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WITCHCRAFT IN FRANCE
GAINING IN ADHERENTS.

PARIS—A survival of sorcery, witchcraft and the black masses which were practiced in the days of Cagliostro and the Marquis de Sade, is now sweeping many parts of France.

Following the enforced departure, some months ago, of Aleister Crowley, known here as the High Priest of Black Magic, frequent cases of devil-worship have come to the attention of the French police. The most popular rendezvous of these votaries of Satan is said to be in the Fontainebleau forests, some 50 miles from Paris, where on moonless nights mystic rites are started as a distant clock strikes twelve.

Although these Ceremonies occur in various parts of the country, it is said they are all carried out in the same manner. A circle is generally drawn in which the worshippers gather on their knees after making cabalistic signs on the ground before them. Then bowls of incense are lighted and the priest, standing before a candle-lit altar, invokes the evil spirits.

As a rule the invocations are blasphemous in the extreme. Hymns of praise are sung to the devil. Then the Mephistophelean one is asked to bestow worldly riches upon his followers or to fulfill their sinful desires. In return, they promise to give him their souls for eternal damnation.

Pacts Signed in Blood.

One of the strangest phases of this devil-worship is the almost legal form it sometimes takes. There are many cases in which pacts with Satan are written out on foolscap in documentary style and formally signed in blood. A noted French lawyer, Maurice Garcon, in a recent address before the Paris Institute of Metaphysics told about some of these contracts which he himself had seen.

He declared that most of them revealed an effort on the part of the signatory to cheat the devil of his promised soul, through the insertion of some tricky clause or phrase. The law-

yer explained that apparently most of the people regard his Satanic Majesty as a most unscrupulous trafficker in evil and that they therefore felt themselves entitled to cheat him.

During his address, Maitre Garcon also related how he had witnessed black masses in France at which evil spirits and even the devil himself were invoked.

Sorcery Soured Milk.

There have recently been numerous cases in the provincial courts of farmers charging their neighbors with bewitching children, cattle, milk and harvests. A baker of Fontenay-sons-Bois has just accused a man of having through sorcery, made his milk turn sour, thus ruining his business.

In Paris, itself, it is alleged that black masses are conducted, but most discreetly and only the initiated are permitted to attend the rites. The police, however, are carefully on the watch to see that none of these ceremonies include human sacrifice.

During his stay in Paris, Aleister Crowley, who is revered in certain circles as The Master Therion, gathered about him a large following. And since his departure, his books on Black Magic have continued popular. The teachings which he formulated in them are regarded with the reverence of religious precepts by his fellow-believers.