

**THE DETROIT FREE PRESS
DETROIT, MICHIGAN
12 AUGUST 1923**

**DRUG DELIGHTS
Are Pictured in "Terrible Story"
Keyed to Our Latest Phobia**

A Review

By Harry L. Lurie

"The Diary of a Drug Fiend," by Aleister Crowley. E. P. Dutton & Co.

The impression is somewhat current that the use of narcotics is stimulating to the creation of great literature. I must confess that previous to the reading of "The Diary of a Drug Fiend" I was imbued with the same delusion. I possessed vague hopes of some day filling up on hasheesh or the like and being inspired into dashing off something weird, fantastic, exquisite. But the diary of this drug fiend is dull, commonplace, uninspired. It seems to me now that I could do as well upon Spearmint.

One should not judge this book from the standpoint of literature, but rather from that of anti-narcotic propaganda. As such it should be mildly successful. The author protests unceasingly that this is a true story, but to me it reads like the plots of the Hollywood scenario writers. It is of course inevitable that the present morbid interest in narcotics will result in the publication of drug fiction, and the present volume is no doubt the beginning of an avalanche.

The plot is well adapted for the screen and omits none of the hokum which invariably appeals. The fiend is an Englishman of title, Sir Peter Pendragon, lately aviator in His Majesty's Flying Corps, suddenly heir to an enormous estate left by the proverbial eccentric bachelor uncle. Apparently he's a decent chap, but a female German spy treats him to a little "snow" and Peter is completely bowled over by a ravishing and exclusive London belle, a Miss Lou Laleham, described as a cross between a Mongolian and a Swede. They engage immediately upon a cocaine honeymoon, beginning with an ascension in Sir Peter's seaplane. Certain advantages of a cocaine honeymoon are frankly presented.

Unfortunately the couple run out of gas and later out of "coke," and their descent from Paradisio is terrible. They sink lower and

lower into the mires of drug addiction until their common life becomes one continuous ground for divorce. The realization of their degradation overpowers them and they are on the brink of drinking prussic acid, when—

Of course they are saved and the last third of the book is devoted to their cure by an ethical culturist out of the House of David with overtones of Dr. Coue and the Pathfinders club. His motto is "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law." Under his hocus pocus Sir Peter finds that his true will is not drug addiction but solving mathematical formulas.

"The Diary of a Drug Fiend" is written in a better style than the general run of drug store fiction and should make a decided hit with all those who thirst for knowledge of psychology is amply satisfied by popular lectures on how to develop one's personality. It is not recommended, however, for its analysis of narcotism, although it is not too far of the mark when it indicates that the cause of the addiction is to be found in the maladjustment of the individual in modern life.

Likewise those who enjoy DeQuincey and Baudelaire will fail to appreciate this book as literature. They will probably agree with the preface that "it is a terrible story."