

**THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE  
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**LIBEL CASE DIGRESSIONS.**

**HIGH COURT SUIT "LIKE TRIAL  
IN 'ALICE IN WONDERLAND' "**

Mr. Justice Scrutton and a common jury to-day resumed the hearing of the libel action brought by Mr. George Cecil Jones, a consulting and analytical chemist, against a weekly newspaper called the "Looking Glass." The plaintiff contended that in a series of articles dealing with the career of a Mr. Aleister Crowley he was charged with immorality. The defence was that the articles did not libel the plaintiff, but referred solely to Mr. Crowley.

Mr. Samuel McGregor Mathers was cross-examined to-day by Mr. Simmons for the plaintiff. The witness admitted that he was registered in the name of Mathers, though he was now known as McGregor.

You assumed the name of McGregor?—That name is of great antiquity, and in 1603 was forbidden to be used under pain of death.

Mr. Simmons: Your name in 1603 was McGregor?—Yes, if you put it that way. (Laughter.)

Have you ever suggested to anybody that you had some connection with James IV. of Scotland?—I do not understand what you mean. Of course every Scotsman of ancient family must have some connection with James IV. And other Scottish Kings.

Are you asserting that James IV. Of Scotland never died?—There is an old tradition about that in Scotland.

Do you assert that James IV. Is in existence to-day?—I refuse to answer that question.

Have you ever asserted that Cagliostro was one and the same person as yourself?—No. You are confusing me with Mr. Crowley's aliases.

Questioned as to other people long since dead, witness said he was not responsible for traditions.

His Lordship: The Flying Dutchman is another instance if you want to pursue the subject further. (Laughter.)

Witness: The Wandering Jew is another. (Laughter.)

Witness said that he had no profession or occupation, but that for a man of no occupation he was probably the busiest man living. (Laughter.)

What work is that?—The establishment of the Rosicrucian Order. It required a knowledge of many languages, and an enormous amount of work.

In answer to further questions witness said that there were secret chiefs and he was the external head of the order and exercised administrative powers. He was in communication with the secret chiefs, but he was sworn not to reveal their names. (Laughter.)

His Lordship: This is getting a long way from the issue the jury have to try. The jury are not here for amusement: they are here to do their business. I do not want this court to be turned into a place of amusement.

Witness admitted that he had expelled members from the Rosicrucian Order, but declined to say how many. He had known the plaintiff for some time, and was on terms of friendship with him until he backed up Crowley on the latter's expulsion from the order.

Counsel was proceeding to question witness with regard to Alan Bennett, a Buddhist monk and also a member of the Order, when his Lordship intervened with the remark that "this trial is getting very much like the trial in 'Alice in Wonderland.'" (Laughter.)

## **rites and rituals.**

Mr. William Migge, a merchant of Eastcheap, said he attended the first séance conducted by Crowley at the Caxton Hall, which had been described in the "Looking Glass." He paid five guineas for a series of screen performances. He did not like the performance and asked for his money back. The performances were supposed to be rites and rituals based on mysticism and planetary spirits. The performance he attended had something to do with the planet of Saturn.

His Lordship: What was Saturn being invoked for?—I do not know, my lord, but I think the performance had a bearing on a particular planet.

Witness, continuing, said there was a mixed audience, but there was so much incense used that he could not see everything. The account in the "Looking Glass" was tolerably accurate as far as it described the rites.

Dr. Berridge, of Gloucester-terrace, Hyde Park, called on behalf of the defendants, said he was a member of the Rosicru-

cian Order. About 1900 there were ugly rumours about Crowley, and witness spoke to the latter about them. Crowley made as extraordinary statement in reply, winding up by saying that the police could not find out anything about him for more than eighteen months or two years.

The plaintiff was recalled to speak to a certain interview and was cross-examined as to his knowledge of Mr. Crowley's books, his attention being directed to an extract from a review in which one of the books was described as "revolting." The extract was printed as an advertisement of the book.

His Lordship: Why does Crowley pick out a criticism which describes his books as "revolting"?—He would like to sell his books.

His Lordship: By advertising that they were revolting and morbid?

Witness: I have seen several criticisms; some one way and some another.