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NEW "RELIGION."

Strange Rites Performed in Semi-Darkness.

Harmless eccentricity is the chief quality to be found in "The Rites of Eleusis," the first of which was performed at the Caxton Hall last night.

One is told that Mr. Aleister Crowley, who presides over these rites, has invented a new religion, and that his idea is to plant Eastern transcendentalism in English soil under the guise of ceremonial magic. But, if one may judge by the first act of the Rite of Saturn, Mr. Crowley's sole claim to originality is the belief that what would merely be yawned at in the light becomes impressive in darkness or semi-darkness. And perhaps even that error has been made before.

An atmosphere heavily charged with incense, some cheap stage effects, an infinity of poor reciting of good poetry, and some violin playing and dancing are the ingredients of the rite.

There is nothing to give offence to the most sensitive. The Mother of Heaven, who plays the fiddle with considerable technical skill, but no inspiration, is probably not intended to represent any figure in other religions. Some of the poetry, such as passages from Swinburne, is mildly erotic, but rendered in a sing-song voice, with little expression, was void of passion.

Positively the only relief in a dreary performance was afforded by a neophyte falling off his stool, which caused mild hilarity among a bored and uncomfortable audience, most of whom were perched on small wooden stools a foot from the floor. Mr. Crowley says that the end and aim of his rites is ecstasy. Somebody ought to tell him that ecstasy of any kind is impossible when your foot has gone to sleep.