

THE TIMES
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CHARGE OF RECEIVING LETTERS

MR. ALEISTER CROWLEY BOUND OVER

After a trial extending over two days Edward Alexander Crowley, 58, (known as Aleister Crowley, an author), on bail, was found Guilty at the Central Criminal Court yesterday on a charge of feloniously receiving four original letters and one copy of a letter alleged to have been stolen from Mrs. Betty Sedgwick, an artist's model, professionally known as "Betty May."

Judge Whiteley, K. C., bound Crowley over for two years, and ordered him to pay a sum not exceeding 50 guineas towards the cost of the prosecution.

Mr. Melford Stevenson and Mr. A. E. E. Reade prosecuted, and Mr. C. Gallop was for the defence.

The letters were stated to have been used by Crowley in a libel action he brought against a firm of publishers, who called Mrs. Sedgwick as a witness.

In the witness-box, Crowley described himself as an author and poet, writing under the name of Aleister Crowley. This was the first time any charge had been made against him in any part of the world.

Mr. Stevenson, cross-examining, asked Crowley: "Are you representing yourself as a respectable person whose word is to be trusted?"

The defendant.—Yes.

Mr. Stevenson.—I want to read what Mr. Justice Swift said about you. He had listened to your libel action and the history of your activities for several days?—Yes.

Did he say this: "I thought that everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me. I have learned in this case that we can always learn something more if we live long enough. Never have I heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous, abominable stuff as that produced by the man who describes himself to you as the greatest living poet.?"

Crowley agreed that the quotation, so far as he knew, was accurate. The reference was to his book.

Mr. Stevenson.—Have you been expelled from Italy?—I

have, like most distinguished Englishmen.

Have you been expelled from America?—No.

From France?—No.

Have you ever been refused permission to remain in either of those countries?—In France they refused to renew my permission on a technical point.

Have you been expelled from India?—No.

Crowley said he met Mrs. Sedgwick in 1992. She was the wife of a friend of his.

In reply to Mr. Gallop, Crowley said the observations of Mr. Justice Swift in his libel action were the subject of an appeal.

The defendant said he heard that Mrs. Sedgwick would probably be called as a witness against him in the action, and he was told that she was to commit perjury. He wanted to know whether the letters proved her plans, and he was advised that the letters might be useful. He asked Mr. Mather to obtain the originals from a Captain Cruze, a former friend of Mrs. Sedgwick, and £5 was handed to Mr. Mather. The money was paid by a friend.

Mr. Gallop.—Did you at any time suspect that these letters had been stolen?

The defendant.—No.

The jury found Crowley Guilty.

Judge Whiteley said that it was the first time a case of that kind had come before him. It was a very useful prosecution, as it made it quite clear that this sort of thing could not be done. The letters ought never to have been used or to have been in the defendant's possession. No harm had been done, and he would not send Crowley to prison.

Crowley.—Thank you, my Lord.

The Judge.—I understand this litigation is still going on, and if anything of this kind occurs again you will be brought here and receive six months. You understand that?

Crowley.—I do, my Lord; it won't occur again.

The defendant was then bound over, and was ordered to pay a sum not exceeding 50 guineas towards the costs of the prosecution.