

NEW YORK AMERICAN
14 March 1922

“Do Anything You Want To Do”—Their Religion
And the Trail of Wrecked Homes, Scandals and
Troubles Which Have Naturally Followed
the Preaching of That Evil Doctrine

The courts in Detroit, Michigan, have unexpectedly stripped bare the ambitious plans of a little coterie of men of evil reputation to establish a new religion based upon this astonishing doctrine:

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

The wicked results of preaching any such doctrine are not hard to see. It is not surprising that those who joined this new religion soon found themselves in difficulties of one kind or another.

Wives who went through the secret ceremonials of the order were soon thrown out by their husbands, and husbands who joined the cult did not escape long from the divorce courts.

But the particular case which brought out all the unholy details was a suit against Albert W. Ryerson, the managing director of the Universal Book Stores Company in Detroit. This was a well established, respectable and prosperous concern just off the exclusive Washington Boulevard in the heart of the city.

Ryerson owned the Ryerson Building and was highly regarded in business circles. He joined the new religionists, lost his personal reputation, his business prosperity, is facing endless litigation and his wife has divorced him.

The new mystic “Do-anything-you-want-to” religion was known as the “O.T.O.” These letters represent the words “Ordo Templi Orientis” (Order of the Temple of the Orient or Oriental Templars), but they had a secret meaning for those who were behind the scenes.

The new religious order is international and is said to have existing branches in every civilized country in the world. The startling discovery was made that plans were on foot to build a gorgeous “Love Temple” like the notorious sun temples of the ancient Chaldeans. The “Love Temple” was to be furnished with exotic Oriental splendor. There were to be fountains

spraying jets of perfumed water amid burning jars of incense, and silken divans behind convenient curtains for the faithful to "worship and recline on."

Similar temples were to be erected in other parts of the country as the new religion grew in membership. These were to be hidden retreats, termed in the ritual of the order "Secret Fortresses" or "Profess Houses." A book of ritual was prepared called *The Equinox*, and the abominable doctrines and suggestions set forth in this book brought about the destruction of the Detroit enterprise.

The official ritual as preached in *The Equinox* teaches the doctrine of yielding to impulse and urge of licentiousness and immorality. The whole thing is based on carnal impulses and unrestrained emotions.

For two years the "O.T.O." made converts in Detroit, and it is not to be wondered at that in its wake has come the trail of wrecked lives, broken homes and business disaster. One was a leading clergyman, another a well-known doctor, still another a distinguished attorney.

Two years ago came to Detroit one who called himself Aleister Crowley. Crowley had been reputed to be interested in what was called "Devil Worshippers."

"I am Baphomet XI of the O.T.O.," he told those that he took into his confidence. "In me you see the Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains that are in the sanctuary of the Gnosis"—whatever that meant.

And following Crowley came Charles Stansfield Jones, whom Crowley, "The Great Baphomet," introduced as his "field organizer."

At that time Albert W. Ryerson was the directing head of the successful Universal Book Stores, Inc., as already said. Ryerson became interested and published Crowley's shocking book of ritual, *The Equinox*. This was the book which according to Assistant United States District Attorney Francis Murphy is "the most lascivious and libidinous book that has ever been published in the United States."

Ryerson, according to admissions made in the proceedings in bankruptcy court, where he was examined, told of the "first meeting" of the "few that were at first interested" in the exclusive Detroit Athletic Club. But Crowley did not at that time, it appears, unfold his full plan.

"The aims," Crowley explained, "of the 'O.T.O.' may be said to teach Hermetic Science or Occult Knowledge, the Pure and Holy Magic of Light, the Secrets of Mystic Attainment, Yoga of

all forms, Gnana Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakta Yoga and Hatha Yoga, and all other branches of the secret Wisdom of the Ancients."

There was a pause, say those present, and Crowley said impressively:

"The names of women members are never divulged."

Ryerson, by his own admissions, is a professed spiritualist. But it soon developed that Crowley dealt only in "spiritism." But while others dropped away Ryerson still sponsored Crowley.

There came tales of the secret meetings at "secret fortresses," where the members clothed only in a single covering sat about on the floor while they received their "lessons" in the cult whose motto was "Do what thou wilt!"

And at these meetings was always recited the "Hymn to Pan," which appears on the opening pages of Crowley's book, *The Equinox*. It begins:

"Thrill with lissome lust of the light,
O man! My man!
Came careening out of the night
To me, to me,
Come with Apollo in bridal dress"—
The rest is unprintable.

Twice during the year the "O.T.O." has loomed up in Detroit court proceedings when shocked wives appealed for divorce because their husbands had become affiliated with this order that taught the doctrine of "do anything you want to."

And then the Universal Book Stores Company, Inc., crashed in failure and the stockholders met and threw Albert W. Ryerson out of control. They engaged Grover L. Morden, an attorney in the Murphy Building, to attempt to salvage upwards of \$35,000 which the stockholders swore in their affidavits had been misapplied by Ryerson in furthering the ritual of the "O.T.O."

Lawyer Morden had read most of *The Equinox* into the bankruptcy proceedings. The Federal Government has linked forces with him and the books still undelivered to the "faithful" have been seized.

Crowley is said to be in [Cefalù], a little town in Sicily, where he has set up the "headquarters" of the "O.T.O.," while "Organizer" and "Field Secretary" Jones is declared to be "somewhere in Chicago" organizing a local branch there.

"At a meeting in the Detroit Athletic Club," Ryerson told on

the witness stand, "held in November, 1919, seven men, the original charter members of the 'O.T.O.,' planned to make Detroit the headquarters of the order in this country. And they were led in this work by Stanfield Jones.

"At a later meeting in the D.A.C. a supreme grand council was elected. I was not invited to any of these meetings. The organizers were some of the leading men of this city. I will not divulge their names."

Then to the stand was called the woman "who was to be the priestess of the order."

Bobbed haired, defiant and acrimonious, she refused to answer questions except in the most evasive manner. On the stand she gave her name as "Bertha Bruce Ryerson," but admitted that she had been known as Bertha M. Bruce, or "Bruce of the 'O.T.O.'" "

"Are you the wife of Albert W. Ryerson?" queries Lawyer Morden.

"Didn't I answer your question when I gave my name," was the snapped reply.

On further questioning "The Priestess," as she was known among the novitiates of the order, declared "she did not remember when she was married, nor by whom." Then Mr. Ryerson, through counsel, said the date of their marriage was December 31, 1919.

Records in the county building show that a license was issued on that date for a marriage between Albert W, Ryerson and Berths M. Bruce, but that "no return" had ever been made on it.

And then came Lady Jean Hooper, title English gentlewoman, now a resident of Detroit, living in the exclusive section of Second Boulevard, to throw another ray of light upon the "O.T.O." and its preachment of free and unbridled lust and love.

"I knew Mr. Ryerson," she said, "before he came under the mystic spell of Crowley. A finer or more intelligent man would be hard to find. It was at the suggestion of some members of a fraternal order to which Mr. Ryerson belonged that I went to live at his home at No. 381 West Grand Boulevard. Ryerson then had not been divorced. His first wife was Miss Vida F. Marsh, a most cultured and charming woman."

And then came Crowley, and soon he was a changed man and his wife divorced him. Mrs. Ryerson's bill of complain reads partly as follows:

"The defendant (Albert W. Ryerson) by his acts and declarations appears to be possessed of a religious conviction that he

is not bound to recognize any of the conventions or formalities of society, but insists that he is free to conduct himself according to the dictates of his own conscience, and in pursuance of such convictions and in following such dictations, he has on numerous occasions subjected plaintiff (Mrs. Ryerson) to great embarrassment, and the greater humiliation by his unseemly conduct in his protestations of love for various and sundry women who profess the same ideals and ideas. Defendant's conduct in this became so objectionable and unbearable that in the month of October, 1917, plaintiff determined that she would never forgive defendant and they separated for several months. Defendant admitted that he loved other women and told plaintiff the 'she could go to hell and get a divorce.' "

Lady Jean Hooper gave further details as follows:

"Crowley used to visit Ryerson's home. He has made a life-time study of things mystic and is very conversant with things Oriental. I know that Crowley knew the method of administering hashish, the opium derivative made from East Indian Hemp, and he told me how it helped him to 'control other minds,' This drug, when mixed with another, possesses the property of exciting the passions.

"In talks with Crowley in Ryerson's home I learned the full purport of the heinous licentious 'religion' he was attempting to promulgate. I left Ryerson's home at once and have kept up an unrelenting fight against this obnoxious 'O.T.O.' cult ever since. It means the ruination of all who practice its alleged 'commandments.' They are unspeakably vile in character and beyond the pale of word, expression or relating.

Mrs. Louise Clarke Pann, of No. 662 Van Dyke Avenue, told how "some friends" induced her to attend a meeting at a friend's home on Vinewood Avenue, at which John Stanfield Jones spoke. He announced himself as the "field secretary" of Aleister Crowley and the "O.T.O." religion.

"I point blank refused to become a member of the Oriental love cult," she declares, "and roundly denounced Jones. Women present had copies of *The Equinox* and attempted to induce me to take a copy home and read and study it. I destroyed the book the following day after reading but a few brief passages."

Among other portions of the ritual in *The Equinox* introduced in evidence, was this from the "Ceremony of the Opening of the Veil":

The priest mounts the first step of the altar and says unto the Queen of Space, kissing her lovely brows, and the dew of her light bathing his whole body in a sweet-smelling perfume of sweat.

THE PRIEST—O circle of stars whereof our father is but the younger brother, marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space, before whom time is ashamed, the mind bewildered and the understanding dark, not unto thee may we attain, unless thine image be love. Therefore by seed and root and stem and bud and leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke thee. O Nuit, continuous one of heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous.

(During this speech the priestess must have divested herself completely of her robe. See CCXX. I., 62)

THE PRIESTESS—But to love me is better than all things; if under the night stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. But always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich head-dress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings and arouse the coiled splendor within you; come unto me! To me! Sing the rapturous love song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! 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 night-sky. To me! To me!

(The priest mounts the second step, etc., etc.)

But Detroit will not see the erection of the great "Love Temple," where the "priest" and the naked "priestess" were to do the things laid down in the ritual. A little wholesome publicity has smashed all those ambitious plans in Detroit. And if the promoters of the new religion attempt to start business in any city where this page of this newspaper is read the police and the church authorities will be able to understand what is going on.