

**THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER**  
**SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**  
**3 AUGUST 1924**  
**(page 112)**

**Mysteries of the Orgies on the  
Haunted Island of Tiberius**

**The Unexplained Death of a Pretty Italian Girl  
at the Foot of the Statue of the "King of the  
Devils" and the Poisoning of the Shameless  
Baron Adelsward to Be Investigated.**

NAPLES, July 15.

The witty and wicked Baron Jacques Adelsward de Fersen has died mysteriously on the beautiful island of Capri, famous as the scene of the Roman Emperor Tiberius's debauches.

The circumstances of Baron Adelsward's death make even skeptical persons feel that there may be truth in the stories that Capri is haunted by the ghosts of Tiberius's victims. Many persons who have lived there assert that they have heard the despairing shrieks of the maidens and youths caught in the grip of the ancient tyrant and condemned to die for his amusement.

The cries are said to be heard during the night time rising from the ruins of Tiberius's villa, beside the enchanting waters of the Bay of Naples.

For ages Capri has attracted rich voluptuaries, fascinated by its lovely climate and the legends of Tiberius's splendor and evil deeds. A surprising number of these pleasure seekers, like Baron Adelsward, have met tragic deaths. Thus the victims of Tiberius's cruelty have found revenge on those who have tried to follow his wicked example. According to superstitious persons the ghostly apparitions and cries on the island mean that the victims of Tiberius are demanding vengeance for their sufferings.

Dr. Ceri, a well-known physician of Capri, relates that he lingered late at night on the cliff where Tiberius's villa was situated.

"At midnight," says Dr. Ceri, "I saw the figure of a beautiful girl, dressed like a Roman maiden of high rank, but with disheveled clothing and terrified eyes. Then I saw a hideous old man with hands like claws about to seize her. Instinctively I rushed to her rescue.

"As I did so my son, who had come to look for me, put his hand on my arm and the vision disappeared. But for his arrival I should have fallen over the cliff."

Baron Adelsward died in his magnificent Capri villa after a terrific debauch, in which strange drugs, perfumed wines and diabolical ceremonies played their part.

Just as Baron Adelsward's body was being carried away to be cremated his sister dramatically halted the proceedings. She is the Princess Minutolo di Bugnano, wife of an Italian Senator. The Princess ordered the coffin to be opened and an autopsy made on her brother's body. In a few more hours that would have been impossible, for the flames would have destroyed all evidence of the Baron's physical condition.

An autopsy showed various conditions that might have been due to poisoning. On the strength of the medical report the Princess demanded the arrest of a young Italian named Nino Cesarini on a charge of poisoning him.

Cesarini was the only person with the Baron when he died. He had been his favorite companion at Capri for more than two years. In 1921 the Baron made a will, leaving to Cesarini his entire fortune of \$2,000,000. This, in the opinion of the Baron's sister, would have been a motive for Cesarini to poison the Baron.

Cesarini, in defense, answered that the Baron had long been addicted to the use of Hashish and opium, and that they had caused his death. The symptoms of poisoning, he showed, were caused by those drugs.

Leading citizens of Naples now demand that there shall be a complete investigation of Adelsward's death, of the earlier mysterious death of the girl Lotta Varese at his villa and of the other strange occurrences in the eccentric colony at Capri.

Baron Adelsward's life was an amazing succession of tragic and mysterious episodes. He belonged to a noted Swedish family and was an Adelsward on his father's side. He was also a descendant through the female line of the famous Count de Fersen, who made the historic attempt to rescue Queen Marie Antoinette from captivity. Adelsward added the name de Fersen to his own.

Young Adelsward was a millionaire and for some years before the war he was prominent among the fashionable young idlers of Paris, who were noted for their addiction to strange cults. Adelsward had a beautiful apartment on the Avenue de Friedland, where entertainments of a fantastic character given by him aroused the curiosity of Paris.

The Baron became engaged to a young woman of the highest French aristocracy, Mlle. de Maupeou, one of whose ancestors was the celebrated Chancellor de Maupeou, in the time of Madame du Barry. Just as the wedding was about to be celebrated the Baron was arrested for taking part in the dreadful sacrilege of the "black mass." He was the leader of a coterie who worshipped Satan with a gross travesty of the real mass.

These impious ceremonies were held in the apartment of Baron Adelsward. The Paris police heard what was happening and detectives were assigned to gather evidence. They placed ladders against the wall of Baron Adelsward's house in the darkness and, peeping through the windows witnessed the celebration of a "black mass" from beginning to end.

The next day Baron Adelsward and one of his friends were arrested on a charge of leading young people into debauchery.

The case came before the Tenth Correctional Court of Paris, presided over by Judge Puget, who was notorious for his harshness to criminals and sinners. He asked every question he could think of that would expose the vileness of Adelsward's acts.

M. Henri Robert, now famous as the leader of the Paris bar, defended Adelsward. He pictured sympathetically the position of this rich young man of foreign birth, exposed to the manoeuvres of corrupt adventurers of both sexes, eager to keep him in their clutches. He referred eloquently to the approaching marriage which would save the Baron from his evil associates.

In spite of the advocate's eloquence the Judge sentenced Adelsward to six months' imprisonment. He was released the same evening, as his detention before trial was counted as his term.

The next day the Baron hastened to the Chateau de Maupeou, the home of his fiancee, with a large bouquet of flowers to ask her to overlook his errors. Rather ingenuously he expected that the marriage would take place as planned and that he would lead a respectable life. But his fiancee's family were religious and had strict ideas of conduct. They could not excuse what he had done and he was ordered by a servant to leave the house.

In despair, the Baron went home and fired a bullet at his head. He recovered from the wound and then his miseries increased. He found the doors of respectable society closed against him. His own family disowned him. This threw him definitely into the society of those who were using dangerous drugs and following insane or criminal cults.

Wandering from one resort to another in search of new dissipations the Baron reached the island of Capri, which in all ages had attracted so many men of similar tendencies. Idle pleasure seekers from all parts of the world, including Americans, flock to Capri for the sake of the fantastic entertainments that can be enjoyed there.

Foremost among the sybarites whom Baron Adelsward met at Capri was Alfred Krupp, head of the great German firm of munition and steel makers. Krupp built the most magnificent villa the island had known since the days of Tiberius. It was the scene of frequent saturnalia, in which strange forms of dissipation figured.

Adelsward and Krupp became close companions in their pursuit of the occult and forbidden. The Swedish baron built himself a villa on the island with beautiful furnishings and gardens in order to be near his German friend.

Krupp committed suicide when he was threatened with prosecution by the father of a girl he had taken to Capri. It was stated that the Socialists planned to make a complete exposure of all Krupp's doings at Capri and that the thought of his life being brought to light was more than he could endure.

Soon after Krupp's death a young Italian woman named Lotta Varese died in Baron Adelsward's villa after an evening of strange amusements. It is believed that many such tragedies have occurred at Capri without being known to the world, but in this case the girl had friends who traced her death and insisted on an investigation into it.

It was shown that the pair had inhaled the fumes of an Indian drug and fallen into a trance at the feet of an ancient idol of Asmodeus, "the King of the Devils."

It appeared from the evidence that some time during the night the pair had left the house, still doubtless in a state of trance and wandered out to the ruins of the villa of Tiberius. What had happened there was more or less shrouded in mystery. A peasant living near the ruins said that he had been aroused from his sleep by strange cries from the historic site, which has always been regarded by the local natives as haunted. In spite of his terrors, the peasant ventured in the direction of the cries.

He heard the wild shouts of a man, who seemed to be calling on a heathen divinity for help. The countryman heard the shrieks of a woman in terror, and this induced him to go nearer. Crossing himself piously, he went toward the raving couple. He found Adelsward and Lotta Varese lying insensible among the ruins. The girl was removed to Adelsward's villa and died before the statue of the "King of the Devils."

Nearly every one of the notorious tragedies which have occurred on Capri have been linked in some way with the Tiberian villa.

There were marks on Lotta's neck, and as persons under the influence of hashish become homicidal it was suggested that the Baron might have strangled her. The authorities decided that her death might easily have been caused by drugs and that there was not sufficient evidence to hold Baron Adelsward.

They decided, however, that he had become too notorious a character to be allowed to live on Capri and they ordered him to leave Italy. This was just after the war, when the diversions of wealthy maniacs were exciting resentment among the people and Socialism was very threatening in Italy.

Baron Adelsward then went on a long tour of the East to study various forms of diabolism and occultism in their birthplace. He spent considerable time among the devil-worshipping sects of Persia, which seems the ancient home of the idea that we should sacrifice to the powers of evil because they can do most for us. With his wealth and experience he was able to penetrate into mysterious places, where death would have awaited other visitors from the West.

He also stopped at the caves of Ellora, in India, where he is said to have been admitted to the rites of esoteric Brahmanism. Here, hidden behind vast, impenetrable walls of natural rock, priests of the innermost circle of the ancient Hindu religion perform strange rites with the assistance of wonderfully trained dancing girls. To these ceremonies only a few initiates of great wealth are admitted.

After his pilgrimage to the East Baron Adelsward returned to Europe with new stores of dangerous knowledge and obtained permission to live in Italy again.

He became for a time an inmate of the so-called "Abbey," established by Aleister Crowley, at Cefalu, in Sicily. Crowley, who is an Oxford graduate and once literary ability of a high order, has long been sunk in crazy and degraded forms of occultism. He lived for several years in New York, where his devil-worshipping séances acquired a certain notoriety.

Crowley recently removed to Sicily, where he has gathered a crowd of unbalanced devotees around him in an old building in a picturesque village. Crowley apparently has founded a religion of his own, the chief idea of which he proclaims to be:

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

A young English writer was attracted to the Abbey by curiosity and became an inmate of the place with his newly married bride. The wife now states that her husband died there from lack of food and ill-treatment, and that she herself had difficulty in escaping.

The girl has since published a detailed account of the crazy and nauseating ceremonies carried on in Crowley's Abbey at Cefalu.

The Crowley establishment did not long satisfy Baron Adelsward's craving for maddening drugs and fantastic orgies. He yearned to be back once more at Capri, for the haunted island of Tiberius never seems to lose its hold of those who have once tasted its unholy delights.

In spite of the evil reputation he had gained at Capri through the death of the Varese girl, Baron Adelsward ventured to reopen his former villa there. His life now became more shameless than ever. He had been for nearly twenty years steeped in devil-worship, occultism and the use of maddening drugs. His know-

ledge and experience of these matters were naturally very extensive.

He drew around himself a following of young men and women, attracted by the picturesque luxury in which he lived, and by curiosity concerning his strange entertainments.

Many people in Naples and other surrounding towns were indignant at the reports of the debauches on Capri, but Baron Adelsward's wealth made him popular with others, who did not wish him molested. There are many colonies of foreign sybarites in Italy, attracted by the soft climate and beautiful scenery. When the Government recently sent word to the Mayor of a town containing such a coterie that he ought to drive the sinners away, the local functionary answered:

"But they are our only source of revenue."

Among the intimates whom Baron Adelsward gathered around him at Capri the one he liked best was a clever young Italian poet named Nino Cesarini. Then followed the Baron's mysterious death and Cesarini's arrest on a charge of poisoning him, as already told.