

**THE TWO WORLDS
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CURRENT TOPICS.

CATHOLIC BAN ON A LECTURE.

A lively discussion is proceeding in University circles owing to the banning of a lecture by Mr. Aleister Crowley which had been arranged before the Oxford University Poetry Society. Mr. Crowley was due to speak on "Gilles de Rais, the Fifteenth Century Magician." Mr. Crowley is well known in occult circles as the late Editor of the "Equinox," and is recognized as an authority on occult matters. Of course, the story was spread that Mr. Crowley was an authority on black magic, and few people have the sense to see that a man cannot well be an authority on "black magic" without being an authority on "white magic," whatever these terms may mean. Father Knox, the Catholic chaplain at the University, hearing that Mr. Crowley was an expert in occult knowledge, which has been banned by the Roman Church since the middle ages, wrote to the secretary of the Poetry Club (Mr. Hugh Speaight). As a result Mr. Speaight, who intends to become a Dominican monk, wrote to Mr. Crowley asking him to cancel the lecture. The Vice-Chancellor is said to be annoyed at the impression conveyed that the ban was in any sense an official one, and it is emphasized that the University authorities themselves had no official knowledge of the lecture and took no steps whatever to prohibit it. It is the old story of the Holy Church again attempting to place its repressive ban on the discussion of any subject which would reveal its own methods or conflict with its narrow theology.

Why Ban Open Discussion in the Universities.

We hold no brief for Mr. Crowley or for the subject on which he is an authority. In fact, the probability is that the practice of what has been called magic consists chiefly in the ability to concentrate one's thoughts and use them either for good or ill. The power of thought to act suggestively is gradually being recognised and studied, and we see no reason to believe that

ignorance is any greater protection than knowledge. The surest way to promote evil is to drive it underground, as has been frequently shown in history. The attempt to enforce prohibition upon an unwilling people in America has produced a mass of evils far worse than the licensing system in England. If there is anything evil in magic, let us have it clearly and openly laid before us. We are then in a position to tackle it. To repress it is merely to make hundreds of people search for the knowledge. Could there be a better place for such discussion than a University? Undue and unhealthy repression always defeats its own ends. Throughout the ages the Church has fettered free and full discussion and hindered the dissemination of knowledge, with the result that such countries as Spain, Italy, and Russia, which had been entirely in the meshes of the Roman and Greek Churches, have had to establish dictatorships instead of constitutional government as the only way to free themselves from such repression. Some time humanity will grow up, and when it has attained a state of adolescence all the restrictions of the priest will have to be removed, for it is certainly true there is more both of intelligence and of wisdom outside the Church than is contained within its ranks.