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**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 IX.

I recently received from Aleister Crowley himself—mailed from the "abbey," where he lives, surrounded by his "disciples," in Cefalu, Sicily—a copy of the secret ritual of the "O.T.O." cult, which he sent "in sealed envelopes," when he was in America, to "nine prominent men in Detroit," and which after his departure, precipitated the series of scandals culminating in the Ryerson divorce case.

It contains, as you will read, the formal creed of Crowley's "Do What Thou Wilt" cult.

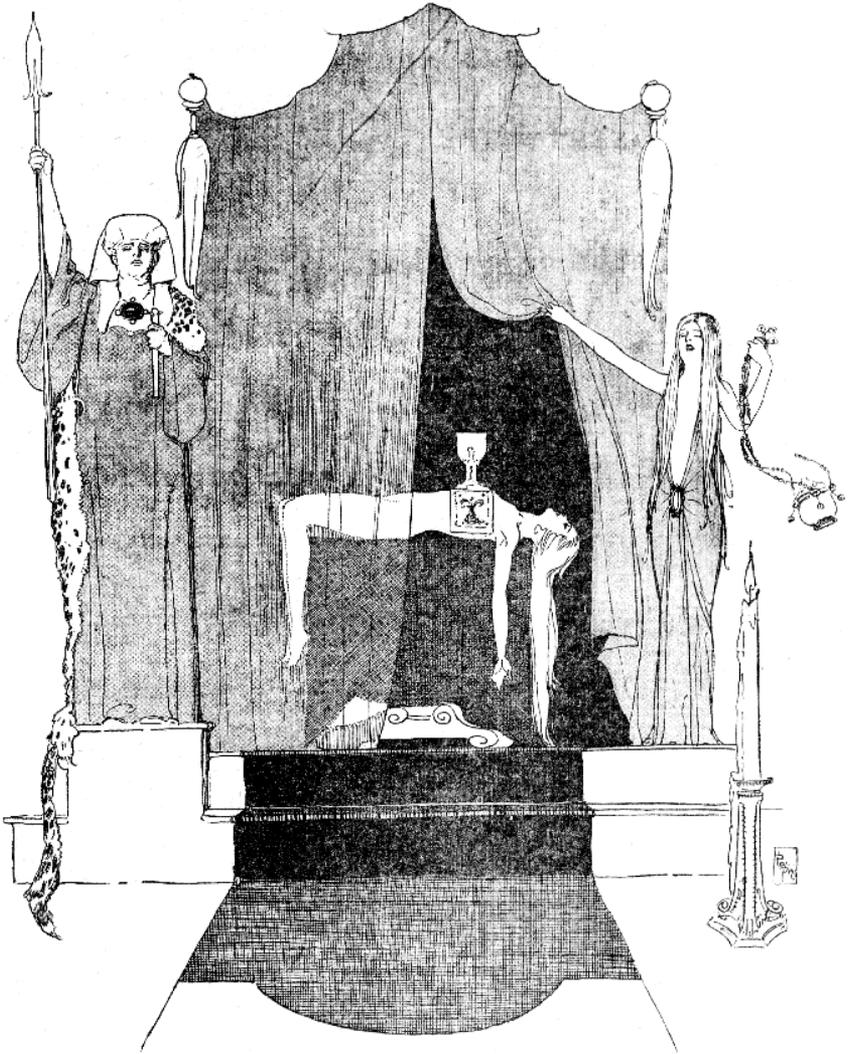
It also contains a great deal of love symbolism, and a ceremonial in which the "high priestess," a beautiful woman, appears unclothed before the assembled worshipers and performs certain mystical rites.

This formula, for the "priestess," who divests herself of her robes, so amazing to the Anglo-Saxon sense of decorum, is really the center around which part of the Detroit scandal has raged.

It is charged by Crowley's enemies in Detroit, that he also communicated to a select "inner circle" of men and women, by word of mouth, the "unwritten ritual" of the "Black Mass," which is the carefully guarded secret ceremonial of the cult of Satanists or Devil Worshipers.

The "Black Mass," which I mentioned in detail, in an earlier chapter, is a blasphemous ritual which travesties the Holy Communion. Its chief feature is that the "altar" on which the ceremony is performed holds the prostrate body of a nude girl—"a maiden pure in mind, heart and body."

While the "high priestess," who eventually divests herself of clothing during the ceremony, acts as a simple acolyte for the "priest," the girl lies motionless upon an altar-block, her head thrown backward, her arms and streaming hair hanging down one side of the altar, and her lower limbs, bent at the knees, down the other side. On her chest is placed a cup of wine, and at the culmination of the "Black Mass," the "priest" lifts the cup, drinks from it, and sprinkles some of its red drops upon the girl's figure.



It was common talk in Detroit that Bertha Ryerson, then wife of Albert W. Ryerson, rich book publisher, was to be the "high priestess" of the new cult. It is not recorded that Ryerson objected

to this at first. But when the secret ritual became known, with a description of the garments which the "high priestess" should wear—and what, during a part of the ceremony, she should not wear—the "fireworks" began.

In the course of the wrangles which followed during which attempts were made by stockholders to oust Ryerson from control of his big book concern, he and Bertha Bruce Ryerson separated.

Afterward Ryerson married Mazie Mitchell, a former art model, who has also since separated from him. Strangely enough, she says she believes Ryerson's "cruelty" to her had as a secret motive a desire to force her to participate in the "O.T.O." practices, though he never demanded it outright.

Here is the ritual, which Crowley himself has supplied me, with permission to reproduce it for the first time publicly in America, and which I have had verified as being identical with the one circulated in Detroit:

The altar shall be seven feet long, three feet wide, and forty-four inches high. It shall be covered with a crimson cloth, embroidered with a sun-blaze. On each side shall be an obelisk or pillar. On the altar shall be an empty place for the Book of the Law, with six candles on each side. Below it is the "Holy Grail," or cup, with roses on each side of it, and on each side beyond the roses are two great candles. In front of the main altar is a small black altar. All this is enclosed within a great veil.

The officers of the ceremony are as follows:

The "priest," who bears the sacred lance, and is clothes at first in a plain white robe.

The "priestess," who must be a woman especially dedicated to the service of the "O.T.O." She is clothes in white, blue and gold. She bears the sword, suspended from a red girdle, and carries a wafer.

The "deacon," who is clothed in white and yellow, and who bears the Book of the Law.

Two children, who are clothed in white and black. One bears a pitcher of water and a cellar of salt: the other a censer of fire and a casket of perfume.

After the "deacon" has admitted the congregation, he places the book on the high altar, kisses it, turns to the worshipers and says:

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. I proclaim the law if light, life, love and liberty."

The congregation replies:

"Love is the law, love under will."

The "deacon" and the people then repeat:

"I believe in one secret and ineffable Lord; and in one star of whose fire we are created, and to which we will return; and in one Father of Life, Mystery of Mystery, and His name is Chaos.

"And I believe in one Earth, the Mother of us all, and Her name is Babalon.

"And I believe in the Serpent and the Lion, and His name is Baphomet.

"And I believe in one Gnostic Church of Light, the word of whose law is Thelema.

"And forasmuch as meat and drink are transmuted in us daily into spiritual substance, I believe in the Miracle of the Mass.

Music is now played, and the children enter, followed by the "priestess," who places the wafer on the altar and adores it.

The "priest" enters, holding the lance erect against his breast, with both hands. He gives the lance to the "priestess," kneels and worships it, and says:

"I am a man among men."

He takes the lance again and lowers it. He says:

"How shall I be worthy to administer the virtues of the brethren?"

The "priestess" replies:

"Be the priest pure of body and soul. Be the priest fervent of body and soul."

She robes the "priest: in scarlet and gold. He takes her by the right hand, and, with his left keeping the lance raised, says:

"I, priest and king, take thee, woman, pure without spot; I upraise thee; I set thee upon the summit of the earth."

He enthrones the "priestess" on the altar.

She takes the book and holds it open on her chest. The "priest" gives the lance to the deacon, and makes five crosses upon the "priestess' " forehead, shoulders and waist. The "priest" then kneels in adoration, and says:

"Not unto Thee may we attain unless Thine image be love. Therefore, by seed and root, and stem, and bud, and leaf, and flower, and fruit do we invoke Thee."

During this speech, the "priestess" divests herself completely of her robe.

She speaks:

"But to love is better than all things; if under the night stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to abide in my mind.

"For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour.

"Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of earth in splendor and pride; but always in love.

"I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich head-dress. I love you! Pale or purple, veiled or unveiled, I am beauty of the innermost sense.

"Put on wings! Sing the rapturous love-song unto me. Burn to me perfumes. Drink to me, for I love you! I love you! I am the blue-lidded daughter of sunset; I am the brilliance of the night-sky! To me! To me!"

The "priest" approaches nearer and says:

"I am the flame that burns in the heart of every man, and in the core of every star."

The "priestess" says:

"There is no law beyond, Do what thou wilt."

The "priest" parts the veil over the "holy of holies" with his lance, and pronounces in Greek an invocation to the "great God Pan," as the pagan symbol of life.

He presents the lance to the "priestess," who kisses it eleven times. She then holds it to her chest, while the "priest" falls at her knees.

This completes the first part of the ceremony, which is called the Opening of the Veil.

There follows a short ritual.

Next comes the "Consecration of the Elements," the cup of wine and the water. The "priest" touches the latter with the lance, and says:

*"By the virtue of the Rod
Be this wine the Blood of God."*

The "priest" says"

"Life of man upon earth, fruit of labor, sustenance of endeavor, thus be thou nourishment of the spirit."

He elevates the wafer and the cup. The bell strikes. He replaces the wafer and the cup.

The concluding ceremony is called the "Mystic Marriage and Consummation of the Elements." The "priest" holds the wafer. The "priestess" clasps the cup. He says:

"Lord, most, secret, bless this spiritual food unto our bodies, bestowing upon us health and wealth, and strength, and joy and peace, and that fulfilment of will and of love under will that is perpetual happiness."

He uncovers the cup, and breaks a part of the wafer over the cup. The other part is placed upon the point of the lance. The "priest" then clasps the cup in his left hand, and he and the "priestess" together dip the point of the lance into the cup.

The "priest" then turns to the people, lowers and raises the lance, and says.

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

The people reply:

"Love is the law, love under will."

The "priestess" then offers the cup from which the "priest" drinks. The people then advance, one by one, to the altar, and partake.

In conclusion, the "priest" says:

"The Lord bring you to the accomplishment of your true wills, true wisdom and perfect happiness."

I am not presenting this ritual to you with my approval, but as recorded fact, exactly as it is—a part of the current history of this man's amazing activities and curious beliefs.

Crowley believes that love should not be regarded as a secret thing, to be whispered about and hidden. He believes that the highest and most complete morality will only come from accepting it as simply as any other essential fact about life. His real views, as he has expressed them to me on this subject—and I can't help it if I irritate him by saying so—are not essentially different from those held by many more "respectable" reformers, for example, H. G. Wells.

An American magazine has published a serial story by Mr. Wells in which he pictures an imaginary Utopia, where all the men and women go without clothes, with practically no laws and no restrictions save their own consciences and wills. Mr. Wells presents these people as actually more moral and happier than they are in the present state of society. That is really the final idea that Crowley has. Not a state of universal license and debauchery, but one in which proper actions come not from compulsion and restraint, but from complete knowledge and the development of the individual will.

The "Do What Thou Wilt" doctrine is not quite so easy to explain, but the central point is that he emphasizes the "will" part of it rather than the mere "doing as you please." He believes that every man and woman, above all else, should try to fulfil his or her own individual destiny by discovering what he or she really wants to do with life, what they really "will" to do, and should then take this as the highest guide and be absolutely true to it.

Strangely enough, he has exactly the same condemnation and denunciation that a reformer would have for people who allow their wills to be led by their appetites. The essential difference is that the reformer believes in escaping these appetites by either shunning or stifling them. Crowley wants to accept them all as a part of life and teach the will to control them—to use them rather than abuse them. It is basically the difference, say Crowley's admirers, between prohibition and temperance.

I am tempted to venture a personal comment though I meant to refrain from it. I think there is a bad flaw in Crowley's doctrine. I personally have told him so many times. And I think this is demonstrated by the rows, scandals and abuses which followed the teaching of his doctrine in Detroit. The flaw, I think, is this:

If all people were strong-willed enough and intelligent enough to live up to such a doctrine, it might be splendid, and perhaps even a beautiful thing for humanity. But the majority of people are neither strong-willed nor intelligent enough. They need restraining influences from the outside. They must have laws and compulsions to make them do right. For them, any such doctrine as "do what thou wilt" simply means unlimited license for debauchery and moral anarchy. If you substitute Will in place of God, then you must have a godlike will—and I think the human will is far from being developed, or promising to develop, to that point, except in the rarest individuals.

Of course, all his experiments haven't turned out so tragically as the fiasco in Detroit. There is the "abbey" in Cefalu, Sicily, the most peculiar colony ever established in modern times, consisting of men, women, and children, all living together under no law except "Do What Thou Wilt" in a big villa and grounds on a mountainside overlooking the Mediterranean.



Betty May Loveday, Whose Young Husband Died Tragically at Crowley's Sicilian "Love Cult Abbey." The Photo Shows the Beautiful Widow as an Artists' Model Before Her Marriage.

I have in my possession letters, diaries, and statement, from a number of persons in the colony, in addition to Crowley himself.

Some of the stuff they contain is so fantastic as to be almost unbelievable. I shall tell about it in the next chapter.

(To Be Continued)