

DETROIT TIMES
10 January 1922

**Business Wrecked, Friends Lost,
Ryerson Wrote to Compiler of "Equinox."**

Marketing of literature furnished by Aleister Crowley, compiler of the *Equinox* and endorsement of Crowley personally, caused all the troubles of Albert W. Ryerson, manager and organizer of the Universal Book Stores, Inc., according to a letter written by Ryerson to Crowley, June 6, 1919.

The letter was introduced in evidence at the hearing in bankruptcy proceedings before George Marston, referee in bankruptcy, by Grover L. Morden, attorney for the creditors of the company, Monday afternoon.

His family and friends had practically been alienated and his business destroyed, Ryerson told Crowley. Opposition of minority stockholders of the company had been aroused, which threatened to put the business in the hands of receivers if Crowley carried out his threatened legal action to get money due him for furnishing the book store with literature, the letter continued.

RYERSON PROTESTS.

Mr. Ryerson protested that the letter was unfair, if read by itself, and that Mr. Crowley's reply should be considered in conjunction with it. Mr. Morden promised to allow the letter to be introduced without objection at the next hearing, scheduled for Jan. 20 at 2 p.m.

Previous hearings have indicated that the *Equinox*, an exotic publication, caused the upheaval which disrupted the directorate of the bookstore.

The *Equinox*, Mr. Morden contends, is the official organ of a cult calling itself the O.T.O., and some of its alleged activities came up for discussion Monday. The advisability of establishing a chapter of the cult here was discussed by seven Detroiters, Mr. Ryerson admitted, after the purchase of several hundred copies of the *Equinox* had practically been agreed on. This was in November, 1918.

Because of the "mess in the press," Ryerson said, he would not give the names of the seven Detroiters, to save them from

suffering as he had. These seven insisted on some changes of the ritual which conflicted with the ritual of secret organization they were members of and to which women could not belong, he said.

Later four of the men got together at the D.A.C. to form a Supreme Grand Council, Mr. Ryerson said. Dr. Gordon W. Hill, secretary of the book company, and himself were not invited.

QUARREL FOLLOWS.

"It was charged afterwards that some one wanted to be the 'supreme grand cheese' of the organization," Mr. Ryerson said, laughing. Later a quarrel broke out between Dr. Hill and Crowley and Dr. Hill tried to cancel the order for books placed with Crowley.

Organization of the O.T.O. was not carried on, Mr. Ryerson insisted. No one was initiated and no dues were paid.

"Did you know that Crowley and Sylvester Viereck, editor of *Vaterland*, were friends?" asked Mr. Morden. The *Vaterland* was the pro-German publication in New York that caused much discussion before America entered the war.

Mr. Ryerson admitted that he knew of Crowley's connection with Viereck. "Crowley really was a secret services man for Great Britain, in the war," he explained. "German spies were continually after him. He played a slick trick on the Germans by having himself, a British spy, on their publication, He practically destroyed the *Vaterland*."

Among the letters introduced by Mr. Morden was one addressed to Ryerson by Crowley and dated Oct. 2, 1918. It began with the salutation, "Dear Sir and Brother," which Ryerson said was a reference to another fraternity. This was followed by "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law," which appears in almost all of Crowley's letters to the book dealer. "I have entered into a certain silence," is the next sentence, followed by "Love is the law, love under the will." The letter closed with the following: "Fraternally, Aleister Crowley, 666."

UNIVERSITY COURSE.

In another letter Crowley tells Ryerson of plans to establish a university course in connection with the establishment of the cult, "with diplomas and all the rest of the humbug." This was a bit of facetiousness on Mr. Crowley's part, Mr. Ryerson said.

In a letter dated March 6, 1919, Mr. Crowley's facetiousness broke out at the very opening of the letter, where appears:

"Cheer up, little bookstore,
"Don't you cry;
"You will be a barroom
"Bye and bye, where the Right Wine of Iacchus will
be dispensed."

Prohibition is coming, the letter states. "I am in conference with some people this afternoon about a Mystic Tea Shop, and propose to add a bookselling feature: it is not a bad combination, in view of the closing of the saloons," Mr. Crowley wrote.

In a letter to Crowley, March 4, 1919, Mr. Ryerson wrote: "Our paths lie further." And further: "Our work is stirring up the opposition of the churches." We have secret information that a \$5,000 loan that was promised us has been blocked by one of our enemies.

It was the intention, Mr. Ryerson wrote, to increase the stock to \$50,000. Mr. Crowley is asked to invest and get his friends to do likewise.

PAMPHLET INTRODUCED.

Mr. Ryerson recognized a little pamphlet as one which was used to advertise the *Equinox*. It gives the contents of the various chapters in the unintelligible terms of the cult, and contains a reference to Mr. Crowley as the "Symbolic Pantacle of the Universe."

Mr. Ryerson testified that the first contact with Crowley for the books was drawn up in the office of Frank T. Lodge. It was signed there by Crowley. The contract was to be signed later by other members of the book company. Dr. Hill objected to Mr. Lodge's part in the proceedings and another contract was drawn in the office of Clarence Hill, he said.

Mr. Ryerson, in a sketch of his career, said he was reared in a home adjoining that of Ralph Waldo Emerson and that he came in contact with a school of philosophy there. It was the philosophic atmosphere he was reared in which determined his later career, Mr. Ryerson said. He referred to the membership of various groups which had been labeled "love cults," and said their membership included only the best people.

"Because of the leprous press, these fine people have to go in hiding when they hold their meetings," he said.