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'BLACK MAGIC' SALE.

Sixty-nine books and manuscripts written by Aleister Crowley, self-styled "Messiah" of black magic who lived in Hastings for several years, and died here in 1947, are to be auctioned at Christie's next week. They include "The Diary of a Drug Addict," which is described in the catalogue as a "suppressed edition."

Born at Leamington, the son of a brewer, Crowley was resident for nearly three years before his death, at Netherwood, on the Ridge.

His career earned him the title—which he relished—of "The King of Depravity." He was the head of a cult which was fiercely attacked for making animal sacrifices and blasphemy. Altogether he wrote 107 books, most of which had to be printed privately.

Mr. Vernon Symonds, former proprietor of Netherwood, who was the last person to speak to Crowley before he died, told me this week: "He was very active mentally and bright to the end."

Mr. Symonds is engaged in writing a monograph on Crowley, which he thinks will clear up many misconceptions about him. "It contains at least one bombshell," he revealed.

His opinion of "Britain's wickedest man" is that he was "not nearly as black as he was painted."

He "used to revel in the nonsense which was talked about him," says Mr. Symonds, "and loved nothing better than to play up to the rich and famous people who came down to see him at Hastings for a cheap thrill."