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Black "Masters" Menace
"Temple" In Heart Of City

"MAD" SCENES

The following revelations of the proceedings at a black magic temple in the heart of London, coming as they do from an investigator of international reputation, can be taken as authoritative. They are a fearless exposure of one of the hidden evils in our midst to-day.

By ALEISTER CROWLEY

BLACK Magic in England!

There are those who will scoff at the idea. Put it down to the vapourings of a lunatic.

Yet I say, with a full sense of responsibility, that Black Magic is one of the most sinister evils in our midst to-day.

Within a few hundred yards of Piccadilly there is a Temple of Black Magic, and throughout the country there are other temples; secret, jealously guarded, with their high priests and priestesses,

I intend to expose the terrible consequences of dabbling in Black Magic whether real or fraudulent; for there are charlatans in Black Magic just as there are charlatans in Spiritualism.

But whether the Black Magician be real or fraudulent, the dangers are tremendous, because he appeals to the pleasure-jaded neurotics of modern society who will do anything to get a new thrill.

CONTROLLED HYSTERIA

Temples and Lodges exist where the rites and ceremonial of Black Magic are practiced at the behest of "Masters" whose identities are shrouded in the deepest mystery.

The initiate has to undergo stern discipline and training "in order to overcome his weaknesses."

The disciple is encouraged to indulge in every sort of hysteria so that he or she may conquer their feelings.

It is said this gives them complete mastery over themselves, and develops magical powers.

Sometimes the initiate's reason breaks down under the very horror of the thing, for as you will see the ceremonies cannot but help but have a tremendous effect on the mind.

The Black Magician wants hysteria. But he wants it controlled. An hysteria flogged into being under the whip of fear, the initiate believing that insanity, even death may result unless they comply absolutely with any demand made upon them.

Like drugs, Black Magic is insidious, but far more dangerous. It grips the senses, excites the imagination, and stifles all moral instincts.

It becomes a mere lust for the powers which it is supposed to yield, as I can best show by a description of the practices which go on in the temple of which I have referred.

THE TEMPLE

Within 250 yards of Piccadilly Circus is the entrance to a small house. There is nothing to distinguish this entrance from any other.

One goes upstairs into a flat, where one is met by a fine specimen of Mulatto womanhood. A girl, beautiful in a peculiar way, attractive—seductive. She speaks perfect English, and if one is known to her, then the way is easy.

One simply passes through a door into the next house where three rooms have been knocked into one, and furnished as a temple of Black Magic.

The walls are covered with a somber material enlivened by various designs. Some of them represent human figures. Most of them, however, are symbolic. Queer, mystic signs which, to those who know, represent the "sigils" or signatures of "demons."

A low divan runs right round the room except in the South, which part is taken up by an altar upon which rests the gleaming figure of West African idol some four feet in height, revoltingly ugly and demoniac in appearance.

It is stained black, and is polished by the constant rubbing of human hands and bodies in devotion.

It is malignant in aspect, and would at once exercise a po-

werful influence upon those who were dabbling in Black Magic for the first time, or who knew nothing whatever about magic.

POWERFUL HERBS

Around the idol, and laid upon the altar are a number of articles used by witch doctors.

Crocodiles' teeth, camels' bladders, hippopotami' tusks, thin strips of hippo' hides, all elaborately painted.

In front of the altar are two or three war drums, which, when rubbed in a certain way give forth a vibrant burring sound, which has a peculiarly exciting effect upon the senses.

In front of the idol on the altar are calabashes in which the burning wicks floating in oil or melted fat of a dark green colour which gives off a most offensive smell.

The flame is smoky and appears to form all kinds of shadowy figures. Vases and saucers are present in which the devotees burn joss-sticks.

On the floor is a large coloured basket in which herbs possessing some secret charm are placed, some-times for burning, sometimes for eating, in a sort of broth which is brewed with sacrilegious incantations by the high priest.

The herbs have different effects. They may be soporific, or stimulating. Some of them bring about an ecstasy of the senses approaching madness.

One makes it impossible to feel pain, being stupefying to the physical senses without interfering with the exaltation of the mind.

It is amidst these surroundings that the devotees carry out their ceremonies and rites.

The burring of war drums, the perfume of the joss-sticks, the sensuous movements of the officiating priest, and the muttering of profane incantations, all tend to cause the initiate to lose himself or herself, for there are as many women devotees as there are men.

DELUSIONS

The swaying of bodies in sensual dances gradually produces a condition when those taking part become "demoniacally" possessed. Rhythmic, mesmeric, they become obsessed with delusions until all rational control is abrogated together with the control of conscience.

And who are the people who go there? In many cases they

are those who have exhausted every other sensation in life, and can only get stimulus from the fantastic.

There are others who go with even more sinister de-signs. To obtain magical powers by which they can get money. To obtain the favours of this "devil-idol" in order to carry out some revenge upon another.

They hurl themselves into the rites with feverish energy, and become convinced that their hysteria is the effect of being possessed by the "demon-idol" to whom they pay their devotions.

They go there to become so possessed and delight in the powers which they believe they have acquired.

Women give themselves to the idol. They lay themselves upon the altar, and become obsessed with their delusions.

FLOGGINGS

Others, having partaken of the herb which makes them immune to pain, are mercilessly flogged with the thin strands of hippopotamus hides taken from the altar, imagining it is the magical powers which they have achieved by allying themselves to their Master, which causes them to feel nothing except the thrill of being beaten.

Yet others will cut and gash themselves with knives which have been pledged to the idol, and made the object of some profane incantation, rubbing their bleeding bodies against that of the gleaming image.

From time to time a ceremony in full dress, the priest arrayed in his magical robes, and with his various officers likewise attired will be held. On these occasions the Temple will be full to overflowing.

It may be the initiation of some young girl who has fallen beneath the sway of a male member of the circle in which case she will be divested of her initiation robes in full view of those present, laid upon the altar, anointed with evil smelling potions, and offered to the idol.

The great time for such an mass is during the eclipse of the sun or moon—a waning moon. The waxing moon is the time for beginning magical operations, the waning for ending them, and this applies to magic both Black and White.

FRENZIED DELUSION

The priest has one or two assistants who exercise a some-

what repulsive feeling on the normal individual. They appear bloodless and inhuman. So long have they treated material things as symbols that all feeling of reality has become lost to them.

The general object of the ceremony is to make the devotees believe in the vitalization of the idol, and they DO believe it.

They believe that their rites and incantations and evocations give it real life, and such is the frenzy of hysteria into which they work themselves, or rather into which they are subtly worked by the Black Magician, that they will afterwards describe how they have acquired his favours and powers by oneness with the malignant idol on the altar.

And the Black Magician is careful to encourage these delusions. He takes care not to drive any of the devotees into a condition of desperation. He is out to satisfy any depravity so long as he can keep control over disciples.

By giving themselves up to his demands he makes them believe that they are conquering their weaknesses and overcoming the obstacles which lie in the way of obtaining magical powers.