

**THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR SUN
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
29 APRIL 1923**

**Astounding Secrets of the Devil Worship-
pers' Mystic Love Cult**

**Revealing the Intimate Details of Aleister
Crowley's Unholy Rites, His Power Over
Women Whom He Branded and Enslaved,
His Drug Orgies, His Poetry and Mysticism,
His Startling Adventures Around the Globe
as "the Beast of the Apocalypse"**

By W. B. Seabrook

Chapter V.

Pretty Mazie Ryerson, once an artist's model, who charges her elderly husband, Albert W> Ryerson, rich Detroit publisher, with trying to convert her to the mysterious "O. T. O." cult, of which Aleister Crowley is the world head, made extraordinary accusations that Ryerson subjected her to physical "tortures" as part of this "conversion."

How many other women there are throughout the United States, throughout the world, under the influence of this strange cult—some of them may be reading these very lines—who could tell even more amazing stories if they were willing to speak!

I am thinking at this moment of Leila Waddell, the beautiful violinist and noted concert artist, who was Crowley's "high priestess" when he was at his height of his fame in England, openly holding elaborate "mystical rites," attended by many notables, in the big town house he occupied at that time—and of the strange circumstances of the talented Leila Waddell in New York.

"What's that got to do with Mazie Ryerson's revelations in Detroit?" you may be wondering.

"And what connection has it with the alleged 'mystical crucifixions' which you promised last week to tell us about in this chapter?"

That, too, shall be explained.

In the "Equinox," one volume of which Ryerson had published as part of the "Bible" of the "O. T. O.," there are many references to mystical "crucifixions" as part of the experiences of initiates and adepts in the cult. One of the extraordinary entries begins:

"Fra P. was crucified by Fra D. D. S., and on that cross made to repeat this oath," etc. There is an illustration entitled "The Crucifixion of Fra P."

To what extent these "crucifixions," as described in the book, were literal, physical experiences—if at all—and to what extent they were purely symbolic rituals, I am unable to specify. But before I go further with this account, it is necessary to give you, briefly, some additional light on the character of the strange figure behind it all.

Crowley, whatever else he may be, believes he is a true mystic—perhaps one of the greatest mystics living. Some of his poetry, embalmed in the anthologies, may suffice to give him, after he is dead, at least a minor rank among the immortals. And the various cruelties which I have described—the branding of Lea on the chest and other incidents—are part and parcel of this side of his character. Throughout my extended and intimate acquaintanceship with him, which has lasted several years, I have never known him to hurt a woman—or any living creature—for the sake of sheer wantonness or amusement. He was not a Caligula or a Nero. In fact, it enraged him, as it does most upper-class Englishmen—and decent people everywhere, for that matter—to see or hear of needless pain inflicted on any helpless being whether human or animal.

"How can this be?" you ask. "A man who, by your own account, whipped a frail girl?"

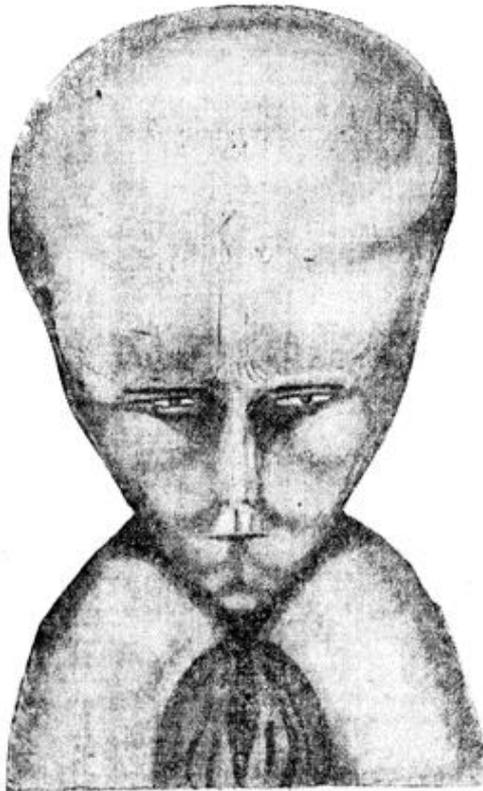
Well, unfortunately for consistency, this is not a fictional story in which the "villain" can be made altogether a villain, nor is it written to prove or disprove anything—to "defend" Crowley, or to denounce him. It is written to paint him as he is, good and bad together, one of the most amazing figures of modern life.

Crowley spent years in the Orient, studying occultism in a land where to become "holy" one must lie on spikes and cut himself with knives, or sit so long in one position that the muscles become atrophied. Crowley "derives" also (though he might violently deny it) from those curious mystics and saints of the middle ages who engaged in similar practices. In some of the modern treatises of William James, late great Harvard psychologist, and in old books of lives of the saints, you can read of many such characters—the Spanish nun who achieved sanctity and ecstasy by having herself beaten with whips to which had been fastened jagged leaden pellets; the early French bishop, who wore beneath his gorgeous vestments a chain around his waist that continually cut into his flesh; or ole Saint Simeon Stylites, who lived for many years on top of a bare pillar, exposed to the blazing sun, storms, winds and snows.

And Crowley, to-day, in the twentieth century, like these old "holy men" and "holy women" of another age, is seeking, as an incidental part of his complicated doctrines, to revive this curious

method of "sending the soul into the infinite" to explore deeper mysteries of life.

These practices, too, are curiously interwoven with his "Black Magic"—and this brings me directly to the "mystical crucifixions."



One of Crowley's Fantastic Sketches, Made While He Lived in New York City and Was Seriously Preparing Himself for a Career as a "Great Artist."

One day, in his New York studio, I asked Crowley to tell me something of this alleged practice. He had a great deal to say about symbolism in mysticism and magic, and gave me a hair-raising account of the "Black Mass" used by sorcerers to work harm to their enemies. In the course of a ceremony dedicated to Satan, a toad is crucified upside down, and by the recitation of certain charms the enemy is supposed to sicken and die as the toad expires.

"But I can tell you something much more interesting," he added, "the story of a girl whom you may some day meet. But perhaps I'd better read you an account of her as I have set it down in writing to be included in the 'Equinox.'"

And he read from a manuscript (he afterward gave me a copy, which I have before me now), the recital which you shall hear.

Before quoting him I must give you the "key" that will explain the significance of what he tells, for it is so fantastic that, without a "key," the normal mind might see in it only a meaningless melodrama of insane horror. After you have read it and heard the sequel you may still think it is merely such a melodrama—but it contains a deeper element.

You may have read in your school books, in the poetry of Tennyson and in tales of the days of chivalry how people used to believe in "love philtres," charms, amulets, talismans, by which, through magic, they were able to obtain the love of persons indifferent to them.

The story Crowley told me was of a modern girl who secretly believed and engaged in "magical" practices, and who had a talisman which she tried to make use of in this way. With a self-sacrificing girl cousin, who was her submissive victim, she went to dreadful lengths, Crowley's narrative related; to restore to this talisman the potency which she believed it had lost.

Here is the essential part of the manuscript from which Crowley read—written, as you will note, with a sort of "literary flavor."

"Patricia Fleming ran up the steps into the great house, her thin lips white with rage. For the third time she had failed to bring the man she wanted to her feet. She looked into her riding hat. There in the lining was the talisman she had tested—and it had tricked her.

" 'What do I need?' she thought. 'Must it be blood?'

"She ran, tense and angry, through the house. The servants noticed it. 'The mistress has been crossed,' they thought. 'She will go to the chapel and get ease.'

"True, to the chapel she went, locked the door, lit a lantern, dived behind the altar, struck a secret panel, and came suddenly into a hiding hole, a room large enough to hold a score of men if need be.

"At the end of the room was a scarlet post, and tied to it, her wrists swollen by the whiplashes that bound her, was a girl, big boned, strong and partially unclad.

" 'What, Margaret! So blue?' exclaimed Patricia.

" 'I am cold,' said the girl in a low voice.

" 'Nonsense, dear!' answered Patricia, rapidly divesting herself of her riding coat. 'There is no hint of frost. But you shall be warm yet, for all of that.'

"This time the girl writhed and moaned a little.

"Patricia took the faithless talisman from her hat, which she replaced on her head. The talisman was a piece of vellum, written upon in black. She took a hairpin, pierced the talisman, and drove the pin into the girl's shoulder.

" 'They must have blood,' she said. 'Now, see how I will turn the blue to red! Come, don't wince dear.'



"Then with her riding whip she struck young Margaret between the shoulders.

"A shriek rang out. She struck again and again. Great weals of purple stood on the girl's back; froth tinged with blood came from her mouth, for she had bitten her lips and tongue in agony. Then the skin burst. Raw flesh oozed blood that dribbled down Margaret's back. Still Patricia struck and struck in the silence, until the tiny rivulets met and waxed great and the blood touched the talisman. She threw the bloody whip into a corner and went down on her knees. She kissed her cousin, she kissed the talisman, and again kissed the girl.

"She took the talisman and hid it in her clothing. Last of all, she loosened the cords, and Margaret sank in a heap on the floor. Patricia threw furs over her and rolled her up in them; brought wine

and poured it down her throat. She smile kindly, sadly, like a sister.

" 'Sleep now a while, dear,' she whispered, and kissed her forehead—

I broke the silence that followed. "Do you mean to tell me seriously," I asked Crowley, "that things like that have survived the middle ages—that there are people who really believe in such practices—that such things are actually done by anybody in this modern twentieth century?"

"Next week," said Crowley, with an enigmatic smile, "if you care to meet her, I'll introduce you to a girl who looks like 'Patricia.' She's coming to America. Wait a minute; I'll show you her picture.

From a little iron-bound trunk which contained pictures and clippings about himself and the doings of his cult, saved from old magazines and newspapers, he produced a portrait of Leila Waddell, the beautiful violinist. From the details of the picture and from the text underneath, I judged that Miss Waddell had been a "priestess" of the "O. T. O." cult while it was at its zenith in England—at the time when Isadora Duncan, the dancer; Augustus John, the painter, and Aimee Gouraud were attracted to the ceremonial rites in Crowley's London house—attracted, no doubt, by their artistic beauty without knowing anything of the hidden mysteries behind them.

Miss Waddell, in the photo-engraving, was shown clad in a mystical robe, bare-footed, seated upon a throne, wearing upon her head and chest the insignia of the "O. T. O." The picture was from "The Sketch," one of London's leading magazines dealing with society and art. The caption read.

"In a modern ceremony to invoke Artemis (a Pagan goddess) this is the lady of mystery, the violin player. On another page of this issue will be found an article dealing with 'A New Religion.' Apropos of this illustration of the lady who played the violin at Mr. Crowley's at-home, at which an experiment was made in the effects of a ceremony to invoke Artemis, we may quote the following lines from the article: 'After a long pause, the figure enthroned took a violin and played, played with passion and feeling, like a master. We were thrilled to our very bones. Once again the figure took the violin and played an evening song, so beautifully, so gracefully and with such intense feeling that in very deed most of us experienced that ecstasy which Crowley so earnestly seeks.' The lady in question, it may be added, is Miss Leila Waddell, who is very well known as a concert artist in England, Australia and New Zealand.

Other photographs of Miss Waddell, I discovered afterward, appeared in several of the volumes of Crowley's mystical books—always in the garb and role of a "priestess" of the cult.

I noticed the dedication on the manuscript from which Crowley had just been reading the amazing story. It contained the initials "L. W."

A week later- true to his promise, he took me to meet Miss Waddell, who had arrived in America—in fact, to have tea with her. It was in a hotel just off Fifth avenue, in her own apartment. She proved to be a lovely, cultured woman, a charming hostess and a brilliant musician, for I later heard he play exquisitely.

We talked of many things, but I didn't quite dare to bring up directly in my conversation with her such a subject as magic. It seemed utterly impossible that two such cultured, well-bred, thoroughly modern and cosmopolitan English persons, as she and Crowley were at that moment, could have anything in common with the strange beings of whom I had glimpses—and more than glimpses—during my acquaintance with Crowley and his books.

Behind it all there is such a mass of facts which will never be known, of mysteries that lead into the secret places of China and the Orient, into old and forgotten cults on the one hand, and into events which, on the other, are taking place to-day in American and English cities, that I doubt if the whole truth will ever be known of Crowley and his strange associates.

Poor little Mazie Ryerson, artists' model, out in Detroit, complaining that her husband tried to "torture" her in connection with the "O. T. O." I wonder how much she knows of the intricate labyrinth behind it all—the astounding background and broader drama of which her broken happiness was only a tiny part, in spite of the big scandal it made in the Middle West.



Betty May Loveday, the English Girl Who Recently Returned to London from Crowley's "Abbey" at Cefalu, Sicily and Who Has Made Sensational Statement and Allegations, Which the Leader of the Cult Stoutly Denies.

In a like maze of bewilderment is the English girl, Betty May Loveday, who recently returned to London from Crowley's "abbey"

at Cefalu, with amazing charges against the man the London Daily Express calls "The Beast 666" and "The Purple Priest." Betty May Loveday's husband died at Cefalu; her charges against Crowley are blood-chilling. But this, and Crowley's answer to them, I must reserve for a later chapter.

In the next chapter I shall take up a side of Crowley's character and of his activities in America which I have hitherto left untouched—his experiments with hasheesh and other Oriental drugs, which he himself used for a time and introduced to his "disciples"—and what came of it.

(To Be Continued)