

**PICTURE POST  
19 NOVEMBER 1955**

**Picture Post throws a new light on  
THE MAN WHO CHOSE EVIL**

**(Part 1)**



**THE BEAST** was the name Aleister Crowley gave himself. Poet, mountaineer and drug addict, he was reviled by the press everywhere for his notorious black magic masses and Iris orgies. His two marriages ended unhappily. Five of his mistresses committed suicide. But to his followers, who still exist, he was the Messiah.

His name is Aleister Crowley. The newspapers called him 'The Wickedest Man in the World'. He died eight years ago. But he is still news: a monstrous memorial to his black magic has recently been discovered. JENNY NICHOLSON will write about this discovery next week. Here she gives a profile of the man who sold his soul to the Devil.

During his lifetime, British and American newspapers headlined Crowley and his works 'The Wickedest Man in the World,' 'The Man We'd like to Hang,' 'A Cannibal at Large,' 'King of Depravity,' 'Do-Whatever You Want Religion Reveals Wicked Rituals Carried on by its High Priest and His Worshipers'—and on the death of a disciple: 'Driven to Suicide by Devil Worshipers.'

Even Hitler was hardly called the wickedest man in the world with such conviction—or for so many years. The public instinctively felt the difference between Hitler, who was lunatically convinced that he did what he did for the good of the world, and Crowley, who deliberately chose evil—consciously setting out to destroy the accepted social rules of behaviour, and to replace them with his own.



Crowley was not a poor, superficially lettered little house-painter with no sex appeal. He was well off (his father made a fortune out of the family brewery, and left him £40,000), brilliant, courageous and irresistible to women. He wrote 107 books—mostly on poetry and magic. Of his poetry, C. R. Cammell, one of his enthusiastic biographers, wrote, "Poets there are amongst his contemporaries who have composed verses as beautiful as Crowley's best. But no poet in our time has conquered thus mightily so vast a realm of poetic theme and meditation." Many serious critics agreed with him. Even *John Bull*, the first to accuse him of being the wickedest man in the world, reviewing one of his books of poetry, declaimed: "... as lord of language, he runs Swinburne pretty close."

## Crowley turned his back on the heights



**THE 'GOLDEN DAWN,'** a magical society to which Crowley belonged, still exists under another name, Crowley's practise of black magic led to one of the most notorious libel cases of the thirties, and established him, to his own satisfaction, as a devil incarnate.



**MOUNTAINEER.** From early youth, mountains fascinated Crowley. They gave him a sense of power, satisfied his craving for the dramatic. In 1905, he joined a Swiss expedition to Kangchenjunga (see right, Crowley seated right). The attempt ended in the death of five men.



**SCHOOLBOY.** He hated Malvern and Tonbridge—preferring his private tutor who introduced him to racing, betting, cards and women.



**'PRINCE'.** In Cairo, he styled himself Prince Chioa Khan, his wife Princess. They spent a night together in the Great Pyramid.



**'BAPHOMET'.** This is how he styled himself as British head of the Oriental Templars, an occult order practising sexual magic.



**'GENTLEMAN'.** Crowley, a wealthy man in his youth, was Laird of a Scottish estate. From there it was a short step to 'Lord' and the use of a coronet.



**THE MARK OF THE BEAST** was branded on Crowley's women disciples. This girl, Edith Y, he used to call 'The Mother of God'.



**THE 'SCARLET WOMAN'** was painted by Crowley as a dead soul. Five years with Crowley left its mark on her appearance (see inset).



**FIRST WIFE**, Rose Kelly, was a clergyman's daughter. Crowley's treatment drove her to drink and a divorce. There were two children.



**SECOND WIFE**, Maria de Miramar, drawn by Crowley. A Nicaraguan, he called her 'Old Nile'. After a year of marriage she entered an asylum.



**LEARNER.** As 'Brother Perdura-bo', Crowley served his apprenticeship in the 'Golden Dawn'. He proved an apt pupil. W.B. Yeats, the poet, was also a member.



**TEACHER.** Allan Bennett, a member of the 'Golden Dawn', introduced Crowley to yoga and drugs. He finally became a Buddhist monk, started a mission in London.



**RIVAL.** Crowley turned his magic against MacGregor Mathers, head of 'Golden Dawn', then started a rival society, 'The Order of the Silver Star'. Mathers sued him unsuccessfully.

Crowley was one of the greatest mountaineers of his age. He led the first expedition up K.2 (seven years before the Duke of Abruzzi attempted it) and lived at 20,000 feet longer than had ever been lived before. He and Oscar Eckenstein literally sprinted up the Mexican mountain, Popocatepetl. Dr. Tom Longstaff, once President of the Alpine Club, says, "He was a fine climber ... I have seen him go up the dangerous and difficult right side of the gigantic side of the great icefall of the *Mer de Glace* ... alone, just for a promenade. Probably the first and only time this mad, dangerous and difficult route had been taken." When the men of his fearful and superstitious expedition refused to go any farther up Kangchenjunga, he demonstrated his courage by rolling fast down a steep slope, and stopping himself on the edge of the precipice.

There was nothing idle about Crowley. He walked across the North African and Sahara deserts and took four months to cross China with a wife and sick child. And it was true that he

could play two games of chess at the same time against experts, who called their moves whilst he, without glancing at the boards, was courting a woman and casting her horoscope. He won all three.



It's anybody's guess why Crowley took up Magic. His mother and father were pious Plymouth Brethren, and preached eternal damnation. When Crowley was twelve, he was publicly ostracised at school, for attempting to corrupt another boy.

Unable or unwilling to defy his desires, Crowley instead defied the household gods—his parents. He deliberately identified himself with such characters as the Indian mutiny leader,

Nana Sahib, who was blamed for the massacre of Cawnpore—and the Devil his father was always warning everyone about. He caught a cat, dosed it with arsenic, chloroformed it, hanged it above the gas jet, stabbed it, cut its throat, smashed its skull, drowned it, and threw it out of the window, claiming he wanted to see whether it was true that a cat had nine lives. He said it was his mother who gave him the title which stuck, "The Beast." Who knows if this is true? It's possible that Mrs. Crowley, as many mothers do, called him "a little beast"—which he dearly was—and he dramatically promoted himself to one of his parents' favourite ogres, the BEAST OF THE APOCALYPSE (Revelations Chapter 13) whose number is 666.

Thus began a long record of self-promotions. He was born Edward Alexander (on the 12th October, 1875, at Leamington) but gave himself the more poetic name of Aleister. At the age of 20 he set himself up as Count Vladimir Svareff. When he bought Boleskine—a house and two acres beside Loch Ness—he called himself Laird of Boleskine, and put a coronet on his writing paper. He later knighted himself "Sir Alastor de Kerval". At one time he became Prince Chioa Khan.

In 1912, he promoted himself in the magical hierarchy from 'The Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona and All the Britains that are in the Sanctuary of the Gnosis' (a title bestowed on him by the German magical adept, Theodor Reuss, of the Oriental Templars, because Crowley had discovered the secret of the IXth Degree) to King Baphomet. The only promotion he did not organise was when the British press elevated him from

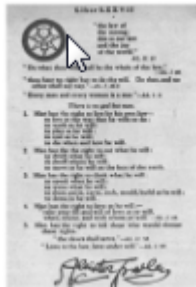
'The Wickedest Man in Britain' to 'The Wickedest Man in the World'.



For someone as poetically imaginative, and anxious to revenge and amuse himself, as Crowley, magic was an irresistible pursuit. He lusted for every physical and mental experience. He wanted to climb higher and sink lower, than anyone else. His body was aggressively male, his hands feminine. He wanted to be both man and woman, poet and money-maker, lover and murderer, frivolous wit and jealous god.



**SELF-PORTRAIT.** Crowley took his name, 'The Beast', from the false prophet in the Book of Revelations.



**SELF-INDULGENCE.** Crowley's so-called 'Book of the Law' (extract above), was, he claimed, revealed to him by his 'Holy Guardian Angel'.



**SELF-REFLECTION?** This Crowley sketch is called 'Satan'. He painted and drew for fun, considered himself a second Gauguin.



**SELF-EVIDENT.** A characteristic Crowley fantasy. He himself used to comb his hair into horns, once shaved it to appear more horrifying.

## **'My master is Satan' he preached**

He decided that magic, which has been defined as 'the control of the forces of nature by word, mind or gesture', was the means of achieving all this. Crowley had the brain to see that magic can be a very dangerous business, but he also had the courage to risk the consequences. Besides, it was specially attractive to him that the practice of sex is—essential to the performance of many forms of magic.

Crowley studied magic very seriously—from the Yogis in India, the Buddhists in Tibet and from the works of Dr. John Dee, astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I (which form the basis of all European magic and include the talisman with which Dr. Dee claimed to have destroyed the Armada). According to fellow magicians, his disciples and his victims, Crowley had a natural talent for it.

It is difficult to take any man seriously who outwardly behaves like a ludicrous charlatan.

Crowley wore flamboyant tourist-European clothes, make-up and scent to draw attention to himself. With whimsical devilry he took a troupe of chorus girls to Moscow and while the 'Ragged Ragtime Girls' danced for his supper, he lurked in the wings of the theatre writing *A Hymn to Pan*. During the 1914 war, he became an ineffectual traitor. He made an anti-British speech, at the foot of the Statue of Liberty, standing in a hired boat with 'four other debauched persons' and a girl with a violin. He talked magical shop at dinner parties in a plummy drawl. And privately and expensively he sold his 'Elixir of Life' ("made from a substance of my own body"), Sex Appeal Ointment, and his course of Rejuvenation called Amrita. He wrote, for cheap success, *The Complete Exposure of a Drug Fiend*. (He had experimented with all known, and little-known, drugs—the backdoor to magic—and became a heroin addict). When he became a painter in New York ("I am an Old Master, because I mostly paint dead souls"), he advertised for models:—

WANTED: Dwarfs, Hunchbacks, Tattooed Women, Harrison Fishergirls, Freaks of all sorts, Coloured woman only if exceptionally ugly or deformed ...

Typical entries in his Magical Record, such as "The Dog was lying quietly smoking her opium pipe when all at once she annoyingly started to have visions," are humourlessly funny. And there is something pathetically unconvincing about initiation ritual being solemnly performed in a back room in Chancery Lane, or Sex Magic in Victoria Street.

But the trouble was that Crowley—however you may like to explain it—was an effective, destructive force. He had made a solemn pact with the Devil. He was a practising and, from his point of view, successful Satanist—"My master is Satan," and he preached, "Resist not Evil."



**BEAST MEETS BEAST.** *A poet as well as a pornographer. Crowley was once guest of honour at a Literary Luncheon, where he was photographed beside an effigy of the murderer Charlie Peace.*

According to John Symonds, who wrote *The Great Beast*, when Crowley first started seriously practising magic and began conjuring up demons at Boleskine, "his coachman, hitherto a teetotaler, fell into delirium tremens; a clairvoyant whom he had brought from London returned there and became a prostitute; his housekeeper, 'unable to bear the eeriness of the place', vanished, and a madness settled upon one of the workmen employed on the estate, and he tried to kill the noble Laird of Boleskine. Even the butcher down in the village came in for his quota of bad luck through Crowley's casually jotting down on one of his bills the names of two demons, viz., Elerion and Mabakiel, which mean respectively 'laughter' and 'lamentation'. Conjointly, these two words signify 'unlooked-for sorrow suddenly descending upon happiness'. In the butcher's case, alas, it was only too true, for whilst cutting up a joint for a customer, he accidentally severed the femoral artery and promptly died."



Most of his disciples and Scarlet Women (the companions of The Beast, of which there were many) ended in lunatic asylums, drank themselves to death, committed suicide, or died suddenly in the prime of a healthy life cursed by Crowley.

He apparently achieved invisibility. He walked through Mexico City wearing a scarlet cloak and a golden and jewelled crown, and nobody noticed him. He walked out of his 'Abbey' in Sicily—through the police who had come to arrest him. He foretold the date of both world wars, the death of his first child,



the child of one of his mistresses, of his mother and father, of his disciples Norman Mudd (by drowning), of Raoul Loveday (from drinking bad water), of his Himalayan servant on Kangchenjunga, and of many of his Scarlet Women. One day he made all the books vanish from the shelves of Mr. Watkin's Bookshop in the Charing Cross Road. But this was all small stuff. Symonds writes: "His ambition was to replace dying Christianity with insurgent Crowleyanity." From his own point of view; he succeeded. He evolved the magic religion of Thelema. Its law was: 'Do What Thou Wilt shall be the Whole of the Law. Love is the Law. Love under Will.'

Crowley wrote his 'bible', which is called The Book of the Law, built himself the first temple to Thelema in Cefalu, Sicily (there was afterwards another in California built by the distinguished American scientist, John Parsons), and initiated 'The New Aeon of Crowleyanity' by "banishing the dying God". This involved christening a frog Jesus of Nazareth and ritually stabbing it to the heart with the 'Dagger of Art' after 'Mocking upon the Cross' and chanting: "I the Great Beast slay Thee, Jesus of Nazareth, the slave-God ... " etc.

There were many of these rituals—and 'Sex Magic' accompanied most of them. Although he said, "Women should be brought round to the back door, like milk," his need for them was insatiable, and the supply of women who gladly allowed themselves to be painfully branded with the Mark of the Beast, and to have goats ritually murdered, was never exhausted. He was married twice (one of his wives, Maria Miramar, died recently in an English asylum still claiming she was the Scarlet Woman) and his mistresses were too many to count. The only Scarlet Woman on record who ended happily was Leah Faesi who attacked him with 'counter-magic'. She finally became a practising Catholic.

It did not entirely serve any man or woman right for associating with Crowley. They had to be spiritually well-armed to resist him, for if anyone he needed seemed unwilling he was often able to compel them. His hypnotic powers were such that one day in Piccadilly he hypnotized a happily married young woman who was gazing innocently into the window of Fortnum and Mason's, so that, under his spell, she accompanied him, a perfect stranger, to a hotel, where they stayed for more than a week. Very soon afterwards she was being divorced, her life was ruined, and Crowley had dropped her. It seems extraordinary that no woman publicly resented his Serpent's Kiss, which

was to seize the wrist of a woman to whom he was being introduced and bite till it bled.



**GUARDIAN OF THE WASTELAND.**

*Was Crowley's title to this pen and ink sketch. One of the names he gave himself was 'Wanderer of the Waste'—a not inapt description.*

Although blood of animals flowed freely on his altars, English, French, Italian and German police were never able to prove that he did human sacrifice. But even though he insisted that he dealt with angels and not demons, they recognized his influence was transparently evil, and he was expelled from one country after another.



Crowley died drearily in an English boarding house in 1947. But he had launched his 'religion' (which still has disciples in America) and left an evil and turbulent spirit behind which it is difficult to lay. The Crowley story does not end here, but continues in its eerie fashion, as you shall see.

**26 November 1955  
(Part 2)  
DEATH AT THE ABBEY**

The Abbey at Cefalu, in Sicily, where Aleister Crowley practised his new 'religion' of Thelema, has just been rediscovered. JENNY NICHOLSON describes in this monstrous legacy of a man whose magical rites shocked the world.

It has been popularly assumed that Aleister Crowley's black magical Abbey of Cefalu was destroyed by the Italian police

when they expelled him from Sicily, following the death of his disciple, Loveday. This man, the newspapers of the world insinuated, died after drinking the blood of a cat, ritually killed.

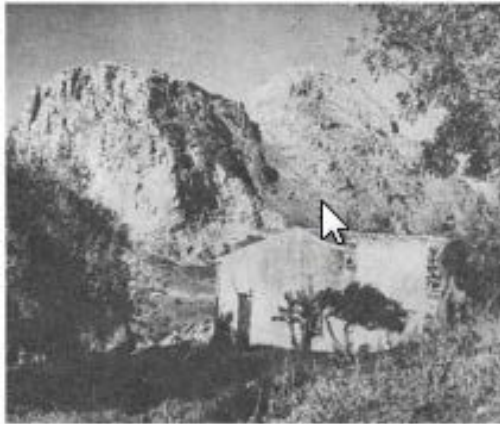
But a few weeks ago Kenneth Anger, a young American who had already made one film about "*The Beast of the Apocalypse, whose number is 666—the number of man*" (it was called 'The Dome of Pleasure,' and was shown at the festival of Britain), appeared in this ancient Sicilian fishing town of Cefalu. He was looking for locations for another film he was planning, which would deal with Crowley's Cefalu period.

From Crowley's description of the Abbey in his diaries Anger at once located it in an olive grove, a mile or more outside the town. It was a one-story building, abandoned and dilapidated—not at all the sort of place you would associate with the headquarters of the magical "religion" which was intended to succeed Christianity!

Anger managed to get into the villa. As he hesitated in the half-light of one of the empty rooms, he was aware of being stared at from the walls by many eyes. He did not run. He simply stood there, waiting for something to happen. Was magic still alive here? Was Crowley playing some posthumous joke? But nothing happened. The eyes went on staring steadily, eerily; until he suddenly realised that these must be the magical, and pornographic, paintings with which Crowley had covered the doors and walls of the Abbey. The police had merely whitewashed them, and now, after thirty-seven years, it was flaking off. In order to reconstruct for his film the most publicised episodes in the history of magic all he would have to do would be to rent the place, and remove the whitewash.



**DEATH AT THE ABBEY.** *The hearth which bore Raoul Loveday, one of Crowley's disciples to the village cemetery at Cefalu thirty-seven years ago. His death caused a world scandal. It was alleged that he died from drinking the blood of a cat, ritually killed.*



**THE ABBEY OF THELEMA**, mother house of the 'magical religion,' which Crowley had founded to succeed Christianity. In the background is the rock to which he banished erring disciples.

It may be superstition or prejudice or a lot of nonsense; but it turns out that nothing connected with Crowley, dead or alive, is as easy as that. It was typical that Crowley's original landlord should have left the house to his two daughters, and that the daughters had died, and left it to their husbands—a retired Colonel living in Palermo and a local lawyer. They had disliked each other, and had divided the villa with a wall which cleaves the main room in two.



**RAOUL LOVEDAY**, just down from Oxford became an earnest disciple. "I dedicate myself ... body and soul, to the Great Work," he swore. Above: the registration of his death in the Cefalu cemetery.



**BETTY MAY**, an Epstein model, chief cook and baby-watcher at the Abbey. She was the only non-co-operative Thelemite. She accused Crowley of killing her husband, Raoul Loveday.



**'THE COLLEGIUM AD SPIRITUM SANCTUM'**. Family group at the Abbey. With Crowley is Leah and his three children. The baby in arms died shortly after this picture was taken.

“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law”  
Was Crowley’s creed.

While Kenneth Anger was treating with the kindly lawyer to rent his half for a pittance, a band of workmen came singing through the olive grove, to make the Colonel’s half of the house habitable for summer visitors. This was bad luck; since the villa, aside from a few months the landlord had spent there himself, had been uninhabited since twelve years before Anger was born. It was locally called “The House of Ghosts”, and even with the extreme housing shortage in Cefalu, no local had been persuaded to live in it. In a few minutes the workmen had destroyed a large area of the walls. To have the work stopped Anger was forced to disclose his discovery. “These murals are scientifically interesting—they should be preserved.” In the minds of the owners, their troublesome little villa without light or water—or even the most primitive convenience had suddenly become a valuable property. At the price they would now ask, Anger couldn’t afford to rent it. While keeping the cooperative lawyer and avaricious Colonel waiting for his decision, Anger began to work day and night scraping the walls, cleaning them with hydrochloric acid. It was a slow job. When Anger uncovered the demons, the Colonel was so furiously disgusted, that he threw Anger out, and locked the door. The lawyer still allowed him to work in the other half of the house.

This was the situation when we arrived in Cefalu to record the discovery. This is still the uneasy situation today. We had to begin work at once. There was no time to be lost.

We arrived from Palermo in the witching hours. The only Cefalun who were not asleep were the sardine fishermen, fishing with lights on the deathly calm sea. The moon was rising reluctantly. Owls called from the heights of the rock which dominates Cefalu. Bats were whimpering above the ornate tombs in the cemetery where Loveday had been buried. The Abbey appeared unexpectedly before us in the feeble moonlight—almost as if it had come down to meet us.

We shone the torch on the door. On the step was a dead cat, paws splayed—its head smashed in. It was beastly and inexplicable. In Italy to kill a cat is evil luck.

The torchlight revealed an exaggeratedly cobwebbed kitchen. Cobwebs of every design and texture festooned the pestles and mortars, and the rusted implements of alchemy which Crowley used for mixing magic potions and preparing drugs, and they shrouded the ancient charcoal stove where Betty May

(Loveday's wife and Epstein's model) cooked unwillingly for Crowley and his disciples.



**IS THIS THE SCARLET WOMAN?** *This painting believed to be a portrait of Leah, the woman who was Aleister Crowley's favourite 'magical mistress', has just been uncovered in the bedroom of the Abbey of Cefalu.*



**THE BEAST**, whose number was 666. *This picture was taken shortly after he had been expelled from Sicily, for practicing Black Magic. The police ordered the Abbey whitewashed and exorcised.*

The torch beam fell on a face from the past—Leah, the Beast's favourite Scarlet Woman, painted naked by Crowley in thick, brilliantly—coloured, oils.

Kenneth held the oil lamp to the other revelations of his patient scraping—portraits of naked disciples performing nameless things with each other, with symbols of sex magic, with a goat.

Kenneth was saying "Yes. There are elementals who keep me company when I work here at night. And between 1.30 and 4.00 in the morning there are heavy footsteps on the roof."

"They confine themselves to pelting me every now and then with tiny pieces of plaster. So long as they don't upset my hydrochloric acid, I don't mind."

Next morning was one of those autumn days in Sicily when all things are bright and beautiful. The new oranges on the trees shone like lamps. Hawks wheeled round the classic ruins of the Temple of Diana on the crest of the great rock.

We were giving the cat a decent burial below the

Scarlet Woman's bedroom window while Domenico, son of a local farmer, was describing to us: "It was a day such as this. A fine, beautiful day. The middle of the morning. I was sixteen

at the time when I saw it—a white beast the size of a donkey; cropping the grass right here.”

“Did you see anything else, Domenico?” Anger asked. “Yes. Later I saw a man leaning on a gate down there by the main road. He was wearing a black coat and a black hat, and in this hand he carried a flower, and in this other hand he carried a sword. ‘Come here! Come here!’ he called to me. Of course, I didn’t answer. If you talk to an apparition you die.”

During the day we met several people who were old enough to remember Crowley as “a fine gentleman.” Although local belief was that he had murdered Loveday, for some obscure reason of his own, and that when he left he had abandoned one of his women (who was forced to prostitute herself), and his children (who begged in the streets of Cefalu), this did not diminish their respect for him. “By Bacchus!” said old Galluazzi, admiringly. “You have to be a man to content so many women.”

Franco, as a little boy, had played with Crowley’s children, Dionysus and Hermes. Lurking in the olive grove, he had watched the sacrifice of the cat. “They were all wearing clothes. The Englishman was wearing a robe and a turban. There was a scarlet cover on the altar ... ”

Galluazzi had seen evening and morning prayers carried out by Crowley and his disciples. But aside from these, the pictures on the doors and walls, Crowley’s passion for dressing up, what was there to see?

Crowley had cast the Chinese sticks, and interpreted their message as advice to found his Abbey of Thelema, at Cefalu.



**KENNETH ANGER.** *A young American film-maker who re-discovered the Abbey, had to scrape off a thick covering of cement to reveal the Magic Circle on the floor of the Sanctum Sanctorum—Crowley’s temple. In the center of the circle stood a six-sided altar on which was kept, among many magic symbols, the Record of the Abbey, in which were such entries as: “Yesterday I resolved to use no heroin after 11 a.m. ...” He prepared his drugs in the kitchen.*

He had expected a stream of eager disciples. Few came. The greatest living authority on Crowley, and incidentally one of the few authorities on magic in England, an admirer but non-disciple of Crowley's, explains the murals. "His pictures were half joke—but were also to show new disciples. If they were shocked, they were no good and he would explode them."

With nine or ten Thelemites living at dose quarters, in magical competition on an income of only £3 a week (all that was left of Crowley's fortune) relations were often strained. Crowley worked at Magic, experimented with drugs, and wrote poetry against terrific domestic odds.

He often had to banish his women to the top of the rock, for quarrelling with each other. And from the doorstep, now overgrown with wild mint, he would signal to them with a mirror when they were forgiven, and could come down.



When he needed to escape from the cries of his children and the sulks of his disciples, he climbed to meditate in the Temple of Diana. He had a macabre sense of humour. He meant to shock when he jokingly summed up Loveday's death: "He lit my cigar and then he went out." But so far as anyone knows, he never did human sacrifice. He sacrificed living things only five times in his life. Five sparrows in connection with an invocation of Mercury. A pigeon in North Africa, to invoke a demon. He crucified, and consumed, a toad in the United States. At Cefalu the sacrifice of the cat (which had been carefully anaesthetised first), and the goat on the stomach of the Scarlet Woman were both done to amuse visitors.

Things went from dreary to disastrous. Sister Cyris got ulcers. The Beast got boils. Poupee, the Scarlet Woman's child, died. And then, to finish them all off, Raoul Loveday drank bad water, and died of enteritis.

Crowley had been notorious for so long that newspaper readers found it easy to believe he had murdered Loveday. The Cefalu period ended in the ignominious expulsion from Italy of the Beast 666. P.S. *At a small stationers in Cefalu I bought a pencil Printed on it in gold was the number 666. Kenneth Anger was not at all surprised.*





**THIS PEASANT** remembers the Thelemites (including the children) at morning sunworship. "Il signore prayed like this in front of a tripod.



**"THERE WERE MANY TEARS,** much weeping from Il Signore's women. Sometimes they ran away. But they always returned."



**"THE SCARLET WOMAN"** in the fantasy film THE DOME OF PLEASURE, by Kenneth Anger. It was shown at the festival of Britain five years ago.

### 3 DECEMBER 1955 (Part 2) WHERE DOES THE DEVIL GET YOU?



**"By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes"**

- Crowley

Dr. Kinsey (left) pays a visit to Aleister Crowley's notorious Abbey at Cefalu, Sicily. He is shown round by his fellow American, Kenneth Anger, who is planning a film on Crowley's life. Anger rediscovered the Abbey and Crowley's pornographic mural paintings, which have been covered with whitewash since he was expelled from Sicily, thirty-seven years ago.



Above: A painting of Crowley on his death bed.

*"Blot out mankind and give the Beasts a chance Nature may find in their inheritance Some semblence of a race less infinitely base."*

PROFESSOR KINSEY, the world famous American sexologist, gives his professional view on Aleister Crowley. JENNY NICHOLSON sums up this false Messiah.

Photographed by FOSCO MARAINI

ALEISTER CROWLEY, "The King of Depravity," is popularly believed to have been exactly as Mr. Justice Swift described him in court, after he had heard evidence of the life led by Crowley and his disciples in the Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu, in Sicily.

"I thought I knew every conceivable form of wickedness. I thought everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me. I have learnt, in this case, that we can always learn something more if we live long enough. I have never heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous, and abominable stuff as that which has been produced by the man who describes himself to you as the greatest living poet."

And why, since Crowley deliberately advertised himself as a demon—shaved his head, or grew his hair like horns, and talked satanically—should anyone have bothered to disagree with Mr. Justice Swift? His disciples, irritated and anxious, asked "Why the devil do you do it, A.C.?" "To keep the fools away," said Crowley.



**"My name is Aleister Crowley, I'm master of Magick Unholy..."**

*A demon discovered by Anger on the wall of the 'Chamber of Horrors'—Crowley's bedroom at the Abbey of Cefalu, which he painted to induce hypnosis.*



**"Women should be brought round to the back door like milk."**

*Cefalu 1922, two Crowley disciples—a star of the silent films, with Leah, Crowley's favorite 'Scarlet Woman.'*

Naturally, as any fool but Crowley should have guessed, it attracted the fools, and embarrassed serious students of magic.

As a matter of fact, Crowley was not always as diabolical as he painted himself on the doors of the Abbey at Cefalu. He

once cured a woman of drink; and he married Maria de Miramar, against all advice of his friends, because he considered it was his fault that she had been expelled from France, and would not have been allowed into Britain unless she came as his wife. But, as in magic, good and bad are inextricably mixed up. Crowley made a point of never being nice without being nasty and vice versa. In a book of devout hymns to the Virgin Mary there was, for bad measure, one which was a complicated anagramic blasphemy.

Even his best friends, when he blackguarded and sued them (he once issued a writ to his literary agent friend for £15,000, which he claimed he would have gained, if his friend had handled his literary affairs properly), had often to remind themselves what a good companion (and cook) he was—how freely the good talk and brandy flowed—how physically courageous he was—how genuinely he was adored by his women, and his children. His sons Dionysus and Hermes always began their otherwise ordinary, childish letters to him “Dear Beast”.



To the normal public he was antisocial. He was bad about paying his debts. He was a drug addict, and a megalomaniac. It was natural that they should assume that if he dedicated himself to Magic it was bound to be black. True Black Magic can only be conducted by a renegade priest. All correct magical communications are through the archangels.

“If you conjure up a devil without first invoking a guardian angel—if you conjure up an evil spirit without a good agency—you can’t control it, and you deserve all you get—like sticking pins in an effigy,” one of England’s few authorities on magic explained. It is possible that Crowley got his magic wrong, and his guardian angel, Aiwass, was really a demon. Certainly the Christian view would be that Crowley was satanically inspired.

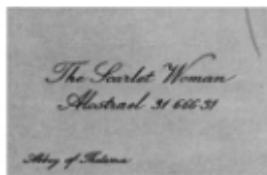
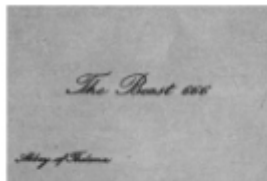
Last week, Dr. Kinsey, the famous sexologist, examined the sex-magic oil paintings with which Crowley had covered his abbey walls and doors, and from which Kenneth Anger, the young American filmmaker, has painstakingly removed the whitewash slapped on thirty-seven years ago by the order of the Italian police. Dr. Kinsey claimed he knew “Nothing about the magic side of it. But I am interested in the sex. I have interviewed several people who knew Crowley when he was in America and I have his books in my library. The amazing thing is that Crow-

ley lived a life that would not normally have been tolerated in the most primitive parts of darkest Africa. He thought he could get away with blatant sex practices and in fact he *did* get away with them for many years."

But an erudite article on Crowley claims, "Crowley, with his aptitude for sex, his knowledge of magical tradition and technique, and his acquaintance with the East, had worked out for himself the secret of sexual magic. Believing it had died out in the West, he was proud of rediscovering it. His paintings in the abbey were merely tactics for his students. He liked shocking people."



Crowley wrote the first dictionary of magical terms—the first comprehensible guide to yoga, and a major contribution to the techniques of magic called "Magic in Theory and Practice". And he was taken seriously until he attempted to make a religion out of a symposium of various western and oriental forms of magic. Then he quarrelled with most of his friends and admirers, because they would not take his religion of Thelema seriously. For all serious magicians are agreed that magic is inferior to religion. "Any recognised religious symbols," they tell you, "such as the sign of the Cross, are proof against it."



Visiting cards used by Aleister Crowley and Leah while at Cefalu.

*Crowley was a false Messiah.* In 1917 he had founded his new religion based on the *Book of the Law* (dictated to him by Aiwass) after ceremonially killing Christianity. He had no disci-

ples of any calibre for his religion in his lifetime. None has yet appeared; and it is unlikely that any will. He tried to become spiritual adviser to Stalin, to Hitler (who quotes from the *Book of the Law* in his conversations with Rauschning on the subject of white and black magic), to the British War Office, Henry Ford and King George V. He tried to 'benefit' mankind with his law 'Do What Thou Wilt'.



**"And I rave and I rape, and I rip and I rend."**  
*Dr. Kinsey takes a scientific view of Crowley's Sex-Magic paintings, which are too shocking to publish.*

The devil generally gets the false Messiahs. Ronald Matthews, in his *English Messiahs*, records the end of "Nayler on his tragic ride through the autumn downpour; Joanna dying, racked by doubts, in the glare of publicity, Brothers thundering of 'divine vengeance' from behind the madhouse bars; Tom leading his deluded followers to imprisonment and death; Prince and Smyth-Pigott founding, in the Somerset hills, a new ark, to save a remnant of mankind." And Crowley ended his days in a Hastings boarding house, taking heroin on the National Health (for his asthma). His funeral wasn't at all as he had romantically willed it. "I direct my executor to take the necessary steps to ensure my body is embalmed in the ancient Egyptian fashion ... my body to be dressed in white Tau robe with Abramelin red and gold tunic and girdle, and the crown and wand. Also the big red sword. Bury all magical jewels with me."

His urn was to be placed "either on (a) the broad ledge of the cliff behind Boleskine House, Scotland, (b) the top of the

rock at Cefalu, Sicily, about the Bath of Diana, or in (c) Westminster Abbey." He was, actually, cremated in the dismal non-denominational chapel in the Brighton cemetery (his ashes were forwarded later to disciples in America). A congregation of scandalised newspapermen, and amused old friends, attended the macabre service. The sound of someone quoting from the *Book of the Law*, and declaiming Crowley's Hymn to Pan—ricochetted off the tombstones in the dreary Brighton graveyard, and echoed through the Christian world:

*"And I rave; and I rape and I  
rip and I rend  
Everlasting world without  
End ..."*