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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 X.



Crowley Absorbed in Thought and "Concentrating" Upon
the Large Ring on His Finger to "Attain Peace."

"What is it really like in Thelema?" I recently cabled Aleister Crowley. He sent me in reply a big package of letters, photographs, diaries and notebooks, which vividly reflect the present daily life of this amazing colony he has established in his "abbey" on the shores of the Mediterranean.

It is a daring experiment—which has been going on now for more than three years—in the practical application of his brazen

"Do What Thou Wilt" religion—a little community of men, women and children who have voluntarily isolated themselves from the conventional life and the conventional code of modern civilization, to try to live in "an entirely new way."

The place itself, though Crowley calls it "The Abbey of Thelema," is in reality an old Italian villa on a country hillside, immediately overlooking the sea, not far from Palermo, and just above the medieval town of Cefalu, in Sicily.

The hill itself is close to a great rocky promontory, whose pinnacles tower above it, and on which are the ruins of old Greek temples and Roman walls.

Housed in this villa and on its surrounding grounds is the small community of which Crowley is the head.

They dress, eat, act, think differently from any people you have ever known. Their lives, to the average conventional person, are as fantastic as the lives of people on another planet described by H. G. Wells.

Absolute freedom, but a freedom achieved by fearless iconoclasm and complete development of the will-power and confidence in the supremacy of their own convictions—this is the basis of Crowley's cult.

His idea is that abso-essential evil—that the evil of anything is only in its misuse. He claims to have cured people of the drug habit. He claims to be teaching them a higher love morality. Yet if you went to this abbey you would find opium, cocaine, hasheesh lying around as freely as butter and eggs; you would quite likely encounter beautiful girls, if the weather happened to be warm, sunning themselves or going about their affairs as unconscious of their nudity as so many household pets.

Yet not only Crowley himself, but other persons who write to me about this "abbey," tell me that even by conventional standards of morality what actually goes on there is no more wicked than the usual life of an average city, where people go clothes, drugs are banned, a thousand laws are in operation and policemen on every corner.

Included in the first-hand information I have obtained from this "abbey" is a mass of notes from an American girl, Jane Wolfe, formerly an actress and motion picture scenario writer in Los Angeles.

I don't know why she first went there to become a member of Crowley's community. It may be that she was tired of a "prohibition" country and wanted to go to a place where there were no "prohibitions"—to another extreme, where "Do What Thou Wilt" was the only law. Maybe she thought it meant complete freedom to do as she pleased.

Judging from the notes and letters she has sent me she must have suffered a considerable shock. "It is all right to do your will,"

Crowley told her, "but first of all, you must discover what your REAL will is, and then train it to obey you."



Jane Wolfe, Former American Movie Star, Now Living in Crowley's Sicilian "Love Cult Abbey," in Mystic Meditation on the Hot Sands.

In order to help her discover her "true will" Crowley made her retire alone to one of the adjacent rocky crags, with no bed but a blanket and no covering but an inadequate "pup-tent," where she had to remain for thirty days engaged in contemplation and self-study. During the greater part of this time she had to sit on the rock, in a cramped, motionless position, like a Buddhist monk, exposed not only to the sun and rain, but also to the gaze of any members of the community who might happen to be passing.

This final detail was "to accustom her to the essential dignity of the human body and the absolute unimportance of whether it is clothed or not,"

She had a terrible time during the first part of her "retirement" to discover her "true will." She was even stoned by mischievous Italian boys from a neighboring village. She tells all about it in a diary which she kept from day to day. But she stuck it out and at the end of thirty days joined the community. That was two years ago. She has been there ever since. She thinks she has discovered her "true will." It happens to be the desire to write. So she stays there and writes and, she says, lives a life of absolute freedom.



The chief permanent residents of the "abbey" to-day are ten persons—five men, three women and two children. Crowley has tabulated the adults to me in his characteristic, methodical way:

| <i>Nationality</i> | <i>Social Status</i> | <i>Profession</i> |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1. English | Old country family | Poet and philosopher |
| 2. Swiss-American | Middle class with infiltration of French nobility | Teacher in public schools in U.S.A. and director |
| 3. French | Southern peasant stock | Nurse |

| | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 4. American | Pennsylvania Dutch middle class | Actress |
| 5. American | New England stock | Naval hospital attendant |
| 6. English | Wessex aristocracy | Writer |
| 7. Scotch | Scotch ancient nobility | Writer, soldier and civil servant |
| 8. English | Lancashire working class | Carpenter |

In the "abbey" of Thelema these people take new names, mostly classical or pagan appellations. The women are called Athena, Cypris, Lala; the men Lamus, Dionysus, etc. Crowley says he doesn't attach any special importance to the changing of the names, except that it helps the individuals to get away from their old "Benighted" selves.

Those who have been following these articles will recognize as No. 1 Crowley himself. They will recognize in No. 2 Lea Hirsig, the Swiss-American girl, first known as "The Dead Soul" and afterward as "The Scarlet Woman," who went abroad with Crowley. No. 3 is a French girl by the name of Ninette Frank who has never been to America. Crowley found her, I believe, in Paris. No. 4 is Jane Wolfe, the American girl from Los Angeles, about whom I told you above.

The two children in the community are Howard, five years old, son of Ninette Frank, and Hansi, three and a half, son of the "Dead Soul."



Raoul Loveday, One of Crowley's Disciples," Who Died at Cefalu Where He and His Wife Were Guests.

In Thelema each individual wears a single short garment, a robe or shirt—or, as he chooses, nothing at all. The food is wholesome, but always of a kind that can be most quickly prepared and the scraps easily cleaned away. The furniture, too, is reduced to the simplest equations. The beds are couches. In short, everything is reduced to the economy of a perpetual "camping trip." The "abbey's" occupants like comfort. They enjoy luxuries. But both must be of a sort that do not get in their way and take up too much time.



Betty May Loveday in the Days When She Posed for Artists and Before She Met Her Husband.



Betty May Loveday, Young English-woman, in the Widow's Garb Which She Adopted After Her Husband's Tragic Death at Crowley's "Love Cult Abbey."

What is the sense in living this way, instead of more elaborately as most people do? Maybe no sense at all for you or for me. But this is the way Jane Wolfe justifies it:

"In civilized life, so-called, at least two-thirds of every one's time is wasted on things that don't matter. The idea of this place is to give every one the maximum time for doing his own will. When I came here two years ago every detail was an annoyance and an insult. Also, I was bored. There is absolutely nothing to do here in the way of amusement. The housework occupies practically no time at all because of its simplification. There is nowhere to go. The result is that with eating and everything else thrown in there is not much more than an hour of our waking time occupied by what one may call necessary work.

"Compare that with life in New York, or any other city. Mere dressing in conventional society takes up more time than that. With the simple garments we wear here, to dress or undress is a matter of three seconds, and these robes are practical for everything but rock-climbing. Even our climbing clothes—consisting of only shirts, breeches and tennis shoes—require but three or four minutes to change.

"In a city, if we are bored we look around for some diversion; we chatter, go to a theatre or movie, play cards—kill time without solving the real problem of our boredom—we only dodge it. But here there are no such diversions. One has to be very stupid not to discover within forty-eight hours that there is no possibility of

amusing oneself in any of the ordinary ways. So one finds oneself up against the fact that one has to discover something to do. We go to Crowley and say, 'What shall we do?' He says, 'Do what thou wilt.'

" 'Yes,' we say, 'but what is that?'

" 'How should I know?' he replies rudely. 'Go and find out.'

" 'Examine yourself,' he says. 'Examine your faculties and tendencies, the trend of your mind and the aspirations of your soul. Allow me to assure you that you will find this investigation leaves you very little time to wonder what to do for amusement.'

"In other words, Crowley uses the same method as the old mystical societies, which shut up candidates for initiation in silence and darkness. They had the choice between going mad or turning their minds inward and learning to study and know themselves.

"It is only after discovering what our true will really is that we begin to practice it. And once discovered, it makes no difference what it is, so long as it is true self-expression. It may be writing or painting. It may be working in a blacksmith shop or breaking rock. It may be hard manual labor. It may be sitting in contemplation and doing absolutely nothing.

"In dealing with so-called indulgences, Crowley believes in conquering them just as truly as any schoolmaster. But his method is totally different. The latter wants you to let your indulgences alone. Crowley wants you to learn by experience what they really are, and to have not merely the power to use, and even enjoy, them, too, without succumbing to them. The teacher wants you to say 'No' to all such things. Crowley wants you to be able to say 'Yes' or 'No,' indifferently and without fear, to all physical things."

"What a place for little children!" you are thinking, and wondering how those two baby boys, Howard and Hansi, are being brought up in such an extraordinary community. Well, I haven't any word direct from Howard or Hansi on the subject. They are too young to write and express themselves. But their mothers think they are "developing marvelously." As to the final results of this amazing child-training, no one knows what its outcome will be, but exactly what this training consists of, Crowley explained to me freely in a recent letter.

The basis of it, of course, is, "Do what thou wilt." Crowley applied his creed even to children. How would you like to try it on children of your own? From the time they could think for themselves, Howard and Hansi were permitted to do exactly what they wanted. If Hansi wanted the brandy bottle instead of the milk bottle, they let him have it. They let him make himself ill, and then carefully explained why it had made him ill, and told him if he liked being ill to help himself again. He decided not to. They didn't remove the bottle from his reach. But he didn't touch it any more.

If Howard wanted to touch a hot stove with his fingers they let him touch it, and they explained why it hurt him. They didn't remove the stove or forbid him to go near it. "You know how it works now," they told him. "If it is your will not to be burned, stay away from it."

But let Crowley speak for himself about the "education" of these children. He says:

"Each child must develop its own peculiar individuality and will, disregarding all other ideas or ideals. Here its natural resources and originality are matched against its environment. It is confronted with such problems as swimming, climbing, housework, and permitted to solve them in its own way. Nothing can be really taught a child except how to think for itself. Here it is treated as a responsible, independent being, encouraged in self-reliance and respected for self-assertion.

"True education is simply assisting a soul to express itself. Every child should be presented with all possible problems and permitted to register its own reactions. Its mind must not be influenced, but only offered all kinds of nourishment. Its innate qualities will enable it to select the things proper for its nature. Respect the child's individuality! Submit all life for its inspection, but without comment. Freedom develops will; experience gives resourcefulness; independence inspires self-confidence.

"Those who train children according to fixed standards cripple and deform them. Every child is a sphinx, and none knows its secret but itself. Every child is the god of its own universe and must be taught nothing but to govern its environment."

If you haven't been reading this series of articles, you may think, from this chapter alone, that I am writing a defense of Crowley—that I am trying to impose his ideas upon you. That is not so. I repeat that I am neither attacking nor defending Crowley. I am chronicling him as I knew him—the good and bad—all of it.

Last week I told you in detail of the scandal that followed the establishment of a chapter of his cult in Detroit. In an earlier chapter I quoted attacks on his "abbey" made by a London newspaper. And it is only fair in this chapter that I present another side—the "abbey" as he sees it himself and as the "disciples" see it.

Next week I shall describe the excitement which prevailed in London when it became known that one of Crowley's "disciples," Raoul Loveday, a young Englishman, had died at Crowley's "abbey."

For the sake of justice, I shall give first the dramatically vivid account by the "disciples'" widow of activities at the "abbey," and then quote from one of Crowley's letters referring to the same set of circumstances.

(To Be Continued)