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**HAS "MOUTH OF HELL"
TAKEN CROWLEY'S BODY?**

Notorious English Cosmopolitan Figure, Sir Aleister Crowley, Famous in Europe and America As Worker of "Black Magic," War Shy, Leader of Religious Cult of Queer Practices, Disappears—Suicide Suggested

By Francis Dickie

Was that dreadful abyss of the sea, "The Mouth of Hell," on the coast of Portugal carried into its depths forever all that was mortal of "Sir" Aleister Crowley, notorious in Europe and America these many years? Has suicide marked the end of the amazing life of one of the most unusual characters in modern times? Edward Aleister Crowley, self-styled baronet, leader of a mysterious religious cult with orgiastic rites, practitioner of black magic, famous war spy, author of a book publicly burned by the English censor for its obscenity, and still more recently interesting in the eyes of Europeans by being deported from Italy and France for offenses against the public morals.

The investigation of the Lisbon police reveals a most peculiar and mysterious situation, quite in keeping with the queer history of Crowley's past life.

The "Boca do Inferno" or "Mouth of Hell" is a deep abyss between rocks sheering steeply up from the sea. Here the water is always whirling, and rough even when the weather is calm outside. It is 20 miles from Lisbon. Into it countless people tired of life have flung themselves in recent years. Many murderers have here thrown the bodies of their victims, for the place never gives back the dead.

Singular Letter Found

While walking near the edge of this place recently, Ferreira Gonzez, a Lisbon merchant, found a letter weighted down by an open cigarette case singularly ornamented. Because of the vicinity in which he found the letter, he at one opened it to look

upon the most puzzling contents. It bore the heading of one of the large hotels in Lisbon. But where the date is usually written were some incomprehensible mystic signs. Then

L.G.P.

I cannot live without you. The other "Boca do Inferno" will get me—it will not be as hot as yours.

Hisos!

Tu

Li

Yu

The envelope was addressed to Miss Hanni L. Jaeger.

The finder, not being able to read English, applied at the hotel, only to learn the woman had departed some days previously. However, the porter said: "The gentleman with whom she came could probably give you some information. He stayed here a few days, then moved to the Hotel Central at Cintra. His name is Sir Aleister Crowley.

But inquiries made at the Hotel Central revealed he had never registered there. The finder turned the matter over to the police.

The wording of the letter suggested suicide from disappointed love. But the mysterious signs placed where the date line is usually written were beyond the Portuguese police powers of solution, as well as the names at the end of the letter.

However the reproduction of the letter in Lisbon newspapers was read by Fernando Venoa, a man interested in all matters dealing with mysticism and kindred occult subjects, and who had been friendly with Crowley during the early autumn in Lisbon. He communicated with the police, and interpreted the puzzling symbols on the date line as follows. The first two were "To 14." The other three signs referred to astrological things. "The sign of the scale." The "To 14" meant the year 1930 according to a special chronology adopted by Crowley and other initiates of a secret cult. This he took to mean that the sun had entered the zodiacal sign of the scale when the letter was written; in other words, an astrologically written date corresponding to September 23, 1930, or a time apparently a few moments before Crowley ended his life by casting himself into the "Boca do Inferno." L. G. P. were probably the initials of the "mystic name" of Miss Jaeger. Regarding the word "Hisos," Mr. Venoa could only offer the suggestion that it was a secret magical word, but of its import he had no idea. The words Tu Li Yu

refer to a Chinese sage who lives some 3000 years before Christ, and of whom Crowley claims to be the reincarnation.

Talked of Suicide

With most of the letter explained, Mr. Vernon added the further information that a few days before the date on which this letter was written (providing, of course, the astrological interpretation of the date is correct), he had received a letter from Crowley from Etoll saying Miss Jaeger had gone out leaving a note that she would return presently. But she had never come back. Fortunately the policing system in Europe is thorough. Miss Jaeger was located in Berlin and admitted Crowley had often talked of suicide. But of their relations, or the reason for their journey to Portugal she revealed nothing; nor explained her abrupt departure.

All this mingling of apparently violent death, of zodiacal signs and magic words, smacks more of the Middle Ages, of the days of Paracelsus, or of the time of Cagliostro, and the writings of Joris Karl Huysmans, than the present when modern wonders of airplanes, television and radio have become taken for granted.

Yet for all the varied progressive methods of our day for all the enlightenment given by modern science, it still remains a surprising fact that sorcery is widely practiced not only in Europe, but in America, and that witchcraft is believed in still in parts of England and Scotland as well as many parts of Europe; that black masses still are held. Certainly the things relating to magic and astrology have still a fascination for a very large public. And to this public, as well as to the world at large, Aleister Crowley is an outstanding figure. His life is an odd melange. By times gentleman adventurer, explorer, magician, founder of a queer religious cult, war spy, companion of rich women past their first youth, writer of books of bizarre contents, self-styled baronet, he packed into his 55 years an incredible, and for the most part discreditable pile of living. He has taken part in a variety of sensational happenings that make his career fully on par with such men as Cagliostro and Casanova.

Truly an extraordinary personality, Edward Aleister Crowley. Born in 1875 at Leamington, Eng., he studied at Cambridge. Possessed of a fortune of some 50,000 pounds, he for years led the life of a dilettante to the point of madness. He published some verse that was favorably reviewed by some of the leading

English journals. Even at the age of 20 he had been fascinated by the oriental theories of magic and the theories of theosophy. Yielding to his interest he traveled first to India, then to China, then set out on foot for Tibet. He returned from there to Lisbon, claiming to have in his possession a magic food that gave to the human body invisibility. He founded a circle in London at which he propounded a new religion, and soon had many followers, some of them people of the highest class. It was at this period in his career, that Somerset Maugham published his weird book, "The Magician," of which Crowley was the leading figure. At this period also further books from Crowley's own pen name began to appear, treatises on religion and strange romances in the world of mysticism. Gradually it became whispered in London that the leader of the new cult had strange appetites and that perversions were part of the rites of his religion. His book entitled "The Key to the Great Mystery," was ordered burned by the English court as obscene.

Cult Broken Up

Crowley divided his time between London and various cities in Europe for nearly 20 years. Shortly before the war he founded his cult in Detroit, but this was broken up following police investigation, and many people said to be prominent in Detroit society were said to have been interested in the new religion.

AT the outbreak of the war Crowley was in New York where he was soon noted for his German sympathies. The publication of violent articles against the Allies, a campaign of defeatism made him highly unpopular in certain circles. Yet this was continued until America's entrance into the war. Yet Crowley returned calmly to England, for in reality all this was on the surface while he made himself strong with spy circles of the Germans in America, to learn what he could to aid the British foreign office.

Shortly following the end of the war Crowley settled in Italy. On the shores of the Adriatic his practice of black magic was again taken up, and a number of women joined the colony. The suicide of one of the women called the attention of the Italian authorities to Crowley. After investigation he was deported for practicing sorcery and offenses against public morality. He came to Paris and lived upon the Avenue de Suffren on a sumptuous scale. Legends grew up around him and his house in a short time. His wife obtained a divorce. In the queer circles of

the followers of magic it was said: "That he had the obsession of all that was low and unclean, so he filled continually his astral light with eroticism." Words conveying no clear meaning to the average reader, further than that the happenings which went on in Crowley's mansion were probably of an orgiastic nature. They must have been fairly "high wide and handsome" for even the exceedingly tolerant French police finally descended upon Crowley in March, 1929, and banned him from the country. During all of the last five years of his residence in France Crowley had been working on a voluminous compilation of his life history which an English publisher published in 1929 in six volumes, a work it is said nearly as lengthy as the adventures of Casanova.

Personal Meeting With Crowley

What lies behind this recent finding in Portugal it would be difficult to say. Some people familiar with Crowley in recent years have deemed him quite mad for some time. His tendency to suicide, as vouched for by Miss Jeger, has also remarked by other people who have come in touch with the man.

This writer was once introduced to him in the Cafe du Dome, Paris. Crowley suggested crossing the street to the Cafe Select. He wore a brick red coat and plus-fours to match, and a golfing cap that shrieked its yellow brightness to heaven. His heavy round face was that of an English squire, but with an added something of cunning that country living does not give. There was nothing about his too corpulent figure to suggest him as the almost worshiped leader of a strange religious cult. Down the wide spaciousness of the Boulevard Montparnasse, taxis, huge lorries and private motor cars rushed by either way with the speedless limit and disregard for human life that is one of the pleasures of Paris to watch from a safe place on the sidewalk. Suddenly Crowley stepped in front; two quick steps, right in the path of a big touring car traveling at high speed. Only the marvelous driving ability of the chauffeur saved Crowley's life. The big car swerved in the only possible moment, the flange of the wheels screeched against the curb. The car rocked a minute, then steadied and went on.

Crowley heaved a vast sigh. "You see," he said, "they won't hit me. I wish I were dead, and then perhaps men would call me great."

Later when the waiter had served our drink, and apropos of nothing, Crowley suddenly said, while his eyes were fixed and

far away: "I have come to sympathize with all founders of religions. I have had many followers. It is a terrible burden. They write to me from San Francisco, from Sydney and Vancouver, from New York and Honolulu." He rambled on for nearly an hour talking of his poetry, of his novels. He seemed very depressed.

Once more the writer saw him before he was asked to leave France. It was at the Bal Negre, a wild dance hall on the Rue Blomet where colored people and quite a few white women and a few white men came to dance. He still wore his suit of plus-fours. With a huge cap, this time a blue one, pulled far down on his head, his eyes and half his face hidden by the drawn-down peak.

Of Crowley, poet with almost a genius for putting on paper the haunting word, it has been said many women loved him and some committed suicide when he failed them.

If he in his turn has thrown himself into the abyss of the "Mouth of Hell," that unyielding sea that never gives back a body, for the unrequited love of a woman, then there is a certain ironical justice about it all. Perhaps some of the magic powers of the unknown he strove to understand and control played their part in his undoing.