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CREMATING "GREAT BEAST"

Black Magic Funeral at Brighton

Without religious ceremony, but with a reading of the strange wild words from his writings on magic, self-styled "Great Wild Beast" Aleister Crowley was cremated at Brighton yesterday in the presence of his disciples.

Crowley, who died at Hastings, aged 72, shocked the world of the early 'thirties with stories of his "black magic" practices and orgies in his "Abbey" in Italy.

Twenty mourners, including five women, stood with bowed heads—one of the women in tears—as Mr. Louis Wilkinson (Louis Marlowe, the novelist) recited for 20 minutes.

In the Dusk

He was meeting the dead man's wishes by giving extracts from "Hymn to Pan," "Collects from the Gnostic Mass," and "Book of the Law."

The first two came from Crowley's works, "Magick in Theory and Practice," the last named, he had claimed, was written at the dictation of a "supernatural being."

Any impressiveness the passages possessed was only gained by the speaker's fine delivery and the sincerity he put into his task.

Out of the torrent of words could be heard: "Satan has come on a milk-white ass. . . Oh Pan, Pan, Pan. . . . I seem to have got in the grip of the snake. . . . The great beast has come. . . . I am born to death on the horns of the Unicorn. . . . I am their mate, Pan. . . . Be not animal: refine thy raptures. . . . love one another with burning hearts. . . ."

Carnations

The mourners—men with long hair, women of all ages—listened intently as the coffin disappeared into the furnace, Mrs. Hilda Johnson, of Leicester, ran forward and placed a spray of pink carnations on the lid.

Mr. Wilkinson told me he was not a disciple of Crowley's but carried out his wish because of 40 years' friendship.

As I left the chapel one man said to me: "Be careful what you write about this. Crowley may strike at you from wherever he is."