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Says O.T.O. Book Made Him Quit.

**Dr. Hill Avers He Left Universal
Company in Protest against *Equinox*.**

**Bankruptcy Referee is told Mystic
Order's Publication Wrecked Business.**

Dr. Gordon W. Hill resigned as secretary of the Universal Book Stores company because of its connection with *The Equinox*, called [the] official handbook of the O.T.O., the mystic order whose Detroit affairs are bound up with those of the defunct concern, he testified in the proceedings against the company before Paul H. King, referee in bankruptcy Friday.

Dr. Hill testified he met Albert W. Ryerson, organizer and general manager of the company, in the Masonic temple and became interested in his book store proposition. As a result of their conversation, he purchased \$1,000 worth of stock and was elected the company's first secretary. Some months later while in the store, he was introduced to Aleister Crowley, author of *The Equinox*.

Gets Copy of The "Book."

"Crowley's whole appearance and attitude were repugnant to me," he said, "and although I was where he was several times later, I never talked to him for five minutes."

Then the book was published and Dr. Hill was given a copy. At the store he looked at the allegorical picture, illustrating "the hanging of Christianity" that forms the frontispiece and decided he was not interested, but later Mrs. Ryerson suggested he take a copy home. He took a sealed copy to his home and placed it on top of the bookcase.

One evening when he and his wife had callers, their five-year-old son took the book from the shelf and asked what it was. It was opened and after all of the party had seen the pic-

ture, Dr. Hill turned a few pictures until he found the explanation of the picture. That was enough for him and he promptly threw the book into the furnace.

"That is all I know of the contents of the book," he said. "At the time the store made the purchase, Mr. Ryerson was manager and buying books was his task. I resigned at the next meeting of the directors after announcing I would get out of the company if the publication of this book was to go on."

Treasurer on Stand.

W. A. Gibson, treasurer of the company for seven weeks in 1918, testified at some length to the affairs of the company and particularly as to a meeting between Ryerson, Crowley, Stanfield [*sic*] Jones and himself in New York city. This had to be arranged clandestinely through Jones, he testified, because Crowley was hiding from the police.

He said the two started out from Detroit with \$5,000 to purchase books. They visited Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Baltimore, the latter because Gibson had a sister-in-law there and they had to borrow money to get home. Long before they reached New York, however, he was thoroughly disgusted with the whole business, he said, because they were spending too much paying old bills with the money intended for new books and also for side pleasure trips, one of these lasting five days and another taking them to a Massachusetts city to look over some of Ryerson's personal property.

When they arrived in New York, he was not keen, he said, for the prospect of meeting Crowley, which was Ryerson's apparent objective. However, Ryerson was in charge and they went to the flat where Crowley had lived. They were told he had left mysteriously and it was some days before they picked up a clue. This finally was accomplished through Jones.

There were three meetings of the trio in a hotel in New York. He said he didn't remember the name of the hostelry. One of the affairs was a dinner given by Ryerson and attended by two women, one of whom was introduced as the wife of a British vice consul. The other was a French woman and he didn't know the name of either, he continued.

Gibson Fights Proposal.

It was at the second meeting that the agreement in regard to *The Equinox* was made. Gibson objected strenuously, he

said, and refused to sign any agreement, but Ryerson signed it. Crowley said the book couldn't be released at once because of money still owing to the British publisher and Ryerson agreed to advance \$1,000 and take over the sale in this country.

Gibson, like Dr. Hill, testified that Crowley's appearance was absolutely repugnant to him, but said that he opposed the purchase chiefly because he thought it was too big a deal for the company to swing. Later, when he saw the book, he said, he was convinced it would be a poor seller because of some of the illustrations would either disgust or frighten whoever happened to thumb them over in the store.

There was more than an hour of Gibson's testimony given to the discussion of figures in the balance sheets, or partial balance sheets of the company. Gibson testified that although he was treasurer, he had never seen a balance sheet and none was made available to him. He owns \$1,500 stock in the company, he said, \$1,000 of which was given him as extra compensation for the seven weeks spent with the company. His salary in that time was \$50 a week.

Blame Put on *Equinox*.

Neither Guy Wasey nor Grover L. Morden. Attorneys for the creditors, who had threatened to expose the secrets of the order, made any effort to bring out any testimony regarding the O.T.O., except at the close of Gibson's testimony when he was asked if anything was said about it while in New York. He replied in a vague sort of statement that he was under the impression Ryerson had intended to organize a chapter here, but did not quote Ryerson directly or make an exact statement on the subject.

It was apparent throughout the hearing that Morden's object was to prove that *The Equinox* was responsible for the failure of the book store and that the liability should be Ryerson's and not the company's. From the moment when the case was started several weeks ago, however, it has been apparent that the hearings would center around the book.

Ryerson personally has denied that the O.T.O. has a branch organization in Detroit or that the cult has a single member here, and has letters from C. Stanfield [*sic*] Jones, a high official of the order, stating as much. But in a recent divorce case, the cult was given the blame and it was this more than anything else that centered attention upon the bankruptcy case.

The Equinox appears to the uninitiated as a weird mixture of ancient religious doctrines and unintelligible gibberish shot through and through with erotic symbolism.

Picture of Female Figure.

The frontispiece is a picture in three colors illustrating a female figure hanging from a limb with a satyr leering from behind a tree while a nymph frolics about in the distance. The meaning of this is explained in the book as follows:

From the blasted stump of Dogma the poison oak of 'original sin' is hanged the hag with dyed and bloody hair, Christianity, the glyph thus commemorating 'sa vie horizontale et sa mort vertical.' The satyr . . . represents the soul of the new aeon whose word is 'Do what thou wilt;' for the satyr is the true nature of every man and every woman and every man and every woman is a star.

Following this is a "Hymn to Pan" highly seasoned with suggestion. This is followed by an editorial which apparently attempts to set forth the basic principles on which the order is formed. Below are a few extracts:

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."

"Christianity has destroyed the joyful celebrations characterized by music, feasting, dancing and making love, and has kept only the melancholy."

"The law of Thelema offers a religion which fulfills all necessary conditions . . . making everyone unique, independent, supreme and sufficient."

The "manifesto of the O.T.O.," contained in another part of the volume which by the way sells for 666 cents, claims for the cult all the wisdom and knowledge of ancient and modern orders. A letter to those who may wish to join the order enjoins the brethren to "be diligent in preaching the Law of Thelema, ("Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.")

"Members of the order," says the epistle, "are to regard those without its pale as possessing no rights of any kind, since they have not accepted the law, and are therefore, as it were, troglodytes, survivals of a past civilization and to be treated accordingly. Kindness should be shown toward them as toward any other animal and every effort should be made to bring them into freedom."

Duties of Members Told.

Several paragraphs are devoted to the duties of the members of the order toward women of which one will suffice:

"If the mother that is to be have asserted her will to be so in contempt and defiance of the Tabus of the slave-gods, she is to be regarded as especially suitable to our order, and the matter of the lodge in her district shall offer to become, as it were, godfather to the child."

Plans are outlined also for the training of children in the laws of the order.

A large part of the book is devoted to the exposition of the ceremonies of the "Essesiate [*sic*] Gnosticae Catholicae," describing adorations performed before an unrobed priestess.

In March, 1921, the Universal Bookstores, Inc., files a trust mortgage wherein Bela J. Lincoln was appointed trustee with power of sale. The sale was advertised for May 20. Several stockholders filed a bill of complaint in circuit court the day preceding, restraining the sale of the stores and asking the appointment of a receivership.

The court named Bela J. Lincoln and Richard A. Pratt, receivers.

An involuntary petition in bankruptcy was filed in August and the corporation adjudicated a bankrupt. The examination of the books, ledger, journal entries, cancelled checks and notes revealed the purchase of the 1,100 volumes of *The Equinox*.

Company Formed in 1918.

Ryerson organized the Universal Bookstores, Inc., in 1918, shortly after he purchased a small store from Homer Adair on Grand River Avenue. The Universal concern was capitalized at \$25,000, \$15,000 common and \$10,000 preferred stock.

The incorporators of the firm were Rev. Dr. Hugh Jack, Dr. Gordon Hill and Albert W. Ryerson. Ryerson held \$15,000 of the common stock, Hill \$1,000 and Jack \$1,000. Ryerson was made president of the firm, Jack, vice-president, and Hill secretary and treasurer. All of the stock, it is said, was paid in cash, except that held by Dr. Jack, who was given \$1,000 of the stock.