

MY SISTER'S LOVE CULT

Excerpt from *My Life in a Love Cult* by
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There was in the back of my mind the anticipation of that time when I should wander the world and investigate those cults of which I had first come to know in Riverside Drive. The more I heard of them the more my eagerness increased. The time was ripe for my investigations.

I had thought this was my own decision. I had not taken into account that Fate might have decided to take a hand in this, too. But already she had set the stage for the first new knowledge of cults that was to come my searching way.

Things I am going to tell you now are among the most astounding of this narrative. If they do not concern me quite as personally as some that have preceded, I think you will agree I have been closely enough concerned to speak authoritatively.

Aleister Crowley

It was in no roundabout way Fate led me to the inside story of those drug orgies, the worship of Satan as a deity, and the terrible pagan rite which the brilliant English poet and explorer, Aleister Crowley, stirred the world as no one else in his time. Knowledge of him and his cult dropped like a plummet into my lap.

I am going to tell you the true story of that internationally infamous character who once, on a mountain-climbing expedition, claimed to have had a vision, and, like a satanic Moses, came down from his mountain to lead his followers, not aright, but astray.

The "Anti-Christ"

Proclaiming himself an "Anti-Christ," naming himself "The Beast of the Apocalypse," he sallied forth to become the head of the most notorious cult of his age, the infamous O. T. O. Though every effort has been made to suppress it, it flourishes even now—in secret—in many parts of our country and in Europe.

His teachings may have been discredited through the notoriety that followed his exposure, and by the shock when their followers in his wake the trail of death and despair that ever does, but not entirely. His teachings have not been buried.

Weird Tales

Even now, ever so often, there come weird tales from this, or that, or the other part of the country of startling occurrences and appalling consequences directly traceable to Aleister Crowley. I am going to tell you many things of him and his love cult activities that have not, before, been brought to light.

You ask how this may be?

How is it that I, who have been so busy with my own life and loves, can know so much about that satanic Englishman who is beyond doubt one of the outstanding figures in all the secret cults of the world? And one of the most devastating?

My Own Sister

This is the reason: The woman who became known all over the world as his favorite high priestess, his "Scarlet Maiden of the Apocalypse," the "Dead Soul" he revived, was none other than my own sister.

Why should I *not* know of all his devilish Satanism and practice of black magic?

Often I have bitterly blamed myself for the relations between my sister and the man she followed to perdition. It was I who made it possible for her to meet him.

But I am not Fate. That meeting was destined, and I was but a tool.

Their Son

I know that what I did was not deliberate, and that I have since done what I could to atone, at least by helping to bring their son, precocious little Hansie, to normalcy and right living. He would never have been normal had he continued to live with her and his father, Aleister Crowley, that faithful follower of the Devil and worshiper of evil.

My discarded lover, the clairvoyant, had written me in New York that I must not fail to see Crowley. A most interesting character, he averred. He was sure I would find amusement in delving into such queer mental kinks as Crowley possessed.

Crowley's Functions

He enclosed introductions that would make it easy for me to attend one of Crowley's functions in his studio in Greenwich Village. Invitations for such affairs were eagerly sought when Crowley was at the height of his fame in this country.

Not caring to go alone, I suggested, more as a joke than anything else, that my sister, Lea, should go with me. It never occurred to me she would.

Not Like Me

She was not like me. A mouse-like little creature, pure and sweet, caring for nothing even for the usual feminine foibles of personal adornment, her only interest was in her work as a school teacher in the Bronx. I knew she had never attended a party resembling even the mildest of Greenwich Village affairs.

To my surprise, she consented to go. Destiny was not to be denied.

It is one of Life's queer quirks that it is the man of lurid reputation, the roue, the gambler, the man of sinister character, who holds the most fascinating appeal for romantic young girls. The more innocent the girl, the more naive, insouciant, the greater her danger.

Sex Slave Complex

It is the age-old slave complex which makes its appearance at the first awakening of sex. To be so "different" the man must, the girl argues, possess superior qualities; mastery. The slave complex bids her bow to one who is stronger.

I am going to tell you, you young girls yearning for such hectic romance, what happened to my own sweet, pure little sister. I have the hope it may serve as a "stop' look' and listen" sign if you should meet some suave devil in human form like Aleister Crowley.

We had not been long in his studio before I was conscious of that shivery feeling one uncomfortably gets when being stared at. I glanced curiously about. Then I saw who was responsible.

Lea Attracts Him

It was Crowley. He stood in the center of the room, arms folded, his thick brows drawn together as he stared. It was not on me his gaze was bent, however. It was on my sister.

It was vastly uncomfortable; annoying. I hoped she would not notice it. I feared it would frighten her, shy as I knew her to be. Undoubtedly, I thought, she must have attracted Crowley because she is so different.

And surely she was as different as the dawn from midnight from those who thronged the heavily perfumed studio. In her quiet little gown, she was like some timid little crocus trying to force its head up between serried ranks of flaunting tiger lilies.

She Returns His Stare

Uncertainly, as though a bit reluctantly answering a strange summons, I saw her glance up. I saw her gaze wander about, wavering, searching. At last it came to rest on the man whose basilisk stare had never wavered.

I started to put out my hand in a little reassuring gesture. She did not notice it. For all she knew of me then I might have been a million miles away. All she saw, knew, in the world right then, were those commanding eyes of "The Beast of the Apocalypse."

For minutes their gaze held steadily, my shy little sister, to my astonishment, giving him back level stare for stare. It was outrageous. It was uncanny.

She Is Dazed

The man shifted his position. My sister's eyes dropped. I saw her shrink back into her seat with a little quiver of her whole body. I heard her sigh of half bewilderment, half ecstasy.

I spoke to her. She did not hear me. Her eyes were filmed, dazed, and her face, always spiritually pale, was like a mask of wax or marble as her eyes shifted, following, following every move of the man who seemed to have bewitched her.

That would never do. I knew my little sister could have no idea of the danger in a man like Crowley. But I knew.

Was Always Shielded

She had never known the world. She had been sheltered, content, in her own small circumscribed orbit. Even I, advocate of following impulses wherever they might lead, had always been careful to shield Lea. I felt that much that would not be wrong for me would be terribly harmful to her.

I was uneasy; I wanted to get away. The place suddenly seemed to be filled with unspoken horrors.

She turned on me like a tigress when I suggested going. Her mouth was set in the stubborn lines I knew as her chief characteristic.

I Shall Not Go!

"I shall *not* go!" she declared. "I will not move one step until I have talked to Aleister Crowley."

I tried to argue with her. I had no idea we should have an opportunity for conversation with the man who was so eagerly surrounded by an admiring crowd. They were interested in him, not alone for his peculiarities, but also for his culture and learning. There was nothing he could not talk about with any of them. He was as much at home discussing Whistler's "Etchings" as he was in a debate about the poems of Araby.

Lea was firm, though. She had always been very conventional. Now it seemed, she was just as determined to break through conventions. It was as if she was answering some mentally telegraphed command.

Beauty and the "Beast"

It was but a minute after she had refused to go that Crowley left his famous guests and came over to us. I tried to tell myself it was nothing more than the frank curiosity of opposites that made those two forget all else to continue their stares—Lea, the quiet little nun; Crowley, "The Beast of the Apocalypse," whose very countenance showed the beast he was at heart. I could not shake off the uncanny feeling that gripped me.

He offered us wine, and Oriental cakes he brought himself. I barely sipped my wine, but my sister . . .

She Remains

I was amazed when she drank glass after glass of blood red wine with Crowley. Again I said we must go. She shook her head most decidedly and told me she would not go. Not then. She told me to go on home. She would come later. She did not want so soon to leave her first studio party. She was petulant.

She taunted me, tried to anger me, told me she was old enough to take care of herself. At last some of the things she insinuated did infuriate me so that I decided to go without her. If she got a good fright it would be good enough for her.

I could not imagine that anything could happen to her in that crowd, unconventional though it was. I thought when Crowley added his urging to let her stay a while longer if she wished that it was a mere gesture of hospitality.

I Cannot Sleep

I left, none too pleased with my Quaker-like sister. She had embarrassed me with her school girl conduct.

Had I had one faintest conception of what was to be, what would have been my thoughts as I went homeward? And left that girl child, so close to my heart, in a studio filled with chattering people and—with Aleister Crowley.

I slept fitfully. I would not have slept at all had I not been lulled into a false security. I was sure that, shortly after midnight, I heard her close the hall door. I thought Lea was safe at home. Though my anger had cooled when it had had time to switch to anxiety, I was still too annoyed with her to leave my bed to see if she was all right. She was at home, that was enough.

Lea Doesn't Return

I lay awake with whirling thoughts. It was possible, I had to admit, though I did not relish the thought, that this innocent sister of mine would some day have a lover. Even as I. But I refused, most emphatically refused, to consider any devil-worshiper as an aspirant to that honor.

You may imagine my horror when, on arising, I found that Lea had not come home! Her cloister-like little room, with all its prim fittings, and her little white bed had not been occupied.

I was hurriedly flinging on my clothes when the telephone rang. It was, as I had suspected, a call from Crowley. Yes, my sister had spent the night in the studio with some other women friends of his. Certainly she was all right. Did I want to speak to her?

To His Studio

"I'll be right down!" I shouted at him and hung up.

What an insane thing for her to do. Of course, though, it was all right. I wouldn't have given the matter another thought in any one else but Lea. I was still more annoyed than alarmed when I arrived at the studio.

In spite of the warmth of the morning, of the exotically scented heat waves that flowed out to meet me when the black servant opened the door of the dimly lit studio, I shivered.

Was that premonition touching me with its clammy fingers? Had anything happened to Lea? I caught my breath sharply.

What Could Happen?

Nonsense! What *could* happen? Here in the middle of New York with a dozen policemen to heed a lifted voice. I would not let such fear thoughts possess me.

And yet—

I glanced around me. It was all as it had been the night before. It was little different in the morning light, what if it could find its way through the heavy, weirdly colored draperies hung before the long windows of the high-ceiled room.

On the walls were "The Beast's" own eerie paintings. There were the wide couches, piled high with great, soft pillows, the Oriental hangings and the swinging braziers wafting their incense.

My Baby Sister

I dropped onto a couch to wait. I was inexplicably uneasy. I wanted to occupy myself and reached for a gold-tipped cigarette on an elaborately carved tabourette.

Well, I hoped the little idiot had seen enough to satisfy her. My little school-mar'm sister! Fancy her "acting up" at her first studio party.

With a sort of grudging pride, annoyed with her as I was, I recalled her as she had sat there in her modest little gown—no jewels, no bare, shining, white voluptuous limbs like other women of the party. I pictured her pale aloofness as she had seemed utterly unable to keep her eyes off Crowley.

Keeps Me Waiting

I smiled a little wryly as I recalled his “strutting” his best sinister glare for her benefit. He had succeeded in dazzling her all right. I anxiously hoped not too greatly, but I would certainly see she had no other opportunity.

I puffed at my cigarette and waited impatiently. What could be keeping her? I began to be peevish again. What did she take me for? A “Patience-on-a-monument” chaperone?

I sat up as the heavy drapery at the rear of the studio was drawn back and there glided in the reed-like, half-somnolent figure of a woman. She was nude, save for the blood-red robe of silk she held tightly about her with one hand.

The Scarlet Maiden

In the half-light of the incense-filled studio I did not recognize her at first. Not until, with noiseless, barefoot steps, she crossed the room and stood in front of me. I glanced up inquiringly.

A queer, half-mocking smile from eyes which but a few hours before seemed dead to all emotion, greeted me. No words.

I rose, tottering, hands groping toward the blood-red apparition.

“Lea!” I choked. “You! What—what—”

She nodded, and there crossed her face the most beatific smile I ever hope to see.

“Not Lea,” she corrected softly, in the monotone of one repeating a well-learned lesson. ‘The Scarlet Maiden of the Apocalypse’—the ‘Dead Soul’—dead no longer, for he, the Master, has breathed into it Life!”

Are You Mad?

I fell back on the couch, too shocked to speak. Twice I tried, before:

“Lea!” I moaned faintly. “In Heaven’s name what does this mean? Answer me! Have you gone mad?”

Her smile was inscrutable; far away. Her words, too, seemed to come from a distance.

"Mad?" she repeated. "Were you? Did you call yourself mad when you lay in the arms of the first man to whom you gave yourself? Or did you not think Heaven had showered on you an ecstasy beyond belief?"

She Knows My Love Life

Choked with emotion, I could not utter a word. She went on:

"*You* should know. Why did you never tell me what it meant? Who knows but that you and I were born to be the high priestesses of a high cult of love—the chosen companions of chosen interpreters? Oh, don't protest, Marian! Have you thought your life a secret from—*me*?" She threw out one bare arm in an expressive gesture.

My head dropped. A pang shot through my heart. I had, indeed, thought my love life secret, especially from my sister who, to me, was the embodiment of all the conventional, homely virtues. I privately scorned; this quiet, represses sister, satisfied for so long with being school teacher of the middle-class children of the Bronx.

Her Virginal Body

I could have understood the metamorphosis in myself. I was ever on the search for something new. I could have understood it happening to me, even though Aleister Crowley, the infamous "Beast," repelled me. I had come to know how close the shade between repulsion and love.

But Lea!

My voice was a husky whisper. "Has—has this gone—far?" I asked.

She pulled herself up proudly before me, like a queen, and threw aside the crimson robe that only partially concealed the once virginal white body I had known.

She Is Branded

There, branded deeply on the snow-white of her skin, was a great star inside a double circle. The anger of the outraged white flesh flamed redly at me. My sister swayed and spoke dreamily.

"I—I am his High Priestess! I am his 'Woman of Babylon!' Not the scarlet woman of the putrid-minded, but the scarlet maiden of the Apocalypse, forever bound to him by this, to him, my Beast, my lover, my Anti-Christ! Here—right here," and her arm dramatically described an arc toward the center of the studio floor on which I could see a faint chalk-line circle, "is where he made me his own. Inside this circle I knelt, adoring him. With his own dagger, white-hot, he branded me his chattel forever! Ah, the exquisite agony! The joy!"

Had Taken Her Body

It was true, too horribly true. That devil-man had, in a night, taken her body. Had he, too, taken her mind? She swayed, about to fall. I sprang toward her.

I was too late. The curtains were flung violently aside. The beast-eyed Crowley leaped across the studio. It was into his outstretched arms she fell. He laid her on a couch and stood over her glaring his defiance at me.

I hate, even now, to glimpse in retrospect the scene that followed. Never before, never since, had or have I been so beside myself. I raged, I tore, I threatened, I pleaded, I cajoled. All to no avail. They laughed at my tears. In their love-crazed condition, all arguments were useless.

To Aid My Sister

I realized at length, as my passion wore itself out, that, if I were really to aid my sister, to bring her back to sanity, I must try to remain on as good terms as possible with Crowley. I did my best to get a grip on myself. That was my idea throughout the luncheon I had with them, and at which appeared another masculine devotee of Crowley's Great God Pan.

When I left them, "The Beast" was seated at a table, absorbed in a game of chess with a boon companion. At his feet lay my sister, sound asleep, completely nude, curled up in cushions like a drowsing kitten.

Poor little "goddess!" Neither "The Beast" nor his companion paid the slightest heed to her who had been dubbed "Goddess"

and “High Priestess,” but who seemed, now, more like a pet animal or docile servant.

The Transformation

I had been the unwelcome witness of one of the “miracles” Crowley boasted he could, with the help of his Satan, perform. For that twenty-four-hour transformation of my innocent little sister was the strangest thing I have ever witnessed—a miracle, truly diabolical!

The most striking thing about that man was his belief in himself, that he was an actual devil-god. The burden of his chant, that which he taught his followers was: “Love is the law. Love under will.”

I think in that neurotic mind of his he really believed he was going to raise humanity to a higher plane, but he certainly went about it in a most peculiar way.

The Right of Wrong

Once, when I attended one of his public lectures, I saw how his teachings were received by people of normal minds. So wild were his ideas, so warped, that the hall which had been reasonable well filled, was more than half empty before he had concluded.

He believed that whatever anyone wanted to do was right, regardless of whom he injured.

You may think there was scant difference between this teaching of his which I condemn and my own ideas of following impulse, defying convention.

There was this great difference: Crowley believed in the “right of wrong.” To him the worshiping and following of Satan and evil were the highest to which one could attain. His idea was: “All is evil. Evil is right. Let evil prevail!”

All Is Good

And I? My belief is that “all is good, for all is God.” There is no right or wrong in the Universal Plan, but there *is* free will to follow impulses and, what is more important still, to *control* them.

The difference between Crowley's freedom and mine is the difference between following impulse in the belief of its right, in *mind* and *motive*, defying convention because of honest belief, and the following of evil for evil's sake, defying all for the sake of defiance.

It would never occur to me to say that anyone could successfully defy the laws of Nature. Aleister Crowley tried to. That was where he went wrong—especially in his notorious drug orgies.

Not Harmful

He taught his students, in his strange "Holy Abbey of Theleme," in Cefalu, Sicily, where he established a most astounding colony after he left America, that, if they trained their minds sufficiently, there was no possible indulgence in which they could not revel. Indulgence could do them no harm. Drink and drugs that would injure most people would be to them, after they had learned sufficient control, harmless as water. He admitted the danger of this to ordinary persons, but—those who were disciples of Aleister Crowley, the "Anti-Christ," could not be ordinary, according to him.

They were not. They were extraordinarily extraordinary, in many ways. Especially in the docile way they gave up all their worldly goods to Crowley when they entered his order; in the way they went on their knees to him, vowing to obey him, to be his slave in all things.

His Collegium Spiritum Sanctum

He had some queer ways of making his disciples "master their souls." I don't think anything was more insane than that story related to me by the beautiful American actress Jane Wolf, who became a member of his colony in Sicily, his "Collegium Spiritum Sanctum," or "College of the Holy Ghost," as he blasphemously called it. It was there he declared he was making a race of supermen and superwomen from "weak mortals."

When I listened to what Jane Wolf had to say, I thought if there was ever a "weak mortal" on earth, it was she—to have obeyed Crowley's outlandish orders. So thoroughly did he make her "contemplate her soul" that she almost lost her life. He said

she could not be sufficiently disciplined until she had spent thirty days and nights in the sunshine and rain on the top of a bare rock on a mountain peak, clad in sack cloth, without food or shelter. She did it, and almost died of exposure.

Not I

If Crowley and his baleful eyes succeeded in subduing my sister, though, he found there was one in our family who would do no knee bending. That was I.

Once, after listening to his lecture, I told him:

"Your ideas are false. There isn't one single thing to recommend them—or you. And you needn't call yourself a High Beast, either. I'm not blind."

He laughed. He pretended not to care what I thought, but he was too vain for that, too eager for encomiums.

"I'd like to have you for a priestess," he said. "It would be interesting to bend you to my will, as I would. You'll come to me, yet. You'll be wonderful, *after* I get through with you."

Never!

Join *him*? Never!

I never have been broken by anyone. I never intend to be. The prospect of worshipping the Devil with Crowley had no appeal for me.

Before I finished with him, it was he who was afraid of me. I gloried in making him fear me. I am sure it was due to fear of me that he hastened his departure from America and set up his Sicilian colony.

She Goes

In one thing he bested me. I was determined he should not take my sister with him. He was determined to take her. She went.

The family was all wrought up, as might be expected, but, wanting no publicity, and realizing Lea was of age, we never called in the authorities, in spite of all the crazy doings in that studio on Washington Square.

There was little I could do, after all. I did have the pleasure once, though, of breaking one of his magic sticks over "The Beast's" august back. I can see him now. How he grabbed up the broken stick and shook it at me, his beast eyes spitting fire.

I'll Get You

"I told you I'd get you," he raged, "and I will! You'll come to me! You'll be my slave! I'll *b-r-r-e-e-a-k* you!"

He was wrong in that prophecy. I was never swayed to the O. T. O. I am no devil worshiper.

For the indignity of the stick he put a most violent curse on me. I might add that it came uncomfortably near being carried out, too.

In spite of my indignation over the affair of my sister, I attended one of Crowley's weird "religious" ceremonies a short time after she went to him. Broken up as I was over the whole thing, I was nevertheless curious to see how this sister of mine with the Madonna face would conduct herself as a high priestess of Satan.

His Ceremonies

Crowley did not "invoke the devil" or "arouse the Great God Pan" at that ceremony. I saw him do that later and of all the wild, frightful panderings to excitement I ever saw, that was about the limit. Blue lights, puffs of smoke, hoarse bleatings, as of goats, from human throats—he had the whole works.

For, of all the people who have ever made whoopee in Greenwich Village (and there have "sure been some!") there has never been one who, for pure devilish, erotic imagination run riot, could touch Aleister Crowley with the proverbial ten-foot pole.

As I entered the dim room the first thing that drew my eyes was my sister's face. It seemed purer, more spiritual than ever as she sat on a high dais-like throne in front of long black velvet curtains. Except for the scarlet robe and circle of the O. T. O. could be seen, she was nude.

Crowley, in a robe of black, wearing a strange headdress in which was one fiery eye, and carrying a tall scepter, stood in front of the throne. In his hand he held a silver cup filled with blood-red wine.

Men and women, as devotionally kneeling as though in a cathedral, were ranged about in semi-circles. Their eyes were bent on Crowley in adoration.

There was a long, strange ritual which it must have taken him, prolific poet as he was, much time to compose. The burden of it was the two outstanding tenets of his faith.

Love Is the Law

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law," was the all-important one.

And so, throughout the ritual:

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law," chanted "Anti-Christ" Crowley.

For "Amen" his followers answered:

"Love is the law. Love under will."

To which: "Every man and woman is a star," answered the leader firmly, and with a conviction that the last word in all that was desirable in life had been said.

The Chant

I knew my sister had a good memory, but I had never thought of her as an elocutionist. She was far too modest for that. It had always been I with the "yen" for the stage.

But it was not without dramatic power that she repeated a chant Crowley had written for her. It was too long for me to remember off-hand, but she later wrote it down for me.

"I am Nuit, lady of the starry heavens. Come forth, Oh Children, under the stars and take your fill of love. I am above you and in you. My ecstasy is yours. My joy is to see your joy.

"Be ye goodly, therefore; dress ye all in fine apparel; eat rich foods and drink sweet wines, and wines that foam. Also take your fill and will of love, when, where, and with whom ye will, but always unto me—that your every act may be a ritual, an act of worship, a sacrament.

"Live as the kings and princes, crowned and uncrowned, of this world have lived, as masters always live, but let not this be self-indulgence.

"Keep pure your highest ideal; strive ever toward it, without allowing aught to stop you or turn you aside, even as a star sweeps upon its incalculable and infinite course of glory, and all is love. The law of your being becomes light, love and liberty.

"Is not this better than the death-in-life of the slaves of the slave-gods, as they go oppressed by the consciousness of sin, wearily seeking or simulating tedious virtues?"

The Spectacle

There was more of their ritual flummery; much more. I shall not here put it down. It did not differ from that of other secret societies. Not that "service" anyhow, for, as I told you, Crowley forebore at the time from setting off any of his devil-inducing fireworks.

I was to have one shock I would never forget. Before the ritual closed, with Crowley dipping his pointed scepter into the goblet of wine (an old magical symbol as anyone knows who has delved into ancient cults), I was treated to an astonishing spectacle.

Entones To Her Man-Devil

I saw my once nun-like sister, no longer with a hint of the cloister, stand, her eyes alight with her newly awakened love, her arms flung out to the man who had taken her, her body swaying as in answer to a hypnotic spell as she intoned to her man-devil:

"Sing the rapturous song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! Wear to me jewels! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you! I am the blue-lidded daughter of sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous sky. To me! To me!"

You ask me a question?

Yes, there *was* much to remind me of a house on Riverside Drive. But Dr. Latson did not believe in "devils." His was a worship of gods.

He Was Convinced

Aleister Crowley was convinced, and was spending his life trying to convince others, of the actual possibility of invoking and producing in some physical form demons, imps, the Pan he adored, or Satan himself!

"I am like a dead soul come to life," my sister had told me that morning I knew she belonged, body and soul, to "The Beast of the Apocalypse." Fatalistically she added: "Whether for good or evil, I do not know. It does not matter."

Because evil sometimes flourishes like the green bay tree, it seemed at first that Lea was not to suffer in a material way. The first we heard of her after she and Crowley left America were extravagant tales of the luxury in which they were living in Sicily.

Crowley's Colony

Crowley's colony had attracted an odd and rather interesting coterie, most of them with money they gladly poured into the coffers of the "Anti-Christ." I will only speak of two others of the colony, besides the American actress, Jane Wolf, whom I have already mentioned.

It was the connection of these two, Raoul Loveday, a brilliant young Oxford student, and his wife, Betty May Loveday, a famous beauty, which finally brought about the downfall of the "abbey" and Crowley and sent him with his "scarlet bride" scurrying into the Great Sahara Desert until the horror of the affair had died down.

The Children

I want to tell first, though, of what I considered the worst horror of the whole abbey affair. The children. There were a number of them among the "supermen and superwomen" who were learning contempt for "weak mortals." The children ranged in age from two to twelve or so. They, too, were all avidly absorbing the bilge about "true wills" and being "masters of their souls."

Chief among these children was my sister's child, Hansie. He was only a little over two when the colony was started, but, like a duck to water, he took to the theory of no restrictions whatever, of absolute freedom.

An instance will illustrate. Lea told me this gleefully, with much pride in the wisdom of her "man."

Gives Child Brandy

Hansie had been pestering to taste some brandy he was watching his mother and father drink. Without hesitation, Crowley handed him the whole bottle.

"Take all you want, youngster," he said, and turned his back as if the matter were of no consequence.

Hansie did. He took a long, full drink. He howled with rage at the burning in his mouth. Of course he became terribly sick.

Again He Indulges

He got over it, though—poor little baby! As soon as he was on his feet again, white-faced and wide-eyed, Crowley brought the brandy bottle to him and told him to take all he wanted at any time.

"If it's your true will, Hansie, to get drunk and sick and burn your mouth, go to it! Don't let me stop you."

So effective was the cure that Lea was sure Crowley had solved the problem of child upbringing. She was not able to see far ahead where he was concerned.

The Outcome

It never occurred to her, I am sure, what terrible harm she was doing her child by allowing him such unbridled license at Crowley's behest. So Hansie ran about naked, like a little savage, because it was "not his will" to wear clothes.

He contracted the cigarette habit at the age of five and was such a "fiend" you never saw him without one in his mouth. He was growing weak, ill, stunted, in spite of all his outdoor life and primitive ways.

Another of my sisters, visiting in Europe, went to see if matters with the child were as bad as they had been rumored. She found things even worse.

Beast Number Two

Crowley and Lea were away when she arrived at the "abbey." Hansie was running wild. She hadn't expected him to be very human. with such a father, but she was not prepared to find what she did. She was horror-stricken at the way in which the poor youngster behaved himself, following Crowley's precepts.

"You just leave me alone!" he shouted, brandishing a stick at her. "Don't you know I am Beast Number Two and can shatter you? I will, too! I'll bust you wide open and throw you into the ocean. Don't you dare touch me or try to get fresh with me! I'm getting ready to be the Great Beast of the Apocalypse when Crowley dies, and I'm going to split the world wide open!"

My elder sister, his aunt, good, noble, thoroughly conventional and old-fashioned, was jolted. She could do nothing whatever with the child.

She Kidnaps Him

But she could see the end ahead for him; how little life could hold. She did the only decent thing, kidnapped him and brought him to America. She had to. She had already found out how useless would be an appeal to Lea and Crowley, for when she telegraphed them about Hansie's condition, they telegraphed back for her to mind her own business.

Luckily for little Hansie, she thought his welfare was her business. Still more luckily for him, his father's reputation was such he was unable to put up a fight that would get the child back. There was nothing in the line of threats he did not try, though.

The Letter

Here is a letter I received from Crowley soon after Hansie reached America and we started undoing all the terrible harm of his early life. It is a reply to one of mine, trying to pour some oil on the troubled waters:

Marian:

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

Thank you for your friendly letter. Philosophy and literature are interesting, but their study must be suspended in the presence of crime.

Beware!

In some states of the Union—and those not the least worthy of respect—kidnapping is punishable with death. There is no capital punishment in Italy; also your sister, Mrs. Bliss, may consider it the most fortunate day of her life when she is safely in jail in that country. Love is the law, love under will.

Yours,

Aleister Crowley

Taming a Wild Beast

It was like taming a little wild beast to bring Hansie to the normal life that is the right of all children. The story of that struggle would make a book in itself. However, by patient and unceasing struggle, by appeals to a latent manhood which we brought out, it was accomplished. He is now a manly young chap of whom we are all proud.

Only a few months later Crowley had enough troubles of his own to last a while.

Raoul Loveday, the Oxford student, died at the "abbey." As was afterward proven, his death was, however, from natural causes.

Loveday's Wife

Nothing could make his heart-broken young wife believe that. She raved. She raged. She accused Crowley of everything under the sun. Crowley, with his abominable teachings, had killed her husband! She knew it!

There was no stopping her. The worst of it for Crowley was that she went off and said what she thought—in printed words in a London daily. She accused "The Beast" of practicing the most ugly, abnormal rites.

Her husband had died, she solemnly vowed, because the "Anti-Christ" of the "Holy Abbey of Theleme" had compelled her husband and her to cut the throat of a male black cat and drink its blood.

The Uproar

Horrible! Gruesome!

Any wonder there was an uproar? An outcry against "The Beast" and all his practices?

Any wonder the "college" and all it stood for was driven out of existence? Or that priest and priestess must flee to the desert to hide in its burning sands?

Little has come out publicly about Crowley's O. T. O. cult in this country. Though I recall an instance. It happened in Detroit not so long ago. It so profoundly shocked the Middle West that all the branches of his cults Crowley had been at so much pains to found, personally, were disbanded by the police.

The O. T. O.

The connection of Crowley and his cult became known when a wealthy publisher was divorced by his wife who declared she could not live with him since he had become a member of the O. T. O.

As his second wife he married a red-haired girl of fiery disposition, who was being instructed by him, under the name of "Bruce of the O. T. O." (her name was Bertha Bruce) to become a priestess of the cult.

The Gruesome Details

To "do what *she* wouldst" was to leave the magnificent home of her aging husband in mighty short order after a few noisy séances which brought much comment from the neighbors.

The downfall of the rich devil-worshiper, as well as that of the cult his money was keeping up, came when all the details of what occurred during his third marriage of twenty-nine days became known. The bride told. She was Mazie Mitchell, a beautiful artist's model. From her a shocked public learned that the principal

thing she found to be the “will” of the man of wealth and neuroses she had married was to beat her with a snake whip till she could not stand, and then work his will on her tortured body.

He wanted me as his ‘mystic bride’,” she haltingly told. “I wasn’t sure what that meant. I know now. It means horrible *torture*.