

Film Mother Stoned in House of Mystics Tells of Attack



Miss Jane Wolfe, and, below, Sir Aleister Crowley

By CARL DE VIDAL HUNT

PARIS, France, June 2. — Jane Wolfe, who played film mothers in early Mary Pickford pictures, has returned to Hollywood, Cal., seeking complete recovery from injuries received at the hands of Sicilian peasants. They tried to stone her to death.

But before departing from Paris she related her experience in the „mystery house of Cefalu,“ in Sicily, where she had travelled to follow the teachings of Sir Aleister Crowley, high priest of Thelema (oriental philosophy) and promoter of queer performances for which the „mystery house“ was raided by Sicilian police.

Known as the „Beast“

Sir Aleister, known among his disciples as the „Beast,“ is a Britisher, who spent his patrimony in search of the stoic philosophies of the East. He had lived with the Yogis in the silent wastes of India and had published books on the subject. Now he is a wanderer, barred even from his own country — but his friends declare him a genius.

Miss Wolfe arrived at the „mystery house“ on the banks of the Mediterranean and was appointed typing secretary of Sir Aleister. Then followed the initial practices of self-control that were designed to relieve her restlessness. For hours she was re-

quired to sit on one spot without moving as much as an eyelid.

Practiced Self-Control

„Then I had to practice the ‚Dharana,‘“ Miss Wolfe relates. „That is fixing a yellow square on a wall and shutting my eyes and visualizing the square for half an hour. This was followed by breathing exercises. In the morning and evening we performed the required rituals in a large room with a tiled flooring, the center of which was inlaid with queer geographical figures. The master changed his gowns and make-up according to the planets he invoked — while we men and women wore Greek robes of various colors.

„Under the teachings of Thelema I made rapid progress, both mentally and physically, until the great moment for my supreme test was announced to me by the ‚Beast.’

„He had consulted the Chinese book Wy King and the Six Sticks of Divination, with the result that the time for my protracted magical retirement seemed most propitious.

Started Silent Period

„According to rules I went down to the beach and, with the help of other pupils, put up a tent in which I was to live in silence for 33 days. During that period of concentration and meditation I was to practice Asana until I could sit motionless for 11 hours at a stretch.

„This is what brought on the trouble. Some of the people of Cefalu, who seemed to regard the abbey and its inmates with suspicion, came snooping around my tent. They peeped in and saw me sitting on my haunches and staring fixedly at a yellow square painted on the canvas of my tent. Some even talked to me, but I had to remain absolutely rigid and motionless. Once a man and his wife rushed in and toppled me over, but even then I retained my stiffness of body and lay there like an overthrown statue until my daily Asana was completed.

Stoned by Natives

„Soon the natives began to attack me with stones. They believed I was a person possessed by evil spirits. The men never touched me, but the women were fierce. One morning about 20 of them surrounded my tent. I was in the fourth hour of my Asana, sitting stiff as a carved idol. I knew they meant to do me great harm, but my mind refused to consider any physical pain that might come to me. Soon they began to throw rocks and finally my tent went down. I did not move, of course. But the women shrieked and danced around me like a flock of buzzards. Then they stoned me until I fell bleeding and unconscious to the ground.

„I don’t know how long I lay there, but when I came to my senses, the women were still round me. Slowly I got back into my Asana position and sat there without moving a muscle. Seeing this the women gasped. They could not understand it. Slowly they backed away from me, crossing themselves and mumbling strange words. They never came back.

Flesh Disciplined

„At the end of my 33 days the terrible pains of my body, caused by sitting almost continually in one spot, were entirely gone. I had eaten little of the food that was brought down to me from the abbey, and my mind was so clear that I thought I could look through walls. A sense of perfect serenity pervaded my whole being. My hot blood had cooled and was coursing quietly through my veins. The flesh had been disciplined.

„Shortly after my departure the ‚mystery house’ of Cefalu was raided by the Sicilian police and all its inmates put out. For several months I lived in England and then went to Paris preparatory to sailing to America. My hair is white now, but I am cured.“