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ARE YOU FOOLISH?
THEN START A NEW RELIGION IN LONDON:
DO NOT DELAY

This is the Silly Season in the World's Capital, and Here Are Some of the Ways People There Are Seeking "Ecstasy" and Other Things.

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The mysterious goddess whose violin gives musical impetus to new religious cult.

You are in search of Ecstasy. Who is not? When your state of mind is ecstatic, you are enraptured. Exultation is yours.

You experience a diminished consciousness and a joy that is not of earth.

So—on with the adventure!—You climb interminable stairs—a bad start. You arrive at the top landing, wiping the sweat from your brow and wondering why London landlords don't put in elevators.

A door opens silently. You are received by a gentleman in a white robe and carrying a drawn sword. Be not afraid: the sword is not a shortcut to ecstasy.

The room is dark, but a dull-red light shines upon an altar. There are several gentlemen standing about, some in white robes, some in red, some in sombre black.

A few carry swords. Never mind why. You wouldn't understand.

A robed brother is reciting. It is something about "the banishing ritual of the Pentagram." Get that. A commanding voice from somewhere:

"Purify the Temple with Water."

It is done—with a sprinkling can. Again the commanding voice:

"Consecrate the Temple with fire."

It is done—with a torch.

Enters Aleister Crowley, poet. Aleister is good, but Aleister jars. The poet ought to change his name or quit the game. Who wants to follow a Crowley—or, for that matter, a Simpkins or a Snobgrass—when one is on the trail of ecstasy.

Crowley is habited in black. Accompanied by the brethren, he leads the "Mystic Circumambulation." That is, they walk three times around the altar, very slowly, chanting gibberish.

Others beside yourself are onlookers. One by one, you are beckoned to join the Mystic Circumambulation."

"Bring, now," says the poet, "the cup of Libation."

A black-robed brother glides away and vanishes in shadow, to reappear a moment later, bearing in his hands a gold bowl filled with sweet-scented wine. You drink in turn. A stalwart brother strides into the center of the circle and proclaims "The Twelfefold Certitude of God"; then passionately invokes Artemis by the Greater Ritual of the Hexagram. The poet reads the "Song of Orpheus" from the Argonauts.

Thirst work. Once more the cup of Libation goes round. You begin to feel that Ecstasy would be a cinch if only the cup were larger.

A draped figure. You wonder where it came from. It is there, before you. The draperies are not black, but blue-black.

By the dim light from the altar you see it is the figure of a lady, a very pretty lady, in bare feet. She moves slowly, noiselessly over the floor. She carries a violin.

The poet meets her and escorts her to the throne; then reclines at her feet. From this reclining position he recites in a solemn and reverent voice Swinburne's first chorus from "Atlantia," beginning, "When the hounds of Spring."

A Great Violinist.

And again you invoke Artemis, apparently without success.

"Frater Omnia Vincam," commands Crowley, "dance the dance of Syrinx and Pan in honor of our Lady Artemis."

It's a little puzzling. The lady isn't Artemis really but Miss Leilla Waddell, a violinist of wonderful promise who won so much praise in Australia and New Zealand that she has come to London to take the capital of the world by storm.

Frater Omnia Vincam, who, like Crowley, writes poetry when he isn't pursuing Ecstasy, advances to the middle of the floor, where he performs a really beautiful dance which he continues until he falls exhausted.

Crowley, standing over the prostrate brother-poet, makes supplication to the enthroned goddess in original verse. A dead silence ensues.

Evidently the goddess is touched. She plays—plays with feeling and passion, like a master. Ecstasy evades you. The music halts abruptly, and the goddess' head drops upon her breast.

Once more she takes up the violin and plays "Abend, Lieb," and the sounds that spring from the quivering strings are like a human voice of wondrous purity—singing and sighing in tenderest cadences.

In the face of Crowley, in the face of Frater Omnia Vincam, in the faces of the brethren shines an expression of unearthly joy.

This—this—is Ecstasy!

Having got what you came for, you are dismissed by Crowley in these words:

"By the power in me invested I declare the Temple closed."

The brethren call themselves the A.A. No one outside the cult knows what the A.A. is or stands for.

Crowley calls it the "New Religion." This is not a good name. It suggests the mundane. One speaks of the newest

thing in safety razors, but one does not speak of the newest thing in religions.

Crowley is the inventor of it. He does not call himself a prophet, or a second Messiah, or anything of the sort. He's the inventor. His main idea is to plant in the Occident the Eastern Transcendental Buddhism under the guise of ceremonial magic. He believes that the human mind is most easily raised to ecstasy by beauty, mystery and ceremony.

This is the silly season in London religious circles.

There are probably more ways to worship in London than in any other place on earth.

The New Religion may be the newest thing in religions, but it is by no means the silliest.

There are, for example, "The Smilers." They are Pentacostal dancers, disciples of Brother Obadiah, a holy man but noisy, who upset the peace of South London a few years ago. His immediate followers were known as the "Holy Smokers."

A Lot of Harmless Allies.

"The Smilers" are less boisterous than the "Holy Smokers," but they are very silly. They have taken apartments in a small street near Regent's park. The gentlemen of the party wear helmets of black straw and leggings (so that they can dance in the dew of early morning without getting rheumatism) and the ladies shade their pretty faces with very wide-brimmed straw hats. They divide their time between the Inner Circle near Regent's park and the umbrageous quiet of Kensington gardens, where they walk soberly, hand-in-hand, smiling. Sometimes they dance a solemn sort of minuet smiling. It is often a silly asinine smile.

Then there is Mr. Ernest Maryon. Mr. Maryon is a tall, thin young man with an esthetic face and the politest manner in the world. He says he is restoring Pantheism and the Old English Religion. He has been doing it a good many years but somehow the public does not flock to his banner.

Awhile ago Mr. Maryon rented a hall and appeared (in a bright red dressing gown) to worship the Winged Disc. He assured the curious congregation that the Winged Disc was the Emblem of Immortality. One of the congregation asked him how he knew and the meeting broke up in disorder.

Mr. Maryon has just begun another series of services "to continue the work of Penda English king of Mercia (middle Eng-

land) who died in battle on the river Aire in Yorkshire in the year 655."

Of course it may be contended that Penda cashed in a long time ago, but Mr. Maryon sees no reason why the good work should not be continued. If you will refer to the Encyclopaedia Britannica you will find that Penda was a very fierce king who slew a couple of other kings before he was himself slain by Oswald in 655. Penda and Oswald had a frightful ruction which ended in the conquering of Mercia and the conversion of that province to Christianity. Penda had wanted to establish a religion of his own, which included the transmigration of souls and nature worship.

Mr. Maryon thinks Penda had the right hunch. The Winged Disc, however, having failed to make a hit he has this time substituted a scarlet banner on which is emblazoned a white horse, rampant. He also uses a magic lantern.

He is very bitter against the extra-cosmic deity which ignorant Christians worship and upholds with the full flood of his eloquence, the wonder of Amen Ra—the God Behind the Flaming Sun.

It doesn't cost anything to worship with Mr. Maryon, but silver contributions at the end of the service are never discouraged.

There are a lot more curious sects here, but those I have mentioned will serve to show how far from a monopoly the Established Church enjoys while the silly season is on.