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**MASTER MAGICIAN REVEALS
WEIRD SUPERNATURAL RITES.**

Extraordinary Story of Raising the Spirit of Mars, as Told by Aleister Crowley, Who Is Called a Modern Cagliostro and Is Variousy Viewed as Saint and Sorcerer, Poet, Student of Demonology, Mountain-Climber and Mountebank. Declares Weird Statements About His Doings to Be Illusions of Black Magic and Nothing More.

By Henry N. Hall.

Aleister Crowley, who recently arrived in New York, is the strangest man I ever met. He is a man about whom men quarrel. Intensely magnetic, he attracts people or repels them with equal violence. His personality seems to breed rumors. Everywhere they follow him.

One man to whom I spoke of him lauded Crowley as a poet of rare delicacy, the author of "Hail Mary," a garland of verse in honor of the Mother of God. Another alluded to him as an unsparing critic of American literature. Another knew him as the holder of some world records for mountain-climbing. Still another warned me against him as a thoroughly bad man, a Satanist or devil-worshipper steeped in black magic, the high priest of Beelzebub. An actor knew of him only as a theatrical producer and as the designer of extraordinary stage costumes. A publisher told me that Crowley was an essayist and philosopher whose books, nearly all privately issued, were masterpieces of modern printing. Among his works is a voluminous treatise on the history and practice of magic, representing immense research and erudition—the authoritative book on the subject. By others he was variously pictured to me as a big game hunter, as a gambler, as an editor, as an explorer. Some said that he was a man of real attainments, others that he was a faker. All agreed that he was extraordinary.

The first time I saw Crowley he was standing in the lobby of the uptown hotel where he lives. I knew at once that he was

the man I wanted, and instead of going to the desk I went right up and spoke to him. He took me to his room and began to talk of an article by Harry Kemp, which *The World Magazine* published last August, wherein was described a black mass at which Crowley was said to have officiated as priest. He said:

"Kemp honestly believes he was present at the things he describes, but he wasn't. I merely made him dream a scene of black magic, and he thought it was actually happening and that I was participating. He dreamed himself. I don't practise black magic."

"But do you believe in magic?" I asked, "Do you claim to have supernatural powers?"

Crowley turned his piercing black eyes upon me, smiled, and in a very sweet, low voice said:

"There is nothing supernatural about magic, any more than there is about wireless telegraphy. The earnest student of the occult profits mentally and physically, and develops capacity for intellectual enjoyment not possessed by the ordinary mortal. Magic gets me anything I want—with the limitation, of course, that I must not use my powers to do anything that would break my oath. Each man has an original oath, which depends on the grade of his initiation. But all Magi are bound to poverty, chastity and obedience."

Since our first meeting I have seen a good deal of Crowley, and although I cannot pretend to solve the bewildering riddle of his character, yet I know him as a very refined and courtly man, deeply versed in the history and principles of all religions, a scientific student of occultism, a leading Freemason and past master Rosicrucian, and as a poet of inspiration. Whether singing the praises of Our Lady in chaste and mystic verse, or lashing the sins of modern Babylon with furious invective, or deriding degeneracy, or extolling esotericism, his lines are never labored. What blemishes there are are the blemishes of haste. He told me that he wrote down just what came to him, and printed it without changing a word. His most finished poetry is written in French, and takes the form of sonnets which might have come from the pen of Edmond Harcourt or Paul Verlaine.

One day as we were sitting together in his room talking of the war he told me that he knew beforehand it would come on, and that as far back as May, 1910, the spirit of Mars, which he had "called up, had prophesied that there would be two wars in five years, in one of which Turkey, and in the other Germany, would be disastrously involved." Of course I wanted to know all about his magic informant. This is what he told me, as I remember his words.

"A magician evokes a particular spirit by a special ceremonial rite. He works for a given result and does not, like the spiritualists, wait for some spirit to turn up and become the slave of whatever does turn up. Once within his magic circle, the magician is master. The spirits must obey. What follows, believe or not, as you please.

"It was in London. Three of us—myself, a British naval officer of high rank and a famous violinist—decided to evoke the spirit of Mars. By Mars we don't mean the planet in the sky, at all; we mean the hidden forces that possess the powers we attribute to Mars. Also we performed no sacrifice. In the old days when the Israelites went out to give battle they would sacrifice an animal, but nowadays it is not necessary to shed blood. You use the proper incense, and the beings you want materialize from the smoke.

"As we were going to evoke the spirit of Mars I used a blood-red robe and wore the crown of the Uraeus serpent and armed myself with the sword and the spear. My two assistant Magi were clad in white and gold.

"Around the altar we had traced a large circle, ample in size to contain the three of us. And then, following the ancient rites, we consecrated the spear, and then the sword, and then the altar, and lastly the magic circle itself. So long as we remain inside that circle no harm could come to us. Once we were secure we conjured the Dog of Evil, just as the minister exorcises the spirits of evil before laying the foundation stone of a church, and having done that we bound ourselves by a great oath to the purposes of the ceremony. That is one of the most important things.

"And as the clouds of incense rose from the altar we lifted up our voices and praised the God of Battle. We invoked the Egyptian God Horus and called upon Elohim Gebor to aid us. And then as I felt the power within me grow I commanded the blind spirit Bartzabel to come forth.

"The dark clouds of incense slowly took form and, standing without the circle, a sexless oxlike form appeared, with dull, deceitful head and hideous human features suffused with blood. It stood panting, its heart beating violently, and in a deep, hoarse voice it answered my questions. It said that in less than five years there would be two wars, and prophesied that the greatest of the two would end by the crushing of Germany."

Crowley told me all this in as matter of fact a manner as if he had been describing an experiment by Edison or Marconi, and as he spoke he puffed slowly at a briarwood pipe with a very short bowl and a very long amber mouthpiece.

He is a well-knit, athletic man, on the verge of forty, standing 5 feet 11 in his boots and weighing 158 pounds. It is possible to describe him exactly so far, but no further.

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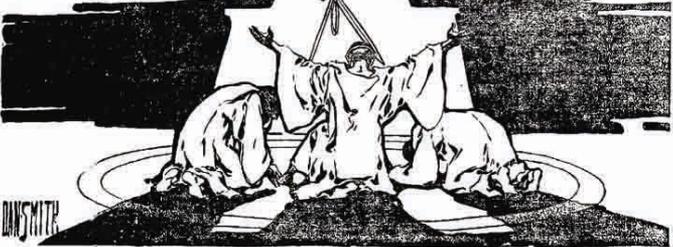
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