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WHITE MEN—BLACK MAGIC

**Sinister Ceremonies and Primitive
Passion Let Loose in London**

There is in the very heart of London a temple where educated, civilised men and women bow in frenzied ecstasy before an ugly African idol, and indulge madly in those jungle atrocities for which the uncivilised races are pitied.

The truth of that statement is placed beyond doubt by the identity of the man who discovered the temple. He is Mr. Aleister Crowley, well known in London, who has actually witnessed the carrying on of the heathen rites associated with black magic worship, by pleasure-jaded neurotics, who will do anything for a new thrill.

Like drugs, black magic is insidious, but far more dangerous. It grips the senses, excites the imagination, and stifles moral instinct. It becomes a mere lust for the powers which it is supposed to yield, and takes terrible toll of the misdirected minds on which it gets a grip. The "masters" who practise it subject their initiates to every form of hysteria in order that they may conquer their feelings, and they are told that by the stern discipline of the training they "overcome their weaknesses."

Usually, in a few months, they are hopeless nervous wrecks.

Three upstairs rooms of a city house, knocked into one large hall, form the "temple." The walls are covered with a sombre 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 a West African idol some four feet in height, revoltingly ugly and demonic in appearance.

INSIDE THE TEMPLE

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

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

Crocodiles' teeth, camels' bladders, hippopotami's 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 altar are calabashes in which are burning wicks floating in oil or melted fat of a dark green color, 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 colored basket in which herbs possessing some secret charm are placed, sometimes for eating, in a sort of broth which is brewed with sacrilegious incantations by the high priest.

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

FRENZIED DEVOTEES

The burring of the war drums, the perfumes 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 woman devotees as there are men.

The swaying of bodies in sensual dances gradually produces a condition when those taking part become "demonically" 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 that 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 designs. To obtain the magical powers by which they can get money. To obtain the favors of the "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 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.

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 that 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.

INITIATION

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 a 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 moon for ending them, and this applies to magic both Black and White.

The priest has one or two assistants, who exercise a somewhat 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 vitalisation 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 favors 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 his 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.