

**NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
29 JULY 1923**

A Diary of the Drug Habit

THE DIARY OF A DRUG FIEND. By Aleister Crowley. 368 pp.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. \$2.00.

Unfamiliarity with the effects of habit-forming drugs is a severe handicap to the reviewer of such a book as Aleister Crowley's "The Diary of a Drug Fiend." He lacks a criterion by which to judge of its truthfulness. However, Aleister Crowley assures us that it is a true story, rewritten only so far as was necessary to conceal personalities, and surely Mr. Crowley should know. Let us then take him at his word, with such mental reservations as will obtrude themselves in spite of our earnest desire to believe.

There are stranger things than "dope" in "The Diary of a Drug Fiend." One of them is the dedication:

To ALOSTRAEL

Virgin Guardian of the Sangraal in the Abbey of Thelema in "Telepylus," and to

ASTARTE LULU PANTHEA

its youngest member, I dedicate this story of its Herculean labours toward releasing Mankind from every form of bondage.

This is not, as one might be tempted to believe, a part of the ravings of a drug fiend. It is a clue to the real character of the book, which is quite obviously intended as a tract for the cult which has its headquarters in the "Abbey of Thelema." The chief doctrine of this cult is embraced in the words: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." The high priest of this cult is one Basil King Lamus, known at the Abbey of Thelema as the "Big Lion." Apart of his mission in life appears to be the reclaiming of those who have fallen victims to the drug habit.

The Diary is divided into three books. In the first, appropriately called "Paradiso," Sir Peter Pendragon tells how, during a wild night in London, he took his first sniff of cocaine, and how he fell in love with a girl who went by the name of "Unlimited Lou." Lou was already a "snowbird," in other words a user of

cocaine. On the spur of the moment they married and went to Paris on a "cocaine honeymoon." If we may believe Sir Peter, there is no happier form of honeymoon—while it lasts. The time came, however, when cocaine seemed to lose the power to lift them up to the heights. They experimented with heroin and found that its effect was quite different, but very agreeable. Tiring of Paris, they went to Capri, and it was there that they fell into the hands of a clever swindler who robbed them of all their ready cash and their jewels, and worst of all, of their supply of drugs. They were obliged to cable to London for money and, until it came, to suffer for lack of their usual stimulants. The first book ends with their decision to return to England.

In the second book, "Inferno," it is Lou who keeps the diary. She tells how they fell lower and lower, living in filthy lodgings in London, not because they could afford no better, but because their eccentricities of conduct would attract less attention there. Later on they went to live at Sir Peter's ancestral home, Barley Grange, first assuring themselves a plentiful supply of cocaine and heroin. At Barley Grange they experimented with devil worship, Sir Peter's deceased grandfather having thoughtfully fitted up a room in the Grange with all the paraphernalia necessary for that purpose. Their crazy antics drove all the servants from the house, and the two drug fiends continued to live there in indescribable filth. Their meals, when they cared for any, were brought in from a near-by inn. Then Sir Peter shot himself presumably by accident, and in the excitement of nursing him, Lou forgot all about drugs. The result was that by the time Sir Peter recovered from his wound, they were both apparently cured of the drug habit. But it did not last. They returned to London and fell lower than before.

The third book, "Purgatorio," is written by Sir Peter. In it he tells how he and his wife, believing themselves to be hopelessly in the grip of the drug habit, had decided to commit suicide and how they were rescued by King Lamus, who carried them away to "Telepylus." He cured them by developing the "True Will," that is to say, by helping them to find something in which they are more interested than they are in drugs. They found that the doctrine, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law," was to be taken quite literally. It meant, among other things, that they might have all the cocaine and heroin they wanted. The only condition was that they should keep charts and record on these charts how much they took and why they took it. By adroit questioning King Lamus learned that Sir Peter's greatest

interest in life was mechanics, particularly as applied to air-planes, and that Lou's one ambition was to be a true helpmeet to her husband. So Sir Peter was set to work inventing a helicopter, while Lou looked after his comfort, and there you are. It's easy to cure a drug addict when you know how.

As might be expected, there is a great deal of mysticism mixed up with the cult practiced by the members of the Abbey of Thelema. Here, for example, is a midnight invocation recited by King Lamus, the Big Lion. He stood facing the north and accompanied his speech with a series of complicated gestures. In a deep solemn voice, he said:

Hail to thee who art Ra in thy silence, even unto thee who art Kephra the beetle, that travelst under the heavens in thy bark in the midnight hour of the sun. Tahuti standeth in his splendour at the prow. Haul unto thee from the abodes of evening!

Does it mean anything? Ask Mr. Aleister Crowley. He tells us in a note prefacing the third book of the Diary that

The Abbey of Thelema at "Telepylus" is a real place. It and its customs and members, with the surrounding scenery, are accurately described. The training there given is suited to all conditions of spiritual distress, and for the discovery and development of the "True Will" of any person. Those interested are invited to communicate with the author of this book.

And this is why the reviewer classes "The Diary of a Drug Fiend" as a tract.