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ELEUSIS.

New Religious Rites on Greek Model.

BEHIND LOCKED DOORS.

Mr. Aleister Crowley is a poet and more than a poet. He has a mission.

He wants to appeal to those who "while essentially religious have no creed." Hence he has devised "The Rites of Eleusis."

In an upper room in Victoria-street, almost facing Victoria Station, the priests and priestesses have already played their solemn parts and impressed the elect.

Next month, on the last two Wednesdays and on every Wednesday in November, these ceremonies will be repeated at the Caxton Hall for ticket holders.

Only 100 persons will be admitted each time, and that the rites of Eleusis are entirely novel may be judged from the following note to those invited:—

For the Rite of Saturn you are requested, if convenient, to wear black or very dark blue, for the Rite of Jupiter violet, for Mars scarlet or russet brown, for Sol orange or white, for Mercury shot silk or mixed colours; for Luna white silver or pale blue.

Doors will open at 8.30: they will be closed and locked at nine o'clock precisely. The ceremonies occupy from one and a half to two and a half hours.

If not mysterious, the ceremonies will be mystical.

There will be a central altar round which priests will be gathered, each on a throne.

There will be censers full of incense, and the "priests" in turn will lift up their voices invoking spirits upon which the minds of those present will be concentrated.

MUSIC AND DANCING.

There will be soft music, slow chantings, and an occasional dance.

The planets named will be represented by persons and their control of the seven ages of man set forth—Jupiter dealing with the man who is serious and serene, and Mars with the man of energy, while Luna will suggest thoughts of childhood and innocence.

Not only will there be no escape for those present if they fail to enter into the spirit of the performance, but they will be expected to keep silent the whole time.

The twofold object of the ritual is to develop power over the will and to induce religious ecstasy.

Mr. Crowley assured an *Evening News* representative that it was all very simple and that there was nothing secret about it—in spite of the locked door.

His aim, he reiterated, was to try and awaken by beautiful ceremonies the religious sense lying dormant in many men who now attach themselves to no faith.

"We do not want them to believe in anything when they come to us," said Mr. Crowley.

"We want them to remain skeptical, because however fine one's experiences may be, they may be valueless from the philosophical standpoint.

"It is because that has not been understood that we have the differences between Mohammedanism and Christianity, which contradict each other."

"Would not the ritual (which is largely based on Greek models) be above the head of the average man?" was asked.

"No, I do not think so. I have found quite normal people have been greatly elevated and impressed.

"One cannot expect them all to reach a state of ecstasy at once—it must come by degrees.

"Some men get 'right there' in five minutes where others take months."

"And when the converts, if they may be so termed, are in a state of ecstasy—what then?"

Mr. Crowley replied that he disliked the word convert.

"I should like to make clear," he said in reply to the question, "that we do not appeal to the emotions.

"We do not want people to get up and shout or sing when they are elevated as at a revival meeting.

"That we should consider very bad behaviour. They remain perfectly still until they leave.

ARTISTIC CEREMONIES.

"These are artistic ceremonies which would not appeal to the vulgar, and those who see them are no more likely to lose their self-control than if they were watching the performance of one of Wagner's operas."

"From what classes is the congregation drawn?"

"They belong to the services, to the professions—Literature, Art, and Journalism—and there are merchants and business men. We endeavour to awake the spiritual side of men from its sleep, that is all."

Having done that, Mr. Crowley added, he was indifferent whether they were led from the ranks of unbelievers into the churches or not.

His work had been accomplished, and he had taught them to know that religious ecstasy in its purest form could be known here in this world and now.

Mr. Crowley, who has travelled largely in the East, knows more about the magic of the Orientals perhaps than the Orientals themselves, and those who have seen the rites bear tribute to the grace and beauty of many of his conceptions.

Women are admitted to the séances, and two take part in the rites—Miss Waddell, an Australian violinist, and Miss Joan Hayes, an actress, who has been seen in "The Blue Bird," and who, clad in white, leads a chorus of white-robed probationers.

A man inclined to worry and "fidget about with his hands" who attends a séance and keeps perfectly still with his mind on one ideal leaves, it is said, pervaded by a holy contentment.