

## THE EVENING NEWS 26 JULY 1934

### THE TALISMAN

In her highly entertaining book of reminiscences, "Why Not?" Mrs. Viola Bankes tells the following remarkable story of a talismanic ring worn by Aleister Crowley, the poet, magician and traveler:—"There was a very fine diamond and ruby ring which Crowley always wore on the wedding finger. It represented a serpent, and was of great antiquity. He declared it to be a talisman which brought good luck to himself but misfortune to others. One night he was sitting at dinner with us, and I had an ardent desire to handle the ring and inspect it closer. He slipped it off and gave it to me to look at, but warned me not to try it on my finger. 'It is particularly disastrous to women,' he said. Perhaps he expected me to give way to the obvious temptation and slip it on my finger. Women can seldom refrain from tasting forbidden fruit—if only to see why it is forbidden. However, I handed it across to my husband, who also abstained superstitiously from trying it on. Crowley watched us in silence until the ring was handed back to him. 'A man was copying some designs for me the other day,' he said slowly. 'There was a very powerful electric light over the table where he was working, with an opaque glass shade. I took off this ring to show him, and before I could warn him he had slipped it on his finger. A second later he got up too quickly from the table and caught his head with some force against the shade. His forehead was gashed from top to bottom.' "