a lady, called the Mother of Heaven?" asked Mr. Schiller, for the "Looking Glass."

"Yes." And another taken by a small girl, called the Daughter of Heaven?—I do not recollect. There was so much incense. I could not see much.

Was one of the people dressed as The Master?—Yes.

When Dr. Berridge, of Gloucester Terrace, Hyde Park, was called as a witness he added some indistinguishable words to the oath.

"Kindly do not invent oaths of your own," the judge commanded. "Parliament has invented the oath."

Dr. Berridge hesitated to give certain evidence because there were women in court.

"Oh!" remarked the judge, "any women in court are beyond scruples of that sort."

The jury returned a verdict for the "Looking Glass," holding that the defamatory statements were true.