

THE ANATOMY OF WITCHCRAFT

The Anatomy of Witchcraft

PETER HAINING

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For
ERNEST H.
—in friendship

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Gerald Gardner, "father figure" of modern witchcraft.
Witch High Priestess, Eleanor Bone.
Eleanor Bone and members of her coven.
High Priestess Monique Wilson and her husband.
Cecil Williamson, Witchcraft expert.
Williamson mixes the ingredients for the "poppet".
Williamson "breathes" life into the "poppet" over the ritual circle.
Williamson symbolically "kills" the "poppet".
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"People involved in the occult, and particularly witches, have classically held such power over the imaginations of men that at certain points anyone who even looked or acted strangely was considered a witch. This pervasive apprehension gave rise to a tradition that has confused to this day the already difficult question of just what a witch is."

Dennis Wheatley.

INTRODUCTION

There is an old European legend that records how three Friars hid themselves in an Alpine Valley near the place where the witches' *Sabbats* were held so that they could count the number of participants and thereby settle once and for all the argument as to just how many followers the cult had. As they lay there, says the story, they were spotted by one of the witches who approached them and said, "Reverend Brothers, our army is such that if all the Alps, their rocks and glaciers, were equally divided among us, none would have a pound's weight."

History, so replete with tales of witches and warlocks, their activities and the dreadful persecutions mounted against them, gives a certain credibility to that piece of fantasy. On closer inspection, however, there is a somewhat stronger element of truth to be found in it than might be apparent at first, for the practice of witchcraft—the real witchcraft, an ancient fertility religion—dates back to pre-historic times and can count its following, world-wide, over the centuries literally in millions. That many who had no knowledge of the craft—and indeed had no wish to—suffered and died at the hands of the inquisitors, modern scholarship has left us in no doubt. But what of the others? Those who professed a belief in a cult pre-dating Christi-

anity and venerating the "Great Mother" of life, and the great provider, the "Hunting God"? Those, who, armed with secrets from time immemorial, could charm good health, see the future, and even influence the human state? They, it now seems reasonable to propose, have survived in fluctuating numbers through the ages to emerge in strength today in a time of dawning tolerance towards the mysteries in general and the occult in particular.

Witchcraft in the second half of the twentieth century, and in the seventies specifically, is enjoying a renaissance the like of which it has never experienced before. Where previously it was hounded and persecuted, and more particularly misunderstood, it now enjoys a certain freedom, a certain respect and a certain understanding. But, one must still ask, what does it all amount to? How, in the face of the continuing and often biased attacks still delivered against it by fractions of the press and most of the Church, can it still claim a place today in our materialistic and assiduously uniform society? How can its followers find in it what the world around them lacks? The answers, or at least some of them, I believe, are to be found in *The Anatomy of Witchcraft*.

Unlike so many other books on this topic which are already available on the market, this book is not another précis of two thousand years of witch persecution and trials. It does not promise you the secret of the witches' charms and spells; nor does it set out to prove or disprove the multitudinous legends which surround the craft. It is, in a nutshell, a study of witchcraft as it is practiced and observed *today*. It assumes a knowledge of at least a little of what has gone before, but concerns itself much more specifically with analysing and reporting what is happening *at this moment in time* in Britain, America, Europe and a little of what is going on even farther afield.

To assemble the material herein I have travelled exten-

sively not only throughout my own home country, England, but across Europe and from one side of America to another. I have observed and spoken to hereditary witches conducting their ancient rites in the solitude of the Essex marshes, sat in with youthful practitioners in the "turned-on" heart of America in New York, observed the sinister dabbling with unknown forces at the edge of witchcraft in France and finally confronted the practice of "evil for evil's sake", Black Magic, in its new centre, California. The aim of my search was to qualify my own convictions about Witchcraft and Black Magic, to separate one from the other, and to demonstrate that whereas it is possible still to practise the ancient "black" magic (the attempted summoning of evil spirits, etc.) under the aegis of witchcraft, the term today applies to a cult whose followers span the Globe and who are bonded together in a devotion to perversion, degradation and the undermining of personal and social standards. But I do not expect the reader to accept my word alone, and along the way I have recruited the aid of both those who are actual participants in the cults and those scholars closest to them, to express their opinions and observations in the light of the most recent developments. This, then, is very much a book about people and their beliefs in two ancient practices, their motivations and objectives, and their part in an occult phenomenon.

Herein you will find many attempts at justification from the participants for their activities. You will meet typical English housewives who turn from their everyday chores to dance naked around their living rooms observing rites of prehistoric origin; you will meet young Americans introducing drugs into their observation of the Old Religion; and you will encounter the extraordinary power still exerted by the old-time "wise" man and woman against the authority of the all-powerful Russian régime. You will find details for the various ceremonies carried on in the name of both

received help and guidance, I have also encountered opposition.

My post has brought me secret information—and curses like this one illustrated here which warns me not to enquire too deeply into the activities of one particular Midlands cult which I know to be dabbling in “black” magic. At the time of the notorious Stephen Ward case I also had experience of evil at work, for Ward was himself a dabbler in the occult and on his death there was a great deal of scurrying around among certain London practitioners to cover their traces in case the subsequent enquiries should lead to their doors.

In direct contrast to this, however, I have received great courtesy and kindness from many witches who, guaranteed anonymity, have talked freely and given me new insight into their craft. I hope in reporting them I have remained impartial enough so as not to make up the reader’s mind for him and left him free to decide for himself based on the facts which are assembled.

If, in conclusion, I ask myself if I have learned anything new, I probably have to say no—only variations on old themes. For the very fact that explanations of Witchcraft and Black Magic are still needed today when they have been practised, little changed, for hundreds of years, only demonstrates that humanity still retains its fear of the dark, its unease where anything not quite part of the norm is concerned. And whether this is ever likely to change I am not prepared or willing to hazard a guess!

A few months back, when finishing up my research for this book in America, an item appeared in a daily newspaper written by one of New York’s most influential and widely-read columnists, Earl Wilson, which asked pointedly of the reader: “Would you believe there’s a coven of witches in Wall Street who have used their alleged powers

to prevent some conglomerate acquisitions and also influenced some proxy fights?"

After reading this book, I hope you can answer that, and any other similar question, with an open-minded and forthright: "Not any longer!"

Peter Haining,
London, January 1972.

WITCHCRAFT IN BRITAIN

"Ours is a cult of love, pleasure and excitement. Fine but primitive things happen which would doubtless disturb a Puritan."

GERALD GARDNER,
Witchmaster.

The general upsurge of interest in the occult, and in witchcraft in particular, in recent years, instanced by the frequency of newspaper reports on the subject, the burgeoning sales of periodicals and books devoted to the supernatural, its use as the theme of films and television plays, owes its origins in a nutshell to a romantic movement best defined by the poet W. B. Yeats as "the revolt of soul against intellect". By this definition he meant those people who had experienced increasing disillusionment with the materialistic world in which they found themselves and sought an older and purer form of satisfaction in the principles of good and evil. Their search was one for the ancient practices of man when the mind was less inhibited, when the dark still held an aura of mystery and the inexplicable was not dismissed by bland rationality; when man found the root of his beliefs in the seasons around him, and the changes in his world were the direct cause of superior spirits who required worship and understanding. It was this urge, perhaps felt to be childish by some, that brought not only the re-establishment of the occult as a subject worthy of study but also the emergence of numerous distinguished practitioners and adepts whose work was to shape modern supernatural thinking. Of those people, several are still household names:

Eliphas Levi, the French Magi and scholar, Madame Helena Blavatsky, the American astrologer and founder of Theosophy, S. L. MacGregor Mathers, the learned magician and creator of the most famous of all English Secret societies, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Aleister Crowley, the grandiose "Great Beast" whose showmanship and excesses disguised a very real knowledge and skill in the art of magic, both black and white; and Gerald Gardner, witch extraordinary and perhaps the single most important man as far as this book is concerned. These people, collectively and individually, contributed to Yeats' "revolt of the soul" and in so doing established the climate of thinking and experimentation which all who study the "Secret Arts" now enjoy. Without them and their work, we might still (heaven help us!) have a climate of opinion like that of the Middle Ages when everything not readily measured by the yardstick of authority was persecuted with savagery and considered with suspicion, bigotry and—yes—even real fear. Take this as an extreme point if you will—but do not forget too readily that the practice of Witchcraft for instance was still a punishable offence on the Statute Books of England until 1951. In certain areas of the world death remains the punishment meted out to those who "deal with devils"—and that is a definition, few would disagree, which can be interpreted as loosely as any authority may choose.

Despite this sudden interest in witchcraft, the practice has actually existed longer than Christianity and was simply called "The Old Religion". Indeed one can trace certain elements of the craft (such as the fertility rites and devotions to the elements) as far back as Neolithic Man. Its modern title of witchcraft is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word *Wicca*, meaning the "wise one" or "magician who weakens the power of evil". In the craft a single supreme deity is recognised, the Mother-Goddess who has a variety of names but is usually referred to by modern practitioners

as the "Guardian of the Witches". The deity is usually represented as having three faces: the Maid, the Mother and the Wise Ancient—in other words the New Moon, Full Moon and the Waxing and Waning Moon. There is also a Male God in the form of a horned figure derived from the fact that the practitioners of old were hunters and depended on beasts for their food and their existence. It was this figure, in fact, which led the craft into its conflict with the church, for the clergy of the Middle Ages saw it clearly as a symbol of the Devil. Today's sincere practitioners of witchcraft (as against the sensation-seekers and cranks) regard themselves as followers of a "traditional" or "old" religion even if they have adapted and modified some of its basic tenets.

What, though, is a witch? During the years which I have been investigating the craft and its mysterious and dangerous companion, Black Magic (which we shall define later) I have received a variety of definitions depending on what point of view or depth of involvement have been admitted by the propounder. Perhaps the best has come from a practitioner living in my own home county, Essex (the English "Witch County" of legend) who told me simply, "Witchcraft is the art of producing results in a way that at first seems unnatural, for the witch has knowledge of how to deal with sickness and health, the past and the future."

It is a common mistake to suppose that there must be something odd, something unusual, about witches and that they are immediately recognisable in modern society. The reverse, in fact, is true and whereas in the past the practitioner was invariably depicted as some wizened and aged crone, today's members are ordinary men and women with whom we rub shoulders day in and day out. In my early days of enquiry into the craft it came as nothing less than a considerable surprise to discover that a man and woman who were leading lights in numerous activities such as social evenings, dances, drama and even church festivities,

were also the priest and priestess of the local coven! Their sincerity and the very obvious fact that they were not sensation-seekers or perverts gave me an understanding of the practice which might otherwise have been tinged by hereditary prejudice for many years. Others of the faith that I have met have come from a variety of backgrounds and occupations: housewives, bank clerks, students, teachers, professional men and several directors and senior company officials. Some of these people have what the witches call a natural psychic ability while others join for personal fulfilment if not actual achievement. There are also a dwindling number of "hereditary" witches, men and women whose parents had the ability to heal and conjure the natural forces and who, in the main, worked on their own in the timeless fashion of the old rural "wise" man or woman.

The joining of a coven of witches is by no means the complicated business it once used to be. Quite a few witches are now more than willing to disclose their beliefs to others who are sincerely interested (and I separate these people from those practitioners who have become dubbed "publicity witches" and are willing—to use the phrase of a journalist friend of mine—"to drop their clothes and perform a ritual for the photographers at the rustle of the first £5 note"). They will arrange for the sincere seeker to be put in touch with a group, perhaps their own, and instructed in the procedures of admission. Some covens wisely "vet" all applicants with great care to avoid the "kinky" and the casually interested, while others are ready to admit anyone and must have suspect motives. Initiation is achieved by a special ceremony to which we shall return later and introduces the new recruit to the predilection of many witches for conducting their rites in the nude.

The topic of nudity in witchcraft is one much discussed in the newspapers and on television and indeed leads to a great many sensational and unfounded charges of orgies

and perversions indulged in by the witches. The truth of the matter is that the witches believe this state allows them greater freedom of movement and that clothes prevent the "flow" of emanations from the body which are required in certain rituals. Nudity is also a great leveller and makes the witches, whatever their station in everyday life, one and the same in their ceremonies. This state of undress is purely at the option of the witches and indeed those meeting in the depth of winter tend to prefer to be lightly dressed, even if the garment is only a shift or flowing robe which can be easily discarded. (In one of the magazines serving the followers of the occult I noticed recently an enterprising advertiser was offering "track suits for witch covens" and encouraging coven leaders to purchase these "useful items for winter meetings" by the dozen and thereby secure a handsome reduction in price!)

Each coven of witches (and the number of these in the British Isles has been variously estimated at between half a dozen to several dozen—one hundred and fifty is much nearer the truth in my estimation) is led by a High Priest and Priestess. In some groups the men play the dominant role—as in the case of Alex Sanders' framed London coven—and in others the women lead the rites—as Patricia Crowther does in her Sheffield coven. The number of witches in each group is traditionally said to be thirteen, but in recent times this figure has come in for a great deal of variation and can differ from three or four people to as many as two dozen. (It should be noted, however, that if the witches are planning a special ceremony to cast a spell or perform a ritual, there will almost certainly be just thirteen present including the High Priest—or Priestess—and his or her assistant.)

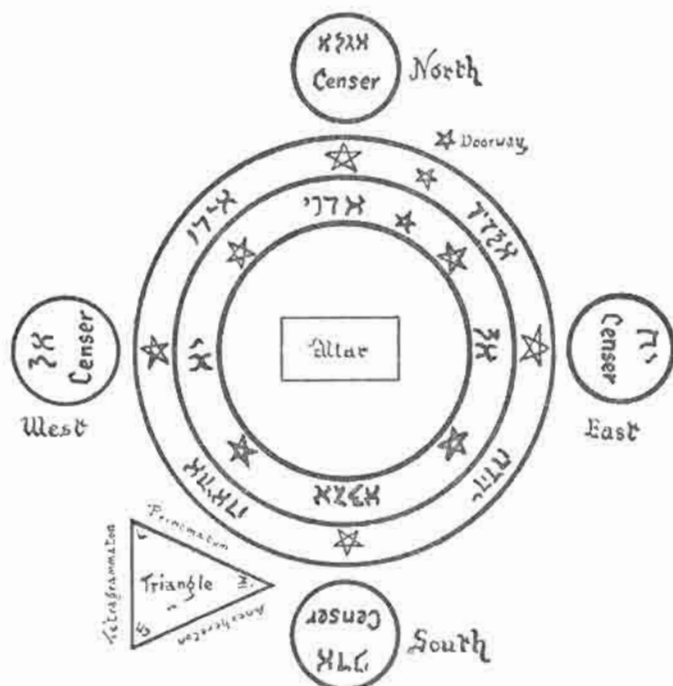
Meetings and special ceremonies can be conducted either indoors or out, though it is my experience that for the most part they take place in private houses to avoid possible dis-

covery or observation by outsiders. Throughout the country there is many a private house no different from its neighbours externally, yet containing inside a room specially redesigned for witchcraft rites. The Magic or "Grand" Circle (illustrated here) can either be drawn in chalk on the floorboards or made from white tape pinned on to a dark, plain carpet. Placed inside this is the altar, on which rest the "witch tools"—the *Athame* (a ceremonial dagger), the sword and white hilted knife (all illustrated), chalice, scourge, censer and candles. Beside the altar stands a small lectern on which is placed the witches' "Bible", the "Book of Shadows", which contains the instructions for the various rites. This work is invariably hand-written and has been laboriously copied from an earlier volume made available to the coven's leader after his or her initiation as a High Priest. Sometimes this may be accompanied by a cauldron which symbolises the ancient nature of the cult. (In some groups an upturned cauldron serves as the actual altar.)

The basic ceremonial is very simple and begins with a blessing of the assembled group (the witches traditional greeting to each other, incidentally, is "Blessed Be"), and then a quiet "love feast" at which wine is drunk and small cakes eaten. (This is the part of the rites which usually give rise to accusations of drunkenness and debauchery.) Next follows dancing around the circle under the direction of the High Priest or Priestess. Witches dance with their backs to the altar, holding hands and moving in an anti-clockwise direction. This is believed to raise the power necessary to perform healing or grant good fortune. After this the initiation of new members, who are brought into the circle blindfolded and with their wrists tied, to be "ritually released" into the cult, takes place. To conclude, future plans may be discussed and other meetings arranged.

Of course, no writer on witchcraft would pretend that all witches conduct themselves in such an orderly fashion

and that in the highly charged and sticky atmosphere of a closed room in the presence of aroused, naked bodies sexual activity does not occasionally result. Or indeed that some

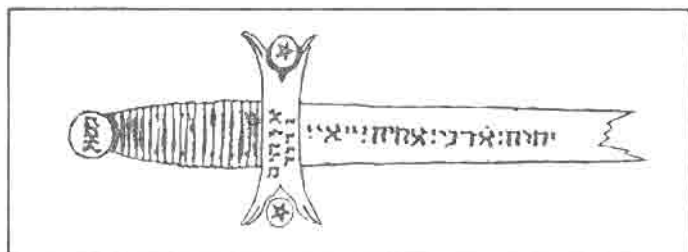


The Magic or "Grand" Circle of Witchcraft

covens are not simply dedicated to just this end. But it is my experience that the majority of witches do have a serious belief in their religion and are not merely using it as a release for their sexual tensions and pleasures. The "life force" is certainly part of their worship, but as one long-standing witch put it to me, "If all we wanted was sex why on earth should we go through all this ceremonial to achieve it?"

Another aspect of witchcraft which is made great play of in the medium of communication is the blood sacrifice.

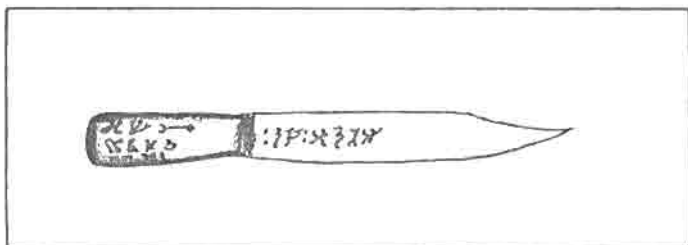
Horrifying stories are on record of witches slaughtering and butchering the bodies of small animals at their ceremonies and then leaving these to be discovered by some outraged member of the public the following day. Most of these reports should be rightly disregarded as the fantasies of bigoted opponents of the cult, but blood does play a part in



"THE SWORD"



"THE ATHAME"



WHITE HILTED KNIFE
The Instruments of Ritual Magic

witchcraft and the occasional sacrifice of a chicken is not unknown to me. Blood is held by the witches to represent "life" and therefore of value in the working of some spell. It is not unknown for witches to use their own blood—a small cut having been inflicted with the dagger—during a ritual. However, it is more usual for the witches to offer flowers or fruit and drink milk or wine than utilise blood.

As far as the witches are concerned the most important item in their equipment is the symbol of the five-pointed star, the pentagram, which is equivalent in Christianity terms to the crucifix. It represents the figure of man although some covens refer to it as the "witches foot". (The same symbol when reverted becomes the token of Black Magic, representing the pointed face and horns of the devil.) The pentagram is normally embroidered on a witch's robe and always much in evidence at the major celebrations of the cult.

In the public mind there is probably no other date more closely associated with witchcraft than Hallowe'en. Termed *Samhain* in witch language, this festival is traditionally held to be the night of great orgies when the witches met on mountain tops from Sweden to Italy, from Ireland to the wastes of Russia and had concourse with devils and fiends. In fact, the celebration marks the start of the Witch "year" and whereas at other times the covens would meet singly, on this night groups from wide areas would all converge on one spot for a united celebration. Today these events still continue and *Samhain* has great significance to the faithful.

There are three other dates marked with similar ceremony by the cult: *Candlemas* (February 2nd) which acknowledges the importance of women in witchcraft; *May Eve* (sometimes referred to as *Beltain*) which celebrates the union of men and women and usually contains a ritual marriage when a young man and woman "jump over a broomstick" in the craft's time-honoured way; and *Lammas*

the autumn festival which offers thanks for a fruitful harvest and continued fertility among man, the animals and all nature. Midsummer's Day is also marked by many covens with special open-air rituals while December 31st will be observed in some snug and warmly heated room! At these meetings the witches will not only pledge their support to the cult but also each other with the exchanging of rings and small items of jewellery.

Despite certain statements to the contrary, it is possible for witches of different covens to recognise each other—usually by the kind of jewellery (often copper or silver) which they are wearing and the manner in which it is displayed. For centuries, of course, popular superstition has had it that each witch has a "mark" on his or her body given by the devil at their initiation. This was a pure invention of the persecutors of witchcraft and almost without exception we can safely assume that the "Witch Marks" were nothing more than moles, warts or other similar small bodily imperfections. On joining a modern cult the new witch is given a special name for use within the group and these are in the main names of very ancient origin such as Olweg, Artemis, Lady Diana and so on. He or she may in time also be entrusted with the special "witch words" which have their origin in certain very old dialects and are used to describe the innermost secrets of the cult. These words, should they be overheard by a stranger, may well sound like a foreign language and have been particularly made so, to avoid exciting any undue curiosity.

Witches also identify themselves in letters to each other by small symbols. I have seen a claim advanced in print that some members of the cult are now signing off correspondence with the phrase "and may the three 'f's' be yours." This is said to be short for "flags, flax and fodder"—a hearth (home), linen (clothes) and food. The passing on from coven to coven of spells and secret formulae is also

entrusted to secret codes and phrases such as this, although it is my experience that because of the antiquity of much of this material and the archaic language in which it is couched only the most determined inquisitor is likely to try and understand it. Some of the spells are in verse and to make them work effectively they need to be spoken by a group, both separately and in unison, in a way only the initiated can reproduce. Despite all this seemingly well-devised camouflage, the witches are rarely careless about allowing outsiders to see their secret manuscripts as they firmly believe that the power to "spell" (or curse) is within the grasp of any suitably inclined man or woman.

To try and accurately define the nature of this power is virtually impossible—certainly there are no scientific explanations which can be applied. Perhaps, though, the recent enquiries into Extra Sensory Perception (ESP) may give us a better understanding of the uncanny ability of the witches to "see" the future and become "tuned in" to certain waves floating around in the etheric—in much the same way as a radio picks up broadcasts. This gift enables them to receive messages and warnings put out unconsciously by others and thus effect a change in the futures of others. The witches themselves are quick to point out that a latent ability has to exist in somebody before they can draw it out. It is not possible for them, for instance, to make somebody a top footballer or star entertainer unless that person has the inherent qualities. What they do is use their facility for instilling confidence and determination to make a person make his "wish" come true *himself*. Some opponents of the cult have suggested that the phrase "turned on" should be applied to today's witches in the drug sense rather than the metaphysical one, as many of them indulge a taste for LSD and other "soft" drugs at their meetings. This is not a statement I can support with much evidence, although it would be foolish to rule out completely the likelihood that some

witches have (and may well still do) take drugs. According to my experience certain strong incenses and narcotics are burned at witch meetings and these—linked with the lively dancing and chanting—almost certainly induce a “high” or psychic awareness. I have seen it suggested, too, that another manifestation of witchcraft is the “elementals”, entities primarily of energy rather than visible form, which practitioners can raise at will. These must be just as elusive as poltergeists and while I dislike dismissing any area of the occult without thorough personal enquiry, I find these “creatures” about as credible as the so-called “familiars”, the possession of which condemned so many thousands of unfortunate old men and women to death during the witch purges. *They* were invariably small animals or pets and I think a similar explanation could be found for most of the stories of “elementals”.

Up to this point we have been referring to witch “magic” as being practised by groups, but it is true to say that it can also be performed by a single devotee. Although it is usual for a witch to have his or her own temple for this work, magic can be performed virtually anywhere as long as the requisite tools and tranquil atmosphere are available. Many of the studies of witchcraft which have been written over the past hundred years or so stress the length and complexity of a good deal of witch magic, but they are, in fact, only repeating the extraneous material included in the instructions to confuse the outsider. The true practitioner versed in the arts, knows exactly what is required and, more important, how to prepare himself and, in particular, his state of mind to carry the act through to success. As much witch magic consists of “willing” action at some point perhaps distant from the magician, the importance of this attitude of mind can easily be understood. Witches claim they can sense if a spell is working, or if the power they are attempting to raise is developing, by a “tingling” sensation not un-

like a stream of cold water running through the bones. This sensation can increase to become a roaring in the mind which gives the impression of floating—or die away to a mere prickling of the nerve ends in the toes or fingers. When this phenomenon has manifested itself, the witches say they have “raised a cone of power” which can then be “sent off” to perform the required task. Not surprisingly, the magicians say they experience considerable palpitation and loss of breath after such a performance. Of course, it is only fair to say that there are people with the ability to carry out such magic who are not witches and have no connection with witchcraft. Today’s witches do not make an exclusive claim to ritual magic although they are always more than anxious to recruit those with psychic abilities to their ranks.

“Sex magic” figures prominently in the history of witchcraft and the renowned poet and student of the occult, Robert Graves has given careful attention to it in his work. He has reported, and indeed the witches have agreed with his conclusions, that the sex act has been held traditionally to “raise great power” and can form the natural conclusion to a ritual designed to conjure up strong emanations. The union of the man and woman, however, must be preceded by their working most closely together in the earlier stages of the ritual, the sex act providing a climax of determination. Despite sensational reports in the national press to the contrary, today’s witches do observe contemporary standards of morality (many, indeed, are social workers and practising Christians, a strange *volte face* at first sight, but not on deeper examination of witch motives) and intercourse between partners who are not married or at least closely involved emotionally, is not encouraged. Robert Graves sees the union as the creation of a “whole person”, male and female, and the linking of minds seeking the great desires of mankind since earliest times—procreation and sustenance. The witches also actively encourage great sex-

ual harmony among their members to ensure a happy home life and the eventual introduction of any children to the cult. Children below the age of fifteen or sixteen are not normally allowed into the covens and instances where boys or girls below this age have been brought to meetings have usually caused annoyance and distress to the older practitioners. The witches strongly resist suggestions that they force their offspring into the cult or that they encourage promiscuity by proposing a religion that practises nudity and sex magic. As one witch put it to me, "It is a preposterous allegation. There is no more reason for our children to 'go off the rails' than those of any other parents. Indeed we believe it has a more balancing effect on a child to see his parents in the nude and obviously adoring each other than making something furtive and behind-closed-doors out of their love. Witchcraft propounds love to all and we have a saying which beautifully summarises what I mean, 'Evil be to him that evil thinks'."

Perhaps the question most frequently posed to the cult in today's materialistic society is, simply: what do the witches hope to gain from it all? The answer would certainly contain a little of the elements we have discussed, but probably uppermost of all would be the promise of reincarnation. For it is a basic teaching and belief of the old religion that everyone can return to this life after their "death" in a new form and thereby continue the "journey" in eternity "learning ever more as we progress". The old phrase, "Once a witch, always a witch" evolved from this tenet and the practitioners believe that it is possible for them to return at the same time as their loved ones and, should they die first, make contact with those close to the survivors, through what I can best describe as "supernatural" means. Whether the reader is prepared to accept the concept of reincarnation I can only leave to his judgement, and thereby form his own conclusions about the goal of witchcraft.

If reincarnation is the highest achievement the witches seek after death, what absorbs them in life? In a word: magic. And by this they mean not only the successful performance of rituals and spells, but also the filling of one's life with magic. "The earth is full of magic", one witch told me, "magic is a result of loving each other. It causes the plants to grow, the birds and animals to flourish and gives man the will to live and prosper. To lose the magic in one's existence is to be dead in life, to see and feel and act, but without purpose." To some that whole feeling may be summarised not by the word "magic" but by "nature".

With a general picture in our minds of the main beliefs and practises of today's witches, we can next examine the extraordinary revival that their craft has undergone and the people responsible for it.

The resurgence of witchcraft in Britain has in fact only taken place in the twenty-five years or so since the end of World War II. Before that it had been hidden away for centuries, practised by only a few devotees, and thought by most people to be defunct. There was good reason, too, for thinking so . . .

The last execution of a witch in Britain took place at Exeter in 1684; the victim being an unfortunate old woman called Alice Molland who was convicted and sentenced to death for supposed "dealing with ye Devile". She had been put to death by hanging, the form of capital punishment specially reserved for witches. (Females who committed either treason or heresy were burned.)

Alice was not the last witch to be hauled up before the justices, however. Trials of suspected practitioners continued until as late as 1711, although during the later years, those found guilty were only sent to prison or the pillory.

Public feeling did, nevertheless, begin to turn against the inhumanity of the witch trials and finally reached the ears of

Parliament. In 1735 the Witchcraft Act was tabled and passed, decreeing that witchcraft was no longer a statutory or ecclesiastical offence. Although this brought to a close a black period in England's history when any harmless old scold could be accused of being a witch and have her life cut short on the gallows, it could not wipe out the fact that in the previous seventy years witches had been hanged in the country at the rate of twenty-three every year.

Many people tried to push from their minds the thought that there had ever been such a thing as witchcraft—and, indeed, developed an attitude of studied sophistication which refused to accept that it could ever develop again. The authorities were inclined to take this view, too, and so witchcraft—the real witchcraft which venerated the Goddess of Fertility—was left to its own devices.

The last statute about Witchcraft was finally removed from the law books in 1951 by the authorities who now felt it was inappropriate to have "such an absurd superstition" still as the subject of legislation. The occasional reports of witchcraft again being practised which did come to the ears of the police were summarily dismissed by them with the comment that the authorities were "no longer interested" in the cult so long as its ceremonies or rites did not step outside the law.

It was not surprising, therefore, that when it finally became patently obvious in the early 1950's that the old cult of *Wicca* was on the upsurge again, newspapers, scholars and supposed authorities were quick to rush into print with statements about "devil worship" on the rampage and the practising of obscene rituals in the name of witchcraft. Once again it seemed, blind prejudice was abroad in the land. To survive, the craft obviously needed a champion to enlighten the public about the real nature of its beliefs and tenets.

It found just the man in Dr. Gerald Brosseau Gardner. A frail, bearded, one-time rubber planter and customs offi-

cer, Dr. Gardner was in fact the man mainly responsible for the practical side of this revival. For some ten years he had secretly practised the "old religion" as he called it, gathering around himself an *élite* group of men and women hand-picked to follow in his footsteps. He had striven especially to uncover the ancient secrets of *Wicca*, and few could deny that he was a master of the craft. His pupils were not slow to give their support to his claims either.

In his childhood, Gerald Gardner had travelled extensively around the world seeking a cure for the asthma which blighted his life. It was in Africa—and later India—that he came into contact with the power of witchcraft, both black and white, and formed an interest in the subject which was to last all his life. A well-educated man (he possessed degrees in philosophy and literature) Dr. Gardner pitted his intelligence against all the claims of witchcraft . . . and emerged from his enquiries firmly convinced of both the power and the good of the ancient cult.

After working for a while as a rubber planter in Malaya, he changed his job and moved to Singapore where he became a customs officer. In his spare time he continued to press on with his research into the occult, and then in 1939, on a rare visit to England, he was put in touch with one of the very few covens of witches in the country at that time—in Hampshire. His immediate reaction, he admitted later, was not to get involved but the witches convinced him that destiny had brought him to them.

In that same year, Dr. Gerald Gardner became an initiated witch, thereby unknowingly setting into motion the chain of events which led to today's revival.

This small man with haunting eyes found little difficulty in understanding and appreciating the secrets of witchcraft. By the late 1940s his name was familiar to most British witches and he had assumed a position of authority which no one questioned. (He had, as a matter of interest, been

instrumental during the days when the Nazi invasion of Britain was imminent, in arranging meetings of witches in the New Forest to "send" the idea to the minds of the German High Command that any plans to land in this country were doomed to failure.) He settled at Castletown on the Isle of Man, finding there the right kind of atmosphere in which to realise his biggest ambition—the promotion of witchcraft as a serious religion. He bought an old mill on the outskirts of the town, renovated and renamed it "Witch Mill". There he amassed a huge collection of witch paraphernalia, including cauldrons, broomsticks, witch "tools", the apparatus of the ceremonial rituals, bones, charms, instruments of torture from the great witch purges of the past and all manner of other items. This museum was soon drawing hundreds of visitors. At first people came mainly to scoff, a few to puzzle, but even fewer to try and understand. However, Dr. Gardner was a man of dedication and remained unruffled by the scorn, continuing to write and lecture to all who would pay attention.

Then, when the public outcry through the press and so-called experts about "this evil witchcraft" arose, it was Dr. Gardner who made himself available to explain the intricacies of the craft and its nude rituals in particular—for it was this facet of the cult, coupled with its heritage of superstition and suspicion, that provided the real reasons for the attacks. Because of his stand, Dr. Gardner was the subject of several sensational exposure stories and certainly his enemies made great play of his confessed liking for flagellation in the rites. But gradually a certain amount of public acceptance began to develop, aided particularly by the rapidly developing "Permissive Society" of the late fifties. The witches found themselves able to continue their work again without the constant fear of interruption by curious outsiders or prowling press photographers. (Nowadays these gentlemen of the press are often actually welcomed,

for some of the witches have come to realise that permission to photograph them can be compensated by a fairly hefty fee!)

Whatever, in hindsight, we may feel about Dr. Gardner's little eccentricities which really had no place in the cult, his rôle as the major figure in the revival was undeniable. His beliefs were sincerely held; his contribution to the craft in terms of the rituals and ceremonies he re-formulated for modern times, and his writings for general readers, are of the first importance. (His book, *Witchcraft Today*, for instance, is rightly regarded as one of the most important and authoritative works on the cult and certainly required reading for anyone seriously interested in the subject.)

In February, 1964, having reached the venerable age of eighty, Dr. Gardner died while at sea, returning from a winter holiday in the Lebanon. He died seemingly well-pleased with his work; the witch covens had multiplied a hundred-fold during his years of "leadership" and the public were showing more sympathy for the religion than at any other time in history. Perhaps even as he died, he uttered a simple prayer of thanks to the ancient gods he revered.

In Great Britain his death came as a considerable shock. Several of the covens even got together and took the unprecedented step of issuing a statement to the Press expressing their grief at Dr. Gardner's passing. To them it was also a great tragedy that he took to the grave a number of the secrets he had so painstakingly uncovered during his lifetime.

Soon after his funeral his will revealed that witchcraft had helped him accumulate a considerable fortune. The bulk of his £25,000 estate and "all my equipment for making magic" he left to one of his protégées, the High Priestess of the Scottish covens, Mrs. Monique Wilson of Perth. Some £3,000 was allotted to another witch, Mrs. Patricia Crowther of Sheffield.

Big money, people thought, for a man who seemed to be just a dabbler in old, pagan practices. What they didn't realise, and probably still don't, was that Dr. Gardner's wealth illustrated the biggest change of all in twentieth-century witchcraft. It had become, financially speaking, something of a gold mine. For strange as it may seem—and there is so much that is stranger than fiction about witchcraft—the cult now supports an industry which nets thousands of pounds a year, perhaps more.

Several hundred people in this country are now earning their living making equipment and materials for witches. They are certainly not all aware of this, as quite a few of the items they produce do not usually go to witches. In actual fact, the range of goods manufactured for the devotees extends from "holy" vessels and occult symbols on the one hand, to ready-made potions for spells on the other. Much of the equipment bought by the witches comes from addresses passed around the covens; while some of it is supplied by members setting themselves up as "wholesalers". Quite a considerable percentage, however, is advertised in the columns of the dozen small magazines and roneoed newsletters which circulate amongst those interested in the occult. One or two of these publications are on sale to the general public as well.

Take these few examples chosen at random from the dozens of advertisements which I have collected over the last few years:

WITCHCRAFT—Ritual equipment, including altar, robes and tools available on best terms. Bulk supplies also.

COVENS. New groups offered all supplies at H.P. terms.

Replies in confidence to Box . . .

MYSTIC INCENSE. This fine, slow burning incense powder is especially blended for the development of your highest witch powers. 50p. a canister.

GENUINE and Rare Occult Supplies. Lists free. Photos 30p. (refundable).

ROBES. Diaphanous shifts and silk embroidered robes available to your specification. Speedy delivery.

MOON MAGIC Beauty Balm. The secret way to beautiful skin. Secretly made for you "where two streams meet" from genuine old Magick* formula. In plain wrapper 60p.

DRAGONS BLOOD. Ideal for all magic ceremonies and will ensure you power. 25p. per packet.

There are details, too, about "best quality" bat's blood, "finely ground, high quality" rhinoceros horn, and "carefully bottled" deadly nightshade—all guaranteed to "make your magical workings more successful".

Perhaps, though, the printed word is the most profitable line of all. Pirate versions of the famous *Book of Shadows*—printed in America—are offered at a "bargain price", as is the *Book of Forbidden Knowledge* which purports to contain secret formulae "as practised by the ancient wise men". But the really big money is secured for titles like *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*, *The Gospel of the Witches* and *The Ancient's Book of Magic*. All these sell—and sell well—at over £5 each.

Possibly the most unusual "literary work" available to the curious is *Witchcraft* a duplicated, profusely illustrated booklet produced by Dumblecott Magick Productions of Charlwood, Surrey. It treats the subject of witchcraft quite light-heartedly and proclaims its policy as "Magick with a smile". Edited by "Dr. Othney Rib"—described as "one of the most extraordinary witches of England"—the publication debunks some of the witches' spells in one article and reveals in another that the secret of the "Magic Wand of the

* It is not unusual to find Magic spelt with this extra "k" in modern witchcraft literature, but it has been known since early times.

wishans" has been discovered and can now be obtained from the publishers—although "it should only be used by the true devotee".

The same publishers have also produced *Witch* a work claimed to be the "secrets of Modern Witchcraft revealed". The book, subtitled glowingly "the complete witchcraft rituals as taught and practised by Gerald Brosseau Gardner", is by Rex Nemorensis, a practising witch who lives in Surrey.

Going hand in glove with "bargains" such as these are other ads which represent to me a most amazing trend in witchcraft today. For they imply—and imply with considerable emphasis—that the rapidly expanding witch covens are now actually touting for new members!

Such a development would have been completely out of the question a few years back. Magazines, even the most "way-out" and adventurous, would not have considered opening their columns for appeals from or for witches. Now, however, the recruiting campaign is being carried out both in small publications and journals with national circulations and readerships running into many thousands. There is no attempt to conceal the purposes of the advertisers, either. They are direct and to the point:

WITCHCRAFT. Ceremonial Magick. London Occultists invite sincere seekers to join activities. Either sex. Confidence respected.

WICCA. Dianic, Aradian Society, Cardiff; enquiries welcomed. Box Number . . .

WICCA PERTSHIRE CIRCLE welcomes sincere seekers. Fullest details. Confidence respected . . .

And let me assure you that these are quite genuine. I have written to several of the "advertisers" myself—and although not all replied (some, I suspect, sensed that my

purpose was not that of a person seeking initiation), those that did wrote from bona fide addresses and were not opposed to discussing the matter further in person.

If I had been an ordinary member of the public and tempted to take up the offers—yet wanted to know a little bit more about what I was involving myself in first—I might have been inclined to sample the very latest “bargain” on the market—a correspondence course in Witchcraft! The advertisement reads:

BREAKTHROUGH IN THE NEW CONCEPTION! Witchcraft . . . invaluable new correspondence course available to approved applicants. Be first! Write for literature today, Box . . .

No doubt items like these have begun to strain the general public's credulity about witchcraft, but they did serve a very useful purpose as far as I was concerned during my enquiries for they provided an entry to several of the most important practitioners of the arts. Some of them were quite happy to discuss their beliefs openly and allow their names to be used while others wanted the promise of anonymity before they would say anything. A third group refused to talk at all, undoubtedly suspected my motives, thought I was another sensation-seeking writer and even passed messages to a number of covens to beware of me. One letter I was shown by a friendly witch which had emanated from this group, finished with the witch phrase “Love to Puck” which means, simply, “This Man is Dangerous”.

Of those who will discuss their faith, Cecil Williamson is perhaps the most important. Today Williamson runs “The Witches' House” in Bocastle, a tiny, picturesque hamlet in Cornwall, but for years he was the chief associate and friend of Gerald Gardner. He has never caught the limelight and during the lifetime of his Master he was practically un-

known outside his own coven. Now his importance as a spokesman and leading practitioner—particularly in the art of “hexing”—is undoubted. Perhaps his greatest assets are his education—he graduated from Malvern College—and his erudite and intelligent approach to all questions about witchcraft. This, combined with worldliness (he has, for instance, worked in films, been a tobacco grower in Rhodesia and during World War II was in the British Intelligence Service) make him a formidable figure in modern occult circles.

“The Witches’ House” which is the result of twenty-five years of collecting items related to the ancient craft contains, among other things, records of witch trials (and the skeleton of one of the notorious Chelmsford witches complete with iron spikes) the magical equipment of several famous practitioners, a ducking stool, the ingredients for numerous powders and ointments (including “flying oil”) and some paintings by Aleister Crowley.

Centre-piece of the museum is the “Temple of the Horned God”. In this dark and dimly lit place, a stuffed, white-robed goat is seated in a carved chair before a large painting of a witches’ Sabbath. There are candles set in ritual arrangement around a magic circle on the floor. A human skull rests on a pedestal; the symbol of the Rose and the Cross dominates one wall.

Cecil Williamson always makes a great point of discussing the dangers of Black Magic and indeed was one of the first people in recent years to become aware of how the practitioners of the Black Arts were recruiting new members from the fringes of *Wicca*.

“A lot of people don’t believe me,” he says, “but Black Magic is big business today and I have found that it is run by a kind of occult Mafia. At the time that the Witchcraft Act was repealed in 1951 I undertook a survey for a group of Members of Parliament and found that some serious

black magicians had got themselves organised at a witches' convention held on the Isle of Man. Using the genuine practitioners as a 'front' which would attract no more than slight amusement, they got on with the business of setting up the practice of Black Magic for profit and perversion."

Turning to his own fellow witches, he dismisses the "play-girl" witches who undress for television and suburban orgies. "The true practitioners are secretive and hard to find. It's useless to look around for one if you are in trouble and need her services. The whole principle is that you don't ring them. They ring you."

After Williamson, three women rank next in importance and while he may not always applaud their forthrightness in discussing the cult with outsiders he can little doubt their faith. The three are Eleanor Bone, a quietly-spoken, handsome woman who lives in London, Patricia Crowther, a beautiful, blonde Sheffield dancer, and Monique Wilson, heir to Gerald Gardner's estate and for some years the most important witch in Scotland.

Eleanor Bone has probably done as much for witchcraft in gaining public acceptance as anyone. Much quoted by the press and always prepared to discuss the subject with the curious enquirer she lives the life of a typical suburban housewife in the London dormitory town of Tooting. Her beliefs she keeps separate from her day-to-day life and she admits that despite her efforts, her husband does not join in the *Wicca* ceremonies. At these gatherings she takes the witch name of Artemis, one of the mother goddesses.

It was a spate of highly sensational and defamatory stories in the early 1960s that caused Mrs. Bone to emerge from obscurity in the role of "coven liaison officer", since then she had commented frequently—and more recently with great vigour—on various developments within the cult, including the controversial claim advanced by one woman in 1964 to be "Queen of the Witches"—a claim which Mrs.

Bone roundly denounced. "There is no such title as 'Queen'", she said, "but even if there were, we other witches would have to approve the person appointed." (My enquiries have since shown that the person who advanced this claim was Monique Wilson, whom we shall discuss in a minute; she based her claim on her inheritance of Gerald Gardner's "mantle". Today, she no longer presses the point, but still maintains she has a position of pre-eminence in the cult.)

Mrs. Bone is considered something of an expert on witch "curses" but strongly refutes claims that either she, her group or indeed any witch she knows, use this power for evil. "The use of wax images in witchcraft has virtually died out and if anyone is being spelled today it is much more likely to be a chanted spell performed at a ritual ceremony. The wax images and sheep's hearts pierced with thorns which have been found in churches or on holy ground have nothing to do with witchcraft and are either the work of some mentally deranged person who has got hold of the old witchcraft legends or a practitioner of Black Magic out to scare people."

During the average week Mrs. Bone receives a fairly substantial post from people all over Britain (and indeed some mail from Europe) asking for information on witchcraft. She endeavours to answer all these with a serious intent. Her post, however, is small in comparison to that of Patricia Crowther who, as an entertainer is a well-known and familiar face.

Mrs. Crowther is living evidence to refute the often-made allegation that all witches are aged, wrinkled crones venting a lifetime of frustration on the unsuspecting public. She is tall and willowy with a cascade of blonde hair and a totally engaging smile. She controls several of the most active covens in the North of England and has put her own personal stamp on their activities by introducing the use of

garters of green leather and blue silk during the rites. Her own garter is decorated with silver buckles, each representing a coven to whom she is High Priestess.

As the second heir to Gerald Gardner's estate, she likewise has considerable authority in modern witchcraft and, as I intimated, receives a great deal of correspondence from the curious, the suspicious and—as you will read in her specially prepared statement which follows—the avaricious, too.

"When I appear on television or in a show, I invariably receive a great flood of letters," Mrs. Crowther writes. "The majority of writers want me to give away all the secrets of witchcraft or help them win the football pools or get money some other way for their own selfish ends.

"One woman from Leeds, for example, had been driven out of her native town of Vienna by the Nazis, and wanted to get back there. I felt this was a deserving case and my coven worked hard for this end. A few weeks later, I received a letter from Vienna. It was from the same woman, thanking the witches for helping her to get home and asking me to make her win the state lottery. Some people are never satisfied!

"Another man asked me to send him a lucky charm made of ivory or gold, and later in the letter suggested that I send two, in case he lost one of them. There was no mention of payment for them. As I have no gold or ivory to give away, I made him a talisman according to the ancient formula, and sent it to him. He never even wrote to thank me for the gift.

"A number of men write, saying they want to become witches and give a G.P.O. number as their address, as they don't want their wives to know that they have written to me, no doubt because their letters are rather suggestive.

"If they are looking for sex orgies in witchcraft they are

barking up the wrong tree, and would do better to join some strip club. Although they would have to pay for that!

"Then we have the people who are searching for some secret cult they can belong to, unknown to their friends. These letters are of the 'cloak and dagger' type, signed with some mysterious name or sign, like Anubis or W.13. These also use G.P.O. restante.

"I have a good many from church people who want to become witches to gain power, as long as it does not interfere with their church duties. They want to be sure that there is no publicity. Such hypocrisy surprises me.

"One minister asked for a book on witchcraft rites which he could try out. I wondered if he was looking for a new gimmick to fill his church as an alternative to Bingo!

"Another witch received a letter from a clergyman offering a guinea for a tape-recording of the secret rites. The witch's comment was 'Even Judas got thirty bob'.

"I have one letter from a minister who favours the witches and thinks it is high time one clergyman should speak up for them and state publicly that witchcraft is not evil. I hope that he gets this opportunity.

"We also get letters from people who are ill and all these we help to the best of our ability. Occasionally we get a reply saying that they have recovered and thanking us for our help, but they all seem too scared to state publicly that they have been helped by the witches.

"There are always some weird and funny letters among those I receive. Some people write several times but I am still unable to understand what it is all about. One said: 'Come at once, you are the only person who can help me.' That was all. There was no name or address. Another one, asking for help and with no address started, 'Dear Patricia Crowther' and in what I presume was an excited frame of mind, signed the letter with my name!

"Another woman said that her neighbours were practising Black Magic as she could hear drumming and dancing and knew frightful orgies were being carried on there. It finally turned out that she was living next door to a teenage jazz club.

"Another was sure that her neighbour had put a spell on her as she could never win at Bingo. If this is true, then I must have a lot of spells worked against me, as I have never won anything in my life!

"Another writer asked for 'Flying ointment' and wanted to know how I made myself invisible, as she saw me disappear on television during an interview which was, of course, done by clever camera work.

"In another programme, from Newcastle, the interviewer was turned into a rabbit by the same means.

"This seemed to prove to many people that I had the magic powers of a fairy-tale witch. I never knew until then, that so many people wanted to turn their mothers-in-law into frogs. It appears that many people still believe in the old sayings 'seeing is believing' and 'the camera cannot lie'.

"I am surprised how many people, today, still believe in love potions and how many young girls want their favourite singer to fall in love with them. People's desires are very strange and varied, as the following list shows. To have triplets, to gain power over others, to be able to hypnotise anyone they want to, and so on.

"These are just a few wishes that witches are expected to be able to grant. Yet the greatest desire of all is for money. Happiness and good health are right at the bottom of the list.

"I should also like to mention that I cannot supply bats' blood, rhinoceros horn, deadly nightshade, or do-it-yourself Black Magic kits. Neither can I put people in touch with vampires or werewolves, which they believe exist because they have seen them on the cinema screen. I, too, have seen

them on films, but know such people never existed in real life.

"Some ask why I admit to being a witch and worship the old pagan god and goddess. As this is a free country, one can worship whatever god one chooses. One is not ashamed of being a Christian, Buddhist, Jew or what have you, so why should I not be proud of being a witch?"

The third of the female witches I contacted, Mrs. Monique Wilson, held a position of importance in the Scottish covens until the death of Gerald Gardner when she found herself his primary heir and among other items inherited the Witches' Mill museum on the Isle of Man. This bequest has since been the topic of much bitter wrangling within certain factions of the cult.

A hereditary witch (both her mother and father had "the power"), Mrs. Wilson maintains that Gardner intended her to take over his position as witchcraft's leading practitioner in the British Isles—but this has been disputed by others of the clique that once surrounded the old man. Nonetheless she is supported in her claim by her husband Campbell who is also a practising witch, and the healthy following she enjoys both on the island and throughout England and Scotland. Mrs. Wilson's name as a witch is Lady Olwen. She is French-born and met her husband when he was stationed in Hong Kong after the war. They returned to Britain in 1954 and joined witchcraft through Dr. Gardner, who paid many visits to their pre-fab in Nemmo Avenue, Perth. It was there they heard of his death. Three days later Mrs. Wilson flew to the Island and took over the cottage and museum.

Today the couple conduct virtual "open house" witchcraft ceremonies and other members of the craft, plus those who seek admission, come to the island to join with them. Mrs. Wilson has already initiated her young daughter into the craft and was the subject of a somewhat sensational

attack in the national press as a result of revealing she had done this and that the child was naked at the time.

The Wilsons make no charge for either instructing or initiating new witches and receive appeals for help from all over the world. One story is most revealing.

Not so long ago they heard of a man in California who was not expected to live. They went upstairs to the room and concentrated. It was a Monday. The man walked out of the hospital on the Wednesday.

"I get goose-pimples when I think about it," says Mrs. Wilson, "I was so pleased."

No study of British witchcraft could be complete without a look at its most recent arrival, Alex Sanders, star of television, films ("The Legend of the Witches") and even the subject of a full-length book. Like his compatriots, Alex is a witch in the old sense of the word, venerating the gods of *Wicca*, but to these basic tenets he has added his own variations and now leads a rapidly expanding breakaway group. His enormous talent for showmanship and self-publicity have caused him to be held up to ridicule in some quarters, but his projection of an image of propounding a new "with-it" way of life should not be allowed to obscure his very real talent in the occult arts.

Like Aleister Crowley before him (although they have little in common), Alex delights in self-appointed titles and gets enormous pleasure when people refer to him—as he does himself—as the "King of the Witches". He claims to be the head of innumerable covens of witches throughout Britain and "the most important man in Europe" in occult circles. His involvement with witchcraft goes back to his childhood and makes a fascinating case history.

Born in a suburb of Manchester, Alex was the son of poor parents (his father had been actor but ruined his career by alcoholism) and was brought up mainly by his re-

markable old grandmother, a woman whose memory he still reveres today. The old lady was in fact a hereditary witch and shortly after Alex's seventh birthday she announced this fact to him. He was, she said, the latest in a line of witches dating back to the fifteenth century and it was now time for him to take up the craft and help it enjoy a new renaissance.

The old lady then put Alex through a basic initiation ceremony in her small, cramped living room and gave him simple instruction in the use of her witch "tools" and equipment. The young boy took to his new craft easily and with enthusiasm, and although he carefully concealed the fact from his schoolfellows he could not resist the temptation occasionally to confound them with predictions of the future which invariably came true. He also began to have "visions" and saw a number of incidents which later happened to members of his family.

At the age of nine, Alex took part in his first full witchcraft ritual with his grandmother and was afterwards given permission by her to take a copy in his own handwriting of her "Book of Shadows". By the time he was in his teens he had mastered a great many rituals and was undoubtedly an adept of *Wicca*. Sadly, though, as he reached maturity his grandmother died, aged seventy-four, and he was immediately conscious of having lost his teacher and witch companion. It was to be some years and a series of unhappy events later before he found another.

As he grew older, Alex says, he became aware of the fact that he could cure minor illnesses by laying his hands on people and this subsequently made him much sought after in the Manchester area—particularly by women. This increasing popularity turned his head somewhat and apart from his witchcraft activities, he became known as a play-boy and was always to be seen at fashionable night-spots and at the best parties. Inevitably he began to boast of his

magical prowess and he was then called on to prove them—doing so by staging some pseudo-magic ceremonies at which sex played the major and magic the minor role.

"They were pretty lurid and orgiastic," Alex recalls, "and very close to Satanism although I kept any serious black magic out of them."

The sexual deviations practised at these gatherings ranged from various male-female perversions to homosexual and lesbian practices. As a young and attractive man—apart from being the leader of the group—Alex was prey to all these factions and indeed recalls that one particularly enamoured man wanted him to go to Italy with him and there start a new "black" coven.

Alex believes that he might well have continued to slip deeper into this mire of degeneracy and devil worship if it had not been for the sudden and tragic death of his sister at the age of thirty-one. Alex was very fond of the girl and as she had once irrationally blamed her illness on his "dabbling with evil" he decided to quit the "Left-handed Path" and return to the study and propagation of *Wicca*. He then put himself through a lengthy series of "purification" rituals and finally came out of his self-imposed isolation by joining a coven of practising witches.

This association was not to last long, however, for Alex soon became restless and finding a number of "soulmates" in the group, decided to break away and form his own coven. There, taking the basic tenets of *Wicca* he devised his own forms of ceremonial magic and occult practice. The satisfaction which came from this move was to be doubly heightened when at last he met the girl he had sought so desperately since the death of his grandmother to be his companion and "other half of witch wholeness". (To achieve the greatest success in witchcraft it is said that only a man and woman "in tune in their minds and bodies" should practise together.)

The girl was Maxine Morris, a devout Roman Catholic, who was at first afraid and suspicious of Alex and his ways, but as she came to understand him and respect his kindness and sincerity, proved herself not only a natural witch, but a perfect High Priestess for the coven. In time the pair fell in love and Alex decided they should be married "according to witch laws". This ceremony which Alex stage-managed, in the style which has since made him so well known for maximum effect and publicity, involved them in declaring their vows before the coven, jumping over a broomstick, then over a flaming cauldron (to ensure fertility) and finally cutting their forearms and mingling their blood.

Over the years the covens following the teachings of Alex Sanders have continued to multiply and in 1965, he says, the 1,600 members passed a resolution announcing that they held him to be the true "King of the Witches". In 1967 he decided to move to London to continue his work and also be closer to the media through which he could explain himself and his cult. He and Maxine found a basement flat in Notting Hill Gate to which they invited all those interested in the craft to come. Today they still operate from the flat, holding regular instruction classes, information sessions and weekly ceremonials.

Alex boasts that he has the youngest coven in Britain and makes a particular point of recruiting the young. Certainly his showmanship, love of titles (his headed note-paper reads: *Maître de Ceremonies*, O. Alexander Sanders, KCR (Constantinople) and he signs himself, Sir Alexander Sanders) and his tremendous personality, make his success in this area not difficult to understand. However, some of his outlandish stunts—he once tried unsuccessfully to raise the demon Asmodeus on a cinema stage before a paying audience—and threats to curse "to death" those who oppose him, have somewhat dented his credibility. Nonetheless he has carved himself a niche in modern witchcraft and probably only time will resolve his real position in occult history.

APPENDIX

I

THE INITIATION OF A WITCH

(The Complete ceremonial of initiation to the cult
of *Wicca*)

RITUAL

The Priestess and the Novice first bathe in warm water, and then stark naked enter the temple of the Initiation together. The priestess now enters the Grand Magic Circle alone, leaving the novice outside it. She re-draws the Circle using her *Athame*, and leaving a doorway. On coming to the doorway again she lifts her *Athame* in an arc and completes the circle. She now circumambulates three times sun-wise with a dancing step, calling on the Mighty Ones of the EAST, SOUTH, WEST and NORTH to attend, then dancing around several times in Silence chants:

"CHANT"

"*Eko: Eko: Azarak, Eko: Eko: Zomelak*"

"Bagabi Lacha bachabe

Lamac cahi achababe

Karrellyos

Lamac lamac Bachalyas

Cabahagy sabalyos

Baryolos

Lagoz atha cabyolas

Samahac atha famolas

Hurrahya"

The Priestess now leaves the Magic Circle by way of the doorway and approaches the young novice saying:

"As there is no other brother here, I must be thy sponsor as well as Priest. I am about to give you a warning. If you are still of the same mind, answer it with these words:

'Perfect Love and Perfect Trust.'"

The Priestess now presses the point of her *Athame* to the Novice's heart saying these words:

"O Thou who standest on the threshold, between the pleasant land of men and the domains of the dread lords of the outer Spaces, has thou the courage to make the assay? For I tell thee verily, it were better to rush on my weapon and perish miserably than make the attempt with fear in thy heart."

The Young Novice now answers the Priestess thus:

"I have two passwords: Perfect Love and Perfect Trust."

The Priestess now drops the point of her *Athame* saying:

"All who bring such words are doubly welcome."

Then going behind the Novice, blindfolds him; then clasping him from behind, with her left arm around his waist, and pulling his right arm around her neck, and his lips down to hers, says:

"I give you the third password: 'A Kiss!'"

The Priestess now pushes the novice through the doorway into the grand circle with her body—and closes the doorway behind them by drawing her *Athame* across it three times joining all the circles, and now leads the Novice to the SOUTH of the Altar saying:

"Now is the ordeal."

She now takes a short piece of cord from the Altar, and binds it round his right ankle leaving the end free and saying:

"Feet neither Bound, nor free."

Then with a longer piece of cord, also from the Altar, she binds his hands firmly behind his back, tying the cord

around his neck, so that the novice's arms make a triangle at his back, leaving the end of the cord hanging in a cable turn in front. With the end of the cord in her left hand and the *Athame* in her right, the Novice is now led Sunwise round the circle to the EAST where she salutes with the *Athame* proclaiming thus:

"Take heed, O lords of the Watchtowers of the EAST (Speaks name of Novice) properly prepared, will be made a priest and witch."

The Priestess now leads him in turn to the SOUTH, WEST and NORTH where similar proclamations are made, then clasping the Novice around the body with her left arm, the *Athame* erect in the right, she makes him circumambulate three times round the circle with a half run, half dance step. He is then pulled to a stop at the SOUTH side of the Altar, and the Priestess now strikes eleven strokes upon a Bell, then kneels at his feet saying:

"In other religions, the postulant kneels, as the Priests claim supreme power. But in the Art Magical, we are taught to be humble, so we say:

"Blessed be thy feet that have brought thee in these ways." :—kisses his or her feet.

"Blessed be thy knees that shall kneel at the sacred Altar." :—kisses his or her knees.

"Blessed be the Organ of Generation without which we should not be." :—kisses the phallus.

"Blessed be thy breasts, formed in beauty and in strength." :—kisses the breasts.

"Blessed be thy lips, which shall utter the Sacred Names." :—kisses the lips.

The Novice is now made to kneel at the Altar, and is tied by his cable turn to a ring, so that he is bending forward. Now his ankles are tied. Then the Priestess strikes the Bell three times saying:

"Art ready to swear thou wilt always be true to the Art."

Novice: **"I will."**

The Priestess now strikes the Bell seven times and says:

Priestess: **"Thou first must be purified."**

The Priestess now takes up the scourge from the Altar and strikes the buttocks of the Novice lightly, first THREE, SEVEN, NINE, TWENTY-ONE, forty strokes in all, and saying at the end of the forty strokes:

"Art thou always ready to protect, help and defend thy brothers and sisters of the Art?"

Novice: **"I am."**

Priestess: **"Then say after me:**

"I (Name of Novice), in the presence of the Mighty Ones of the Outer Spaces, do of my own free will most solemnly swear that I will ever keep secret and never reveal the secrets of the Art, except it be to a proper person, properly prepared, within such a circle, as I am in now, and that I will never deny the secrets to such a person, if they be properly vouched for, by a brother or sister of the Art. All this I swear by my hopes of a future life, and may my weapons turn against me if I break this solemn oath."

The cords are now taken from his feet, then the cord from the Altar; the blindfold is then removed, but his hands are still bound. The Priestess now kneels before him again and says:

"I hereby consecrate thee with oil."

Priestess now touches the phallus, the right breast, the left breast, then the phallus again, and a triangle is now formed.

"I hereby consecrate thee with wine."

Priestess now touches with wine, first the phallus, then the right breast, then the left, then the phallus again, and a triangle is again formed.

"I hereby consecrate thee with my lips."

Priestess now touches with her lips, the phallus, the right

breast, then the left, then the phallus again completing the sign of the triangle—she now rises and his hands are loosened. She now says:

"Now I present thee with the working tools of a witch."

She now picks up the sword from the Altar and motioning him to touch it says:

"First the Magic sword. With this as with the Athame, Thou canst form all Magic Circles, dominate, subdue and punish all rebellious Spirits and demons, and even persuade the angels and geniuses. With this in thy hand thou art the ruler of the Magic Circle."

Priestess now kisses the Novice and says:

"Next I present the Athame. This is the true Witches' weapon, it has all the powers of the Magic Sword."

The Priestess again kisses the novice and says to him:

"Next I present the White Handled Knife. Its use is to form all instruments used in the Art. It can only be properly used within a Magic Circle."

She again kisses him and now says:

"Next I present the Censer of Incense, this is to encourage and welcome good spirits and to banish evil spirits."

Again a kiss by the Priestess:

"Next I present the Scourge, this is a sign of Power and Domination, it is also to cause suffering and purification, for it is written: 'To learn thou must suffer and be purified.' Art thou willing to suffer and learn?"

Novice: **"I am"** (again a kiss).

"Next and lastly I present the Cords, they are of use to bind the Sigils, the material basis, and to enforce thy will, also they are necessary in the oath."

Again a kiss, now the Priestess says:

"I salute thee in the name of the Gods. Newly-made Priest and witch."

They both now circumambulate the circle and the Priestess proclaims at the four quarters:

"Hear Ye, Mighty Ones (Name of newly-formed Priest), hath been consecrated Priest and Witch."

This is now the end of the ceremony. The Novice has become a Priest of witchcraft.

Please note, with the Magic Circle and the proper instruments, this ceremony can be conducted by any Priest or Witch, Female or Male—but here I give warning not to try it—even to find out its result unless properly prepared to take the consequences, and damn your soul for life to the utter depths of Hell. G.B.G.

II

RITUAL MAGIC

(The making of the instruments for magical working)

PREPARATION

First of all the washing preparation of the body takes place. A large tub of very warm water is prepared and the High Priest enters saying:

"I exorcise thee, O Creature of the Water, that thou cast out from thee all impurities and uncleanness of the spirits of the world of phantasms so they may harm me not, through the virtue of God the Almighty, who reigneth in the Ages of Ages. Amen.

"Mertalia, Musalia, Dophalia, Onemalia, Zitanseia, Goldaphaira, Dedulsaira, Ghevialaira, Gheminaiea, Gegropheira, Cedani, Gilthar, Godieb, Ezoil, Musil, Grassil, Tamen, Puri, Godu, Hoznoth, Astachoth, Tzabaath, Adonai, Agla, On, El, Tetragrammaton, Shema, Ariston, Anaphaxeton, Segilaton, Primarouton."

The High Priestess also washes in the water, and he pours the water over himself and the High Priestess, saying:

"Purge me, O Lord, with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

The High Priest now takes salt and blesses it saying:

"The blessing of the Father Almighty be upon this Creature of Salt. Let all malignity and hindrance be cast forth hencefrom, and let all good enter in. Wherefore I bless thee, and invoke thee that thou mayst aid me."

Casting the salt into the water they both enter it, wash again saying:

"Imanel, Arnamon, Imato, Memeon, Hectacon, Muobii, Paltellon, Decaion, Yamenton, Yaron, Tatonon, Vaphoron, Gardon, Existon, Zagueron, Momerton, Zarmesiton, Tileion, Tixmion."

Both put on, from head to foot, white linen perfumed robes after they have dried themselves thoroughly.

Previous to this cleansing, the whole floor has to be cleaned—and also before the ceremony with a damp cloth so that no dirt exists, perfume to be used—hands must be washed again after the floor has been wiped—then perfume it.

CREATING THE INSTRUMENT CIRCLE

The point of the *Athame* is thrust into the floorboards of the floor, and a long piece of string is looped over it by one end, five foot six inches from this point a piece of charcoal is tied to a loop. This measurement must be exact. A circle is now drawn pivoting around the *Athame*; an entrance is left in the charcoal marking—north nor-west. The string is now shortened by six inches; another circle made leaving the same doorway. The string is now shortened to four feet six inches and another circle carefully drawn for the instruments, thus making an inner circle nine feet across. The outer circle is then divided into four quarters, the four points of the compass. Beginning at the EAST the High Priest marks in Hebrew, "*Agail*", at the SOUTH point "*Tzabaoth*" at the WEST "*Jhvh*", and at the NORTH "*Adghy*". Between each point of the compass is drawn a pentacle or five pointed star.

The High Priestess now takes the *Athame* and goes over to the charcoal drawing again, and the High Priest places

a lighted brazier of the same fuel at the due Eastern point within the small circle. It is lighted, and a table placed before it with its centre to the middle of the brazier, and the various articles for consecration are set upon it, among them the wand and the cord or string used for marking (this cord should be prepared beforehand). Two stools are placed in front of the table. The Triple Circle is now complete, and is closed by drawing the *Athame* across, and placing two pentacles, one inside the third circle, and the second in place between the second and third circle.

The High Priest now stands with the High Priestess beside him facing EAST and recites the CII Psalm, then the XIV Psalm, then Psalm VI and ending with Psalm XVII.

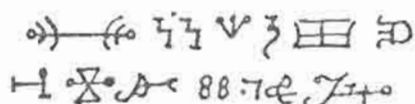
The High Priest now takes from the table the Sprinkler (a vessel of Brass varnished within and without) having a lid pierced with holes, also a handle, it is now filled with clear spring water. He now takes salt in his hand from the table and says:

"Tzabaoth, Messiach, Emanuel, Elchim, Eibor, Yod, He, Vou, He!"

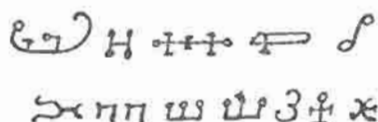
"O God, who art the Truth, and the Light, deign to bless and sanctify this creature of salt, to seve unto us for help and protection and assistance in this Art experiment and operation. And may it be a succour to us."

With this prayer, the High Priest casts the Salt into the Sprinkler and takes nine herbs—1. VERVAIN, 2. MINT, 3. GARDEN BASIL, 4. ROSEMARY, 5. HYSSOP, 6., 7., 8., 9. Nine herbs in all, and also casts them into the sprinkler, or they should be tied in a small linen bag and steeped in the sprinkler. These herbs must be gathered and prepared by a young maiden, in the hour and day of Mercury in the Waxing Moon. The High Priest now takes the white hilted knife and engraves upon the sprinkler's handle the following characters:

On one side:



On the other side:



The Sprinkler is now ready for use, knowing that whatever they sprinkle with it will be sanctified by its power to chase away all phantoms and depriving them of the ability to hinder or annoy them, and in making the preparations for the Art.

The Second operation is now to make the pen. He now takes a quill from the table plucked from one right wing of a live Male Gosling and shapes it with the white handled knife and now says:

"Aurai, Hanlii, Thamcii, Tilinos, Athamas, Zianor, Auonail.

"Banish from this pen all deceit and error, so that it may be of virtue and efficacy to write what I desire."

The High Priest now casts upon the brazier a handful of dry herbs taken from the Altar and with the same knife shortens the pen, sprinkles it and holds it over the brazier, in the cloud of perfume which arises from it due to the action of the herbs—now wraps it in clean linen cloth. The Cords are taken from the Altar and proffered in the same manner, also wrapped in clean linen cloth.

End of this Ritual, which must take place when the Moon is in Ariel and in her increase, and the Sky clear and serene. The Cords must be plaited from watergrass.

THE GROWTH OF BLACK MAGIC

"Do What Thou Will Shall
Be The Whole Of The Law."

ALEISTER CROWLEY,
Black Magician and Occultist

Now that we have had a chance to examine witchcraft in some detail, let us turn to that other topic so closely associated with it and yet so different in intent and activity, Black Magic. Despite all the learned definitions which might be applied to it, Black Magic remains, in a nutshell, the practice of evil for evil's sake. A. E. Waite, the noted authority on the occult and its dark side in particular has commented: "The end product of Black Magic is to disturb reason and produce feverish excitement which emboldens to great sensuality and crime."

Those observers of the occult like myself who have been studying the upsurge of interest in witchcraft have also noted a subsequent increase in the practice of Black Magic. It has become a power in the land, mysterious, rarely seen and wholly evil. Our enquiries have shown that whereas a few years ago it was conducted by just a handful of groups scattered about the country, it is now widespread and organised. The increasing permissiveness of today's society has undoubtedly played a major part in this growth, but the rituals of grotesque obscenity which are held in its name go far beyond the boundaries of mere promiscuity and permissiveness.

Nor, we have found, is Black Magic just an indulgence

of the wealthy as it was for so many years in the past. Today the ranks of Black Magicians are filled with ordinary people, clerks, factory hands, white collar workers and professional men, all bonded together in a devotion to evil, sadism and the defiance of society's standards of behaviour.

It is a fact that still angers most observers how the vast majority of the population refuse even to accept the existence of Black Magic, or Satanism, as it is sometimes called. Stop the average man in the street and he probably believes the entire business to be the invention of writers like Dennis Wheatley; find a person who does think there might be some truth in the stories and he will undoubtedly write the practitioners off as just a bunch of weird sexual perverts. The very few people who do give the matter serious attention are, as I have intimated, seriously concerned about its striking growth and its apparent appeal for people of all ages and their obvious disregard for its dangers.

During my own enquiries, spread over a period of some ten years and more, I have assembled documents to prove the existence of Satanic cults in no fewer than 16 counties of Great Britain. I also have good reason for estimating the membership of the cult to run into several thousand men and women. It has been no easy task assembling data on these groups for they cover their tracks well and also embroil their followers in such a way that the risks they run in talking to outsiders entail the very real danger of blackmail or even violence to themselves and their families and relatives.

It would also be a mistake to think that there is no purpose to Black Magic or that the people are merely indulging obscene fantasies. These cults know what they seek and for what ends. In the following pages I shall try to show their aims.

Practitioners of Black Magic fall into two distinct categories—those who willingly embrace all its vileness and

obscurity and the others who are tricked into joining, thinking such a group is a relatively harmless body with a predilection for the ancient mysteries and sex. Once they have gained admission, terror, coercion and even blackmail are readily employed by the organisers to prevent their leaving.

The main line of procedure is always an insidious undermining of the neophyte's moral standards. Doctrines are expounded to the effect that evil is only a relative term; that people have to be "freed" by Black Magic to see the beauty in so-called wickedness; that sin has no reality and that the only way to a full life is to ignore ordinary standards of honesty, purity and kindliness, because the exercise of these qualities prevents people yielding to all their impulses and limits their material attainments. Until, at length, the individual who is not strong-minded, begins to believe that his or her standards were foolish and non-progressive. Usually someone already an initiate is assigned to "guide" the new member; cleverly finding out his weakest points, such as love of money, jealousy or repressed sexual desire, and dangling before him tempting suggestions as to how he may achieve his ends by entering wholeheartedly into Satanism.

At the very heart of the practice is the Black Mass, the legendary ritual which is frequently taken to be the whole of Black Magic. The new initiate learns through it and its revolting acts, the ideal of utilising evil for its own sake.

Today's practitioners of the Black Mass are in fact descendants of the superstitious people of medieval times who chose to give homage to the Prince of Darkness rather than the high and authoritarian Church. To them the choice lay between the stern priests with their threats of hell-fire and damnation on one side and the "devil worshippers" on the other, promising wealth and sexual gratification. While they may not have obtained a great deal of the former, it did not prevent the men and women of those times from

joining the groups for a great deal of the joys of the flesh!

As far as we can tell the first Black Masses *per se* were being celebrated in Europe at the time of the Battle of Cressy in 1346. According to the historian Flammermont, writing on the period, ritualised satanism was born because of "an outbreak of hatred which had accumulated during the centuries in the hearts of the peasants against church, landlord and noble". He noted, too, that the Church, which might have been expected to provide a refuge and solace for the harassed peasantry, was just as riddled with corruption and vice as the state. Nuns and priests were frequently seen drinking in taverns and inns and there was good reason for suspecting that many of them cohabited together.

Not surprisingly, much of the peasantry felt that God had turned His back on them and did not care whether their morals or dignity were abused. In the last throes of despair they sought the only escape open to them—as servants of the Anti-Christ. So they signed a pact with Satan through the Black Mass conducted at the now infamous Sabat. These Sabats were a development of the earlier *Sabasia*, rustic festivals of drinking and debauchery. In the hands of the devil worshippers they were dedicated to the perpetration of evil and a "deliberate and deadly defiance of Jesus", to quote one clerical authority.

At these nightmarish gatherings held in secluded woods and groves, the initiated were taught that hatred of their condition and those who ruled their lives was not enough; they must also hate God. They must be prepared to defile His image and spit upon the Cross. They must despise all that was good and dedicate their lives to the service of Satan. In return he would bring pleasure into their lives by providing merrymaking, promiscuity, and drinking and give them the wherewithal in the form of potions and spells to revenge themselves on their tyrannical masters.

Before a neophyte could be admitted to the ranks of the devil worshippers, however, he had to declare all the sins he had committed in his life. This was the leader's safeguard against loose tongues being tempted to inform the landlords—a formula which is still being successfully employed in the twentieth century.

In the centuries which followed, the appeal of the Sabat and the Black Mass was to remain as strong as ever and even when the Church became less authoritarian and closer to its people, and officialdom similarly more responsible, the Satanists merely channelled their evil into a more general hatred of society as a whole. Authority was often aware of the presence of these people but not always inclined to move against them. The terrible witch-hunts in the main missed the devil worshippers, due to a blindness and bigotry which was more dedicated to convicting the innocent than searching out real evil. Those who followed Satan were skilled at escaping the arm of the law and indeed have never lost this accomplishment.

By the seventeenth century we find the Sabats were totally unrestrained in their licentiousness and the Black Mass had found a format which would remain unchanged for all time. Its component parts do not make for the most pleasant reading.

The classic Mass was performed in a deserted coppice by an expelled, unfrocked or renegade priest wearing a black cloak decorated with fir cones. (He could, alternatively, wear purple or scarlet robes.) His acolytes or assistants were females wearing church vestments. One, dressed in red, was a prostitute while the other in white was required to be a virgin.

The altar, usually just a stone slab, was covered with a black cloth on which were placed candles, a skull and various sacrificial bowls. The candles were made with fat (allegedly human) mixed with sulphur and coloured

black. The candle-holders represented the zodiac and were made of ebony. The incense was a mixture of sulphur, alum, asafoetida and herbs, often foul-smelling. The crucifix was turned upside down as was the Holy Bible when used. The latter was supposedly bound in the skin of an unbaptised infant who had died at birth.

The Host was black instead of white and often made up of body wastes, with markings or images considered blasphemous by the church. Not infrequently it had an image of Satan stamped on it. The chalice was of either wood or metal—though preferably the skull of a dead criminal. Instead of wine the chalice more often than not contained blood and sometimes urine. In the more debauched of the Black Masses the blood of a sacrificed child or female was mixed with the wine and given to the celebrants.

The ceremonial began with an invocation to the Devil. The Lord's Prayer was next recited backwards; then followed a mock confession, the Sign of the Cross being made with the left hand in reverse. The chalice was then passed around and the celebrants drank the wine mixed with blood and urine. The High Priest then stabbed the host with the same knife as used in the blood sacrifice. He finally spat on it and threw it on the ground, where the celebrants trampled it underfoot. After this the contents of the chalice were poured over the desecrated and dissected host. The ending of the Black Mass was usually an orgy where everyone ate, drank and indulged themselves in all kinds of sexual acts and perversions.

Although historical records would have us believe that the Devil did appear at these gatherings, this merely seems another legend invented about the dark practices of the past. Like today's practitioners of Black Magic, the disciples of the past did not actually try to conjure up Satan in physical form; although they did believe it was possible to see a vision of him if they smeared their faces with the

blood of a goat which had been boiled with vinegar and crushed glass!

It is perhaps quite fair to say that only in the very earliest times did these people actually believe that the Devil, as a person, existed. For most of the time in which Black Magic has been recorded the disciples believed in the existence of evil itself as a living force rather than in a being with horns and a forked tail. However, they have continued to acknowledge their debt to their "founder", the Devil, the legendary Father of Evil, by having one member dressed in a style to represent him. In a nutshell, the "Goat" figure is there to symbolise the many powers of evil and *not* to be the actual recipient of worship.

Today's groups of Black Magicians are known generally as the "Fraternity of the Goat" or "The Brothers of the Shadows". Like the practitioners of witchcraft they normally assemble in groups of 13, although it is not unusual for the number to be much larger. Unlike witchcraft, however, women do not play the leading part in Black Magic, instead their rôle is very limited, being frequently reduced to that of a sex object for the use of the male participants. Each group is administered by "The Goat", or High Priest, usually an elderly man who takes little part in the physical side of the ceremonies and sometimes keeps his identity secret beneath the grotesque goat mask. There are few set dates on which they meet, these being governed by the availability of some secluded spot to avoid the chances of discovery.

Although outsiders find it extremely difficult, in fact virtually impossible, to identify these people in everyday life, Black Magic practitioners can make contact with each other if the need arises. Not surprisingly, the cult does not encourage communication, reasoning rightly enough that a person in touch with a lot of people has more to reveal should he try to break away. Should one group need to con-

tact another, however, adequate provision has been made through a complicated system of "fronts". These test the urgency of the matter and the advisability of a contact. Individual members can, nevertheless, side-track the "middle" men, recognising other practitioners by finger signs not unlike those used in Freemasonry.

With secrecy being of the utmost importance, the hierarchy of the groups watch their followers very closely. Any member suspected of breaking his ritual oath of silence will be put under constant surveillance. His every move will be observed by fellow devotees and regular reports supplied to the leaders on his conduct, where he goes and whom he meets. Members are even encouraged to spy on each other and are promised favours for their information.

Gaining admission to a coven of Satanists is by no means an easy task and, in fact, the groups usually tend to recruit their own new members from the fringes of the occult world—the areas of grey around "white" witchcraft and spiritualism when certain members have become dissatisfied with the controlled sensuality and seek more positive "rewards". One such person was introduced to me while I was researching for this book and subsequently prepared a statement about her experiences which I shall now reproduce. It is not a pleasant report and underlines the dangers inherent in Black Magic.

The "victim", a woman now in her middle thirties was, before her experience, a gay and lively person, attractive and popular in the Midland business circles in which she moved after office hours. She delighted in parties and through meeting a practitioner of *Wicca* at one such gathering, decided to join a coven. At first, she says, her interest was sincere and she was eventually admitted into a coven based in Manchester. Not troubled by inhibitions, she enjoyed the sexual side both with her chosen partner and, separately, with others from the group at secret rendezvous.

"I suppose," she recalls, "I got a reputation for being promiscuous, although in fact I only went with two other men. When I expressed a desire to one of them for a bit more excitement he asked what I knew about Black Magic. Of course all I knew was what I'd read in books and it seemed to be just a bit more advanced than *Wicca* with a lot of extra thrills thrown in. I couldn't have been more wrong."

The supposed witch to whom she had confided her secret was, in fact, a contact man for a group of Satanists and the next thing she knew she was being carefully screened for admission. This is her story:

"The introduction was not hurried. I was told that there was a way to have all the things I longed for in life. And the bait worked. Foolishly I agreed to be initiated.

"Then, late in the evening of one August bank holiday Monday, shortly after I had gone to bed, there was a knock at the door. I pulled on a dressing gown over my night-dress, went downstairs, and found a car waiting.

"In this car, with a driver, was my 'instructor' from the coven and another man. It was pouring with rain. We drove into the centre of the city where we left the car and changed into a plain van. A little later we picked up another passenger, a short, stout man wearing a trenchcoat and cap. Then, after passing through two big wrought-iron gates, the van stopped. One of the men looked at me and said: 'Ought she to have her blinkers on?' My acquaintance replied that he could vouch for me, but the others appeared nervous.

"We walked about fifteen yards from the van to a house. It was still raining. Inside the house, in a large dimly-lit foyer a man was standing waiting for us. Someone else touched my arm almost immediately and I went through a side door into another room where there was a strong smell of flowers, and of incense. Facing me, in the middle of the

opposite wall, were drawn curtains. They were parted by a woman in dark maroon robes. A long veil was pinned over the centre of her head and draped over her face. She said: 'You're late.' Then: 'Oh, you've already robed.' I had not, of course; she had mistaken the dressing gown. 'Well,' she went on, 'you'd better come behind the curtains.'

"This led into another, brighter, room. I remember getting the impression there were a lot of people there before the woman pushed me back again behind the curtain while she fetched a robe for me, and a veil. She told me to let my long hair fall.

"I slipped the robe over the top of the things I was already wearing. It was a choirboy's kind of robe with long, wide sleeves and a round neck. After pinning on the veil I felt a little queer and I leaned against the wall until someone called for me. I could hear drums beating, quietly.

"I went into the other room, only now it seemed to be full of a pink glow. I could just distinguish people and that was all. It seemed very large. It couldn't have had carpets, because there were markings on the floor. I turned left through the curtains, and walked between two lines drawn for the initiated to follow. Three other women walked behind me. They joined me inside the door and had walked from the other, right-hand, end of the room.

"In the top left-hand corner, facing me, was a semi-circle of twelve men—hooded, masked and robed. One woman from the three behind me took up position with them to form a coven of thirteen. I turned right, and with the drums still beating, walked to the middle of the wall, where three men making a triangle were standing—the triad, three-in-one. Behind them against the wall, was a two-feet high statue of the Mother Mary on a stand. I approached this point as I had been told, walking slowly with hands held as if in prayer but pointing fingers to the floor. Stopping at the statue, I brought my hands slowly up and

opened them out with fingertips touching, a sign of sexual obeisance.

"I continued walking to the other corner now facing me, while the second of the women behind me fell out and took her place in the centre of the triangle.

"In the top right-hand corner of the room which I now approached was an altar. On the wall itself was a mirror and the symbol of the goat—the devil. A small wall light was over the symbol and on the altar, below it, five unlighted black candles with gold symbols. There was a tray in the centre of the candles and a tall cross standing in the centre of the tray reaching up almost to the centre of the mirror. I stopped at the front of the altar and the remaining woman still following me walked past me to the other side. In the centre of the room were drawn a large and a small circle, one within the other, with nine triangles set out from the outer circle. Facing the room now I noticed quite a number of people standing at the bottom, and behind them angled across the corner (left-hand, facing me) curtaining from the back of which seemed to come the drumming.

"Suddenly, from the curtained doorway by which I had entered the room, came three men with a young girl. They walked forward with her to the Mother Mary statue. The men were cowed and masked, but I am certain one was my 'instructor'.

"The woman from the group in the corner at the right-hand side of me (as I faced the room) walked slowly between the lines towards the door, meeting another man in robes who was carrying a live black fowl. He had his finger and thumb securely on the bird's neck and was also holding its feet. He walked between the lines to the triangle and held the fowl towards the statue, then bowed to it. After that he walked to the altar. He knelt, still holding the bird, in front of the altar star.

"One of the men who had escorted the girl left her and made to the statue a sign with hands together pointing downwards and touching the front of his trousers. He took up a position beside the man with the fowl, turned his back on the altar and slowly recited the Lord's Prayer backwards. After this he called on the covens and told them a sacrifice was about to take place 'and tonight we have a virgin in our midst who is to be initiated'.

"Hanging from the girdle of his robe he had a flat, tapered knife. He took the cockerel and it squawked loudly. He held the bird up in the air by the neck and slit it with the knife from the throat right down across the breast and between the legs. Blood gushed all over his hands and the robes of the other men standing nearby. While this was going on, chanting began.

"Now the young girl, who seemed about fifteen or sixteen and was probably below the age of consent, was brought by her remaining two escorts up to the statue. She seemed to be half fainting, and had to be helped to walk. The triad broke and stood apart. The girl was made to declare aloud that she was giving up all thoughts or rights of prayer to Mother Mary. Afterwards she was brought across, one man holding her, dragging her feet, to the altar star. The members of the triad walked into the centre of the circle and knelt. The coven from the bottom of the room walked forward on to the outer circle. Eight people from the right-hand side of the door took up positions at the points of eight of the altar stars, leaving one point opposite the altar empty. The drums quickened. The eight on the stars swung incense burners and the room was full of the smell, choking.

"The girl, still at the altar star, was told to kneel. As she did so, the man with the cockerel held it up, then placed a bloodied hand on the girl's head and gave a parody of the blessing. The other man at the altar was pouring blood

into glasses. He had taken the cockerel and drained the blood from it down its beak. The woman on my left brought forward a small silver tray. We were told that we were to partake of a body that night in honour of the new initiate. Powder and dust were sprinkled on the top of the glasses. The lady from my left took the tray of glasses round the room. As the girl was given a drink she seemed stupefied, probably the result of an injection given to her earlier.

"She tried to push the glass away but she was held and given it forcibly. Some of it spilled on to her open-necked white blouse and ran down her small breasts. Chanting went on all the time.

"The girl, still kneeling, was told to repeat certain words. She promised to give her soul to the devil, declared that she belonged absolutely to him, and condemned God and His Son. Afterwards, her hands taken by two men, she was brought to the altar and ordered to stand the cross upside down with the head inside the body of the cockerel. Now she was told to look into the mirror, to keep on looking and she remained like this while a parody of the Catholic Mass was carried out. She had to turn round to face the room to repeat her 'vows', but just before this she had a hood placed over her head, and was also veiled. At this point the girl fainted. I went forward to help her but was at once told to go back to my place as I had offended. Now the circle began to open up, leaving only the eight points. The girl was taken to the ninth point, slumping between two men. The rest of the eight came up to the altar.

"A long table was brought into the middle of the central ring and they carried the girl and put her upon it. One of the four men in front of me muttered: 'I'm afraid they've given her too much.' I did not realise at that time what he meant. Now dancing began. Everyone was served with drink. As soon as a glass was empty it was refilled.

"I refused a drink because I was feeling worried and ill and for this I was reprimanded by one of the members. The drums were beating faster now. People began to be intoxicated, stamping their feet, jumping about. It turned into an orgy of sex.

"I walked from the altar to the girl on the table; she still wore her veil and hood, but her hair draped back over the end of the table and touched the floor. I remember stroking her hair. I knew something was really wrong. Everyone was shedding clothes. There seemed to be many more women in the room. I was afraid for the girl. Then the man I thought was my 'instructor' came and told me to go back to the altar or to leave the room. I was taken across to the altar and given an injection. Before I began to feel dopey I saw them stripping clothes off the girl. There were a number of them round the table interfering with her body. I tried to speak to someone near me but they said: 'Why don't you stop worrying. You can't do anything now. She's beyond it.'

"Someone removed the last of the girl's clothing. Her eyes were wide open, staring. Then a naked man climbed on top of her. After he had finished another took his place. I felt awfully ill and had to lean back against the wall for a while. I had to be helped out of the room and sat on a chair in the other room behind the curtains. I remember I asked what would become of the girl and was told it was quite all right, that would be attended to.

"After a bit a veiled woman came to me and said I had been given permission to go home. But first I must return and make my vow of silence. I went back into the big room. The girl, still on the table, had been pushed up in front of the altar. I gave my vow of silence to the full room and was told that Black Magic was for the strong and not for weaklings. I was to remember in case anything ever went wrong that I was as much responsible as anyone else in the

room. After this I had to give my handprint—dipped in blood on a tray and put on a fresh piece of paper. This I had to sign. I was told that the paper would be kept and used if I ever spoke about what had happened.

"I felt numb from the effects of the injection. I know I was put in a car but how I subsequently reached home I just don't know. All I remember is I came to my senses in my hallway. And I was still in my nightdress, slippers and dressing gown . . ."

The story does not end here for my anonymous lady recruit, for she was subsequently approached several times and taken to a number of other satanic meetings, being called on to participate in most of these. She admits that after her first experience she went in constant fear of the man who had first taken her to the group and did not dare to defy his calls although she was revolted at what happened. After a while his interest in her waned and when he was no longer a member of the parties which came to collect her, she decided she could cut herself off from the group. For two years she went to live abroad and, in fact, only returned to this country a few months ago, to settle in a quite different area some hundreds of miles away from the scene of her ordeals. Despite the fact that she has heard nothing further from the original group, my informant does not believe she has truly escaped their clutches.

"I have broken my satanic oath," she says, almost in a whisper, "and I know the power of these people is such that they won't rest until they have taken their revenge on me. I don't sleep too well and a knock on the door—any door—always makes me nervous. Do you think I am wrong to worry still?"

I had to tell her, sadly, that I did not.

It has to be said that not everyone who joins a satanic cult or dabbles in Black Magic does so unwillingly. Not a

few of the participants have joined without needing any deception or lure—other than the promise of sexual indulgence, vileness and the perpetration of evil. These men and women are in the main mentally sick, in need of psychiatric treatment for an illness which can, in extreme cases, drive them to insanity.

Who, for instance, is going to say that there is no madness in the list of Satanic Oaths which the neophyte is called on regularly to affirm? They demand:

1. A spoken denial of the Christian faith.
2. Re-baptism in Satan's name, the novice given a new name to replace the Christian one.
3. Symbolic removal of the baptismal chrism (consecrated oil mixed by balm) by Satan's touch.
4. Denial of godparents and gaining new sponsors.
5. As a token of submission and obedience, the novice makes a gift of his or her virginity (symbolically if necessary) to Satan.
6. While standing in a magic circle the novice pledges an Oath of Allegiance to Satan.
7. Initiate's name is included in the "Book of Death".
8. A promise to indulge in all sexual excesses with men or women.
9. Marking the initiate with Satan's "seal"—a strangely shaped mark on the skin which is concealed from view.
10. Vows of special service to Satan which include destruction of holy relics, and most importantly, not revealing the secrets of the Sabbat.

In the face of all this evidence perhaps the question we should be asking ourselves at this point is, Why? How has this upsurge of Black Magic and Satanism arisen? Why should an increasing number of people be dabbling in the dark arts and indulging in degraded perversions and pro-

fanity against the Church? The answer lies almost wholly in the activities of one man—Aleister Crowley.

Today's liberated and generally permissive society is of now inclined to accept Crowley as less of a fiend incarnate (which he was held to be a generation ago) and more as a man of monumental excesses with an enormous talent for the blacker shades of magic. Yet, whichever viewpoint one holds there can be little denying that Crowley in his life and actions—and more particularly in the example he set—*did* give the lead to those who would explore the outer reaches of the occult. Before him, Black Magic—the practice of “evil for evil's sake”—had lain virtually dormant for a century or more. That he took a lead from the evil practices of Eliphas Levi in France (Crowley believed *he* was Levi's reincarnation) and various other practitioners of the late nineteenth century cannot be doubted, but just as Gerald Gardner re-shaped *Wicca* for modern usage, so did Crowley give Black Magic—or *Secret Magick* as he preferred to call it—a new impetus and direction in the twentieth century. He, in fact, crystallised the whole movement into following a simple *dictum*: “Do What Thou Will Shall Be The Whole Of The Law.”

The life of Aleister Crowley, self-proclaimed “Great Beast” and publicly-labelled “Wickedest Man In The World” was, according to his biographer, John Symonds, “a series of ecstasies, abominations and bizarreries”. These have been fully documented in Mr. Symonds' remarkable biography of Crowley and I intend to do no more than list the highlights here. That he was a man of prodigious energies and exceptional intelligence was obvious from his early years. His black fantasies and cruel behaviour not only put his own mother in fear of him but convinced her he was the “Great Beast 666 of Revelation”—a statement which delighted him. At university he proved himself, apart from being an outstanding scholar, a skilled mountaineer, a tal-

ented chess player and a uniquely original poet. He also furthered his interest in the occult, which had been first instanced at the age of nine when he had asked for the body of a still-born sister to experiment on—and being denied this grisly request, proceeded to test the theory of a cat having nine lives by butchering one in nine different ways.

On the death of his father, young Crowley inherited a considerable fortune (estimated at £40,000) and consequently spent his twenties first dabbling in, then perfecting, his system of magic. Unhampered in those years by any social restrictions on the taking of drugs, he made liberal use of heroin and cocaine—so much so that towards the end of his life his body had built up a tolerance level sufficient to assimilate, without any ill-effects, a daily intake equivalent to ten times a normally fatal dosage. Crowley also had a passionate hatred of Christianity brought about in the main by his strict upbringing among the Plymouth Brethren. (He called his mother “a brainless bigot of the most narrow, logical and inhuman type”.) And in the ritual in which he constituted himself a Black Magician in 1916, he baptised a frog as Jesus of Nazareth, “arrested” it and accused it of blasphemy and sedition. He then crucified the reptile, stabbed it to death and chanted:

“Give thou place to me, O Jesus; thine aeon is passed;
The Age of Horus is arisen by the Magick of the Master
the Great Beast that is Man.”

Crowley regarded himself as a divine being and Messiah, the lord of a new age and founder of the religion of Crowleyanity, that would destroy all outworn creeds.

“To hell with Christianity, Rationalism, Buddhism, all the lumber of the centuries,” he wrote to a friend, “I bring you a positive and primeval fact, Black Magic by name; and with this I will build a new Heaven and a new Earth. I want none of your faint approval or faint dispraise; I

want blasphemy, murder, rape, revolution, anything, bad or good, but strong."

For a time he was a member of the most famous occult society in Britain, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, but after he made an unsuccessful attempt to seize command of it, he broke away to start his own group which he called the Silver Star. He was, it was claimed, the first organiser of a Western cult to use public sexual acts as an integral part of Satanic worship; he believed that the practice of "sex magic" enabled adherents of the cult to attain the highest possible degree of wisdom.

Rituals were mostly conducted in secret. Occasionally, however, when the state of his finances dictated, Crowley would throw open his services to the public, charging the wealthy women—who formed the bulk of his audiences—heavily for the privilege of satisfying their curiosity.

"Men and women danced about, leaping and swaying to the whining of infernal and discordant music," reported one eyewitness. "They sang obscene words set to hymn tunes and gibbered unintelligible jargon. Women tore their bodices; some partially disrobed. One fair worshipper, seizing upon the high priest's dagger, wounded herself in the breasts."

With these ceremonies Crowley was establishing a new order of Satanism and linking it to his hard-won knowledge of the dark secrets of the occult (he was by this time, for instance, credited with the power to raise the "great Demon Beelzebub with his 49 attendants"!) gave Black Magic a new and sinister reputation. Women fell easily into his power and he used them and their bodies ruthlessly to further his great design of Crowleyanity. Men, too, found his hypnotic power difficult to resist and this, coupled with his flamboyance and grandiloquent manners, enabled him to extricate himself from any situation that presented itself.

The Black Mass, in a not dissimilar form to the one

earlier described in this section, was also being re-shaped to his specifications with heavy emphasis on the use of drugs, copulation, and general beastliness and degradation.

Perhaps the Master came nearest to fulfilling his grand design when he moved to a villa on the island of Thelema just off the coast of Sicily in the 1920s. The villa was in fact nothing more than a single-storey brick building, but with his group of faithful male and female disciples he turned it into an "Abbey" where magic and sexuality were to be performed. The central hall of the building formed the "temple"; it contained a magic circle and altar on which stood the "tools" of Crowley's art, the whip, the phallus and the Black Book of Rituals, with the Master's "throne" on one side and a brazier beside it. The walls were covered with frescoes and paintings by Crowley depicting the worst forms of sexual aberration.

Those who lived in the "Abbey" were subjected to the most appalling conditions and personal restrictions. Apart from indulgence in sex and drugs they were made to fast, sleep on beds of nettles or gorse and slash themselves with a razor every time they used the word "I". While this was going on, Crowley continued his magical experiments and claimed not only to have made contact with certain evil spirits but to have received a number of important messages from them. He also said he had learned the secret of invisibility.

Crowley chose certain of his female followers to be his "Scarlet Women", or mistresses, and apart from endless sexual humiliations, had them branded with the "Mark of the Beast" between their breasts.

In time, however, rumours of the devil worship earned him a fearsome reputation in the district and gave birth to rumours of human sacrifices being performed in the "Abbey". Inevitably, the authorities heard these stories and

after a brief enquiry he and his followers were deported.

Returning to England, he began writing of his experiences in earnest and through several of his books presented the satanic movement with its basic principles and tenets. Perhaps his best work, however, was *Magick in Theory and in Practice* which gave occult literature a volume of enduring worth in terms of authority on certain mysterious rituals and insight into the real secrets of magic.

In the closing years of his life, spent quietly at Hastings, there were attempts made to whitewash Crowley's life and put his excesses down to the figments of journalistic imagination. However, death had dogged his footsteps and the number of his "disciples" who had died, been committed to lunatic asylums or ruined for life, was too overwhelming to be ignored. Nor could anyone dismiss his avowed practice of Black Magic and the holding of Black Masses as mere indulgence. Crowley knew what he was doing and for what end—the practice of evil for evil's sake. His example was not forgotten on his death, either, for his followers assembled to give him a "satanic funeral" and despatched his body to hell with the promise that they would continue what he had begun. The increasing number of church desecrations, orgiastic rituals and general dabbling in the black arts which are reported each year illustrate clearly how well that promise has been kept.

Much of my information on Crowley and indeed a considerable amount of devil worship and Black Magic in particular, has come from Dennis Wheatley, the renowned novelist and acknowledged authority on the dark arts. Mr. Wheatley has widely proclaimed his noninvolvement with the occult—and indeed has warned stringently against any kind of contact with it—but his work is based on very real information imparted to him both by letter and from those who have been involved.

He recalls vividly one letter from a man who was a chauffeur to a wealthy couple living in one of the Eastern counties of England. They held a number of parties each year and people would arrive in cars from all over the area, disappear behind closed doors all night and then depart as dawn was breaking.

The letter went on: "They draw pentacles on the floor, sir, and late at night the men dress up in silk smocks with signs of the zodiac on them. The ladies come down wearing masks and red, high-heeled shoes. I've seen black candles, too.

"I hadn't an idea what it was all about. Just thought they were playing charades or something until I read your book *To The Devil—A Daughter*. Of course, I tumbled to it then. There can be no doubt about it, my employers are Satanists."

This and other similar communications led Wheatley to the conclusions which he voiced in one of his books as a preface: "Gatherings to practise the Black Art undoubtedly take place. There are, of course, phoney imitations, organised only for the purpose of lechery followed by blackmail, but genuine Satan worship is still as prevalent today as—shall we say—the drug traffic."

Mr. Wheatley knew Aleister Crowley, about whom he felt a genuine unease, the Reverend Montague Summers, the well-known writer on witchcraft and Black Magic ("a curious character—you know rumour has it he was not, in fact, a priest," he says) and also Rollo Ahmed, a West Indian whom he considered "perhaps the most deeply versed man in magical lore I ever met". Ahmed was certainly an extraordinary figure, an advanced practitioner of Yoga, and from him he learned much of the theory and practice of Black Magic. When Ahmed wrote a book, *The Black Art*, Dennis Wheatley provided a foreword in which he acknowl-

edged his debt to the author; certainly, the work should be required reading for any new student of the occult. Ahmed was himself an intimate of most of the leading practitioners of "white" and "black" magic and earned a certain notoriety in both England and Europe through his lectures on the occult and specially staged public rituals.

Naturally, in researching this book, Rollo Ahmed was high on the list of people I wished to see. However, though he was prepared to assist me with material he was flatly opposed to an interview. He had, in the past he said, been grossly misrepresented by journalists and writers and wished to avoid any further notoriety. He would, however, provide me with a statement of his views and experiences and this I gladly agreed to accept. It now follows here, just as Ahmed wrote it, and provides an extraordinary insight into the mind of a man deeply versed in twentieth century occultism. The reader must form his own judgement as to how involved—or otherwise—Rollo Ahmed is in today's Satanic underworld—and on whose side.

"Because, some years ago I wrote a book on Black Magic I acquired the label of being a Black Magician myself. All magic is not necessarily black and my interest in magic in general began in my childhood in British Guiana. Although of mainly Egyptian parentage, I was raised in Guiana, and at a very early age, on gold prospecting trips, came in contact with primitive Indians who practised a form of Ritual Black Magic which may be called tribal magic. I also met West Indians who practised Voodoo.

"Thus my interest began. I studied all available information on the subject and witnessed ceremonies whenever possible and thus acquired a reputation for being to some extent an authority on the subject.

"Some thirty or so years ago in London I was invited by

the occultist Garland Anderson to give my experiences to a specially selected audience. At this meeting I was introduced to the late Aleister Crowley. I soon became interested in his form of magic which I investigated by witnessing some of his ceremonies.

"After this I began lecturing regularly on various occult subjects, and especially Raya Yoga. Then, following the publication of my book, *The Black Art* which I was especially asked to write, I was inundated with enquiries and requests to bring about various results through magical practices.

"These requests were not altogether new to me, for when I had been living in the Channel Islands some years earlier and making various experiments in magic myself I was frequently consulted by the Islanders of Jersey and Guernsey.

"Finding so much interest in London and the provinces I began lecturing specifically on Black Magic. I particularly remember an occasion at the Pavilion at Brighton, when I believe my Black robes and accompanying incense scared people into thinking I was practically the Devil himself, that I had a great sale of small amulets to ward off the possible evil effects of having witnessed a pseudo Black Magic ceremony. Pseudo, because it is obvious it would be impossible to openly hold a true Black Magic ceremony in a well-known public building.

"At this period I saw a good deal of Aleister Crowley in London and Brighton and was present at many of his gatherings. Originally my interest in Black Magic as such was purely detached.

"I had practised rituals and experimented personally with much of the knowledge that had come my way in youth and through study, but the darker side had no direct appeal. However, I found that it was impossible to maintain the detached approach—imperceptibly, but surely, the poison of

evil seeps into the character—and one cannot associate with those to whom 'Do What Thou Will Shall Be The Whole Of The Law' is actual doctrine, without becoming seriously affected.

"The will weakens, moral values become obscured, the senses blunted. Habits, motives and actions which would previously have appeared grotesque or revolting now appear amusing and desirable, or worse still are taken in deadly seriousness as being a means of obtaining the favour of the Powers of Darkness.

"For the majority of people the basis of all cults and religions is to please the Deity and to obtain favours, here or hereafter—the Black Magician and his followers follow the same line, though working on the premise that evil is more powerful in the material World and far more prevalent than good. That by nature man inclines to follow his own desires and that he has a right to do so and that by indulging his lowest nature mentally and physically he is, as it were, 'fading' the powers of destruction and evil which rule the World.

"Thus it is that intelligent men and women are led into this cult basically through their weaknesses. The promise of being able to impose their wills over others—in other words Power, domestically, financially and sometimes even politically. They gain the chance to join with others in the indulgence of perversions and have the ready-made excuse of doing so for more than the mere fulfilment of sensual pleasure.

"I do not hesitate to say that I became mentally and morally affected by these things, but most of those who were practising Black Magic at this time were drug addicts, which vice had no hold on me. My nerves also suffered and I became affected in ways which only those who know of, and will admit the powers of the Unseen, will appreciate.

"After a period of prolonged illness and serious misfortunes, I gradually disentangled myself from the abyss which threatened to engulf me and I have since set myself to the task of resisting and showing up the evil wherever it is to be encountered. It is an absolute fact, that when you have participated in any form of spiritual evil, there is a force and power, call it what you will, that makes periodic attempts to conquer you again and draw you back. I am sure that all who have had similar experiences will agree.

"Long after I had disconnected myself, circumstances would arise or people be drawn across my path which aimed at my material and moral destruction. Probably the general public does not realise the tremendous allure the darker side of the occult has for men and women in every grade of life, but more strongly at the opposite poles of society—that is among the primitive or peasantry and among the highly intelligent and cultured. (*sic!*) Both will consciously and deliberately practise Black Magic for given ends. In between there is a world of respectable semi-educated people who fall victims to indiscriminant (*sic!*) spiritualist practices and soon become affected for the worse.

"The public would find it hard to believe the large number of people who still believe in the power of sympathetic magic as it is called and who will consult people like myself with requests to bring evil and disaster into the lives of others, and to cast spells on them. Conversely the numbers who consider themselves injured in this way.

"Every year I have letters from people who have either practised Black Magic themselves and are suffering the consequences or are seeking help for a friend or relative in this position.

"There are fashions in magic as in other matters, and there is certainly a tremendous upsurge of interest today among both the young and the old. It is a certainty that groups of people are carrying on the practices in many

places, often as the hidden kernel of various recognised societies and groups of people, but it is extremely difficult to enter these and on the surface they appear harmless enough.

"To know the existence of a thing and to be able to publicly unmask it is a very different matter, just as the police may be able to place their hand on a murderer but are helpless to convict him through lack of absolute proof. Nevertheless I shall continue my work and if I need to don the role of a Black Magician to do so, I shall not hesitate for an instant. That is my promise and that is my vow."

While much of the practice of Black Magic and Satanism goes on secretly and unobserved, an increasing amount of evidence of its existence is spilling into the columns of our newspapers and magazines. Although, as I have previously noted, the confusion between "white" magic and "black" still exists in the public mind—and particularly in that of the journalist looking for a good headline—it is possible to sort through the recent reports of occult activities and pin-point those which are obviously worked for evil.

For instance there have been a large number of accounts of graveyards being desecrated, tombs forced open and sinister symbols (such as the hearts of animals pierced with thorns and the "Black Magic Pentagram" daubed with blood) painted on church doors. Most of these are the work of Satanists—though not all I hasten to add, for there are still about the sick in mind who will imitate anything given prominence in the press. These activities coincide exactly with what we have learned about the cult despatching its new recruits to prove their obedience by defiling the Church.

Over the years I have been studying witchcraft and black magic I have assembled a large collection of newspaper clippings which clearly indicate that not only has the practice of devil worship increased but how those practising it have

become increasingly more sure of their ability to flout the law and get away with it. Perhaps the first most significant report to underline this point appeared in 1963 and a clipping from the front page of *The People* of December 8th tells its own story:

*Big Police Hunt after Vicar Finds
"Devil" Men in Church*

BLACK MAGIC GANG IN BATTLE AT
ALTAR

A fantastic police hunt was going on in Southern England late last night for a gang of Black Magic devil worshippers who held an orgy in a 12th Century village church and then fought a battle with the 79-year-old vicar, his church-wardens and other parishioners.

The vicar and his men were overwhelmed after a fierce struggle and the gang escaped in a car.

For their "service" the gang, made up of four men, lit candles from the church altar, laid them out on the chancel floor in the shape of a cross and stood chanting as they performed their evil rites.

The vicar, the Rev. Harold Coulthurst, of Westham, near Pevensey, Sussex, said last night:

"The men were trying to communicate with evil spirits. They were chanting some sort of mumbo jumbo.

"Someone had spat on the altar cross and when I tried to restrain them they lashed out and there was a fight. We were no match for them."

Mr. Coulthurst added: "They were definitely in league with the devil. The incident was most distressing and alarming."

The Black Magic Gang were found in Westham Parish Church by bellringer, Walter Binsted.

He went to the church expecting to find a group of visiting bellringers.

Instead, he saw a light in the belfry and found the gang chanting weird prayers.

Mr. Binsted, of Battle Road, Westham, rushed from the church to the village school next door where the Church Christmas Bazaar was being held.

Then Mr. Binsted, accompanied by the vicar, two churchwardens, Captain Leo Hayden and Mr. Bob Tourle, and other Bazaar helpers, returned to the church.

In the battle which followed, 65-year-old Capt. Hayden had his glasses smashed when he was hit by one of the gang.

The vicar, who was also attacked during the struggle said:

"I am sure that these are the same people who have been desecrating churches and graveyards in Somerset. One gang there set fire to churches and once some of the people actually opened a grave."

The effects of this story on people, I recall, were varied. Not a few denounced the newspaper and others which carried the story, as only seeking to create a sensation by over-elaborating a case of desecration. Others chuckled over it while they enjoyed their bacon and eggs; it made good reading—but was surely just a prank which had gone wrong? A few felt tremors of misgiving but were not prepared to venture an opinion in case it turned out to be just an isolated incident.

In fact it was not, and my cuttings for the ensuing weeks show that the Satanists—either the same ones or others—were soon busy again. The *Daily Express* takes up the story on January 27th, 1964:

TOMBSTONES MOVED IN
BLACK MAGIC RAIDS

Tombstones were moved from three graveyards and black magic signs scrawled on church doors yesterday.

It happened in Sussex—the third series of similar raids there in six weeks.

An East Sussex policeman said last night: "We have a very good idea who is doing this, but the difficulty is proving it."

The Rev. Robert Hooper, rector of eleventh-century St. Michael's in NEWHAVEN said: "Two tombstones were lifted bodily out of the ground and dumped by the closed church door.

"Chalk emblems were also written on the door."

In ALFRISTON, eight miles away, at the parish church known to tourists as the "Cathedral of the South Downs", one gravestone was left against the door.

Black candles had been burned there in the night.

The same thing happened at St. Andrews in JEVINGTON, near Bexhill. A sheep's heart was left on a gravestone and rings—pink, yellow and purple—chalked on the door.

Faced with this kind of evidence it was impossible for anyone to deny that something was afoot. The more astute, and those who knew a little about the working of Satanism and devil worship, sensed a new trend. Not only were the followers of Black Magic becoming more daring in their practices, they were virtually challenging the authorities to try and catch them.

Wisely, the police were taking the outrages more than seriously. Directives went out to all divisions instructing officers that all unsavoury incidents were to be fully investigated and not merely categorised as the work of cranks.

How serious the new menace was becoming was spotlighted in February of the same year by *The Daily Telegraph*—never a newspaper to use its columns for nonsense. On the tenth of the month it devoted a considerable amount of space to the following report:

BLACK MAGIC SYMBOLS ON ROYAL ESTATE

Black Magic death symbols, including a clay model of a nude woman, found nailed to the wall of a ruined church on the Sandringham Royal Estate are being investigated by the police.

The six-inch model had a hawthorn stuck in its heart. The other symbols were a sheep's heart containing five thorns and a black candle. They were found in the bell tower of the ruins at Babbingley.

The ruins stand nearly a mile from the roadway on one of the Queen's farms which is tenanted by Mr. Tom Neill of Babbingley Hall. The symbols were discovered by Richard Dix, 10, of Lynn Road, Dersingham, Norfolk.

Mr. Frank Buckley, of King's Lynn, a witchcraft expert, described the symbols as "a rather crude death charm". During the past six months similar symbols have been left at Castle Rising and in a ruined church at Bawsey, both less than 10 miles from Sandringham.

Various implications can be, and were, drawn from this unpleasant discovery, including the suggestion that it was directed at the Royal Family. Whatever the theories, the fact that the practice of "evil for evil's sake" was going on over a widespread area was undeniable. The reports continued, and throughout the rest of that year we read of suspected black magic orgies in Lancashire, Devon and Middlesex, churchyard desecrations in Hertfordshire, North-

umberland and Scotland and two reports of a Black Mass being held in the heart of Surrey. In the intervening years the story has been the same—with even a slight increase in the incidents year after year.

To quote at length from these reports would serve no real purpose for they follow an alarmingly similar pattern both in what occurred and the manner in which it was discovered. Let it suffice to say that in the past twelve months, up to the end of 1971, something like 300 outrages of sacrilege, desecration and breaking and entering were committed on places of worship in Britain. And simple arithmetic leads one to the appalling conclusion that this is an increase of over one hundred percent compared to the period when these reports first began to emerge just ten years ago. It is also salient to note that of these incidents, nearly two-thirds were committed on holy buildings in towns and cities with populations in excess of 10,000. No longer would it seem that the seclusion of the rural countryside was what the Satanists coveted—the big city was their target.

These people have also begun directing their attention most specifically at the young; the teenagers, liberated sexually by the pill and a general climate of permissiveness and eagerness for new experiences. The Satanists' main weapon to attract them, (sex no longer offering the vicarious thrill it once did), has become drugs, and, in particular, LSD. This is being used to heighten the sensations at Black Masses but according to a number of reports has so distorted the effects as to leave certain practitioners still in fear of the simplest object such as a shadow or a bird long after the "high" has worn off.

LSD has apparently become much favoured as a "booster" for the neophyte about to undertake the desecration of a graveyard as part of his gaining admission to the cult. It is also used during the orgies and the claims which

have been advanced about it stimulating the sensations have already been widely discussed.

Barry Irons, a Church Army captain in Birmingham, was one of the first people to point out to me this use of LSD in Black Magic and his experience of it among young people in his area is disturbing.

"I stumbled on it quite by accident," he recalled, "And I have since built up evidence that there are at least four groups of Satanists using LSD in the Birmingham district. They have a membership of about a dozen each and seem to meet about once a week.

"They glorify the devil and all things evil. Hallucinatory drugs are taken and under their effects orgies of blasphemy, nakedness, mass-sex and the like take place.

"Followers become fantastically loyal to the group and its leader, or *Abaden*, as they call the High Priest.

"These *Abadens* are usually older men and often have private means. They have strong personalities and gain almost complete control over their followers.

"Young people have come to me so afraid that they would not walk in a shadow and shied away from the crucifix in my hall. One swore that a bird outside my window was the *Abaden* spying on him."

Captain Irons has found trying to help these youngsters no easy task and indeed those who have actually been involved in graveyard desecration and sacrilege have a physical revulsion towards anyone connected with the Church.

"All the Satanists I have met have dropped their Christian names and adopted devil names," he went on, "The important thing is to get them to tell me that new name. Usually they will only write it down.

"The climax of the cure is for me to hold both their hands and recite the Lord's Prayer. Often when I do this the Satanist screams out loud. Several have had what looks like an epileptic fit.

"The whole business is very frightening to me. I get a feeling of intense cold and horror which I assume is just caused by the atmosphere of the occasion.

"Perhaps the worst feature of all is that by the time I see these young people they have often lost their jobs and most of their friends. Their parents, too, cannot understand them and they are just existing—not living."

Because of the long association of drugs and potions with both witchcraft and Black Magic, I took details of this latest development to a psychiatrist with knowledge of occult history. His comments were brutally forthright.

"Believe me, the effects of this drug in a Black Mass situation could be very horrifying and extremely dangerous.

"The really worrying thing is that those under the influence of the drug are likely to believe anything the leader tells them is happening and might well do anything he tells them.

"For instance, if he told them they were seeing the Devil they would be quite likely to be convinced that they had seen him and that belief could continue after the effects of the drug had worn off."

The doctor felt that the practice could only progress in time to hard drugs and the total disintegration of mind and body which they bring.

"As a psychiatrist I know of the mental dangers inherent in Black Magic—but these combined with the indiscriminate use of hard and soft drugs is a prospect almost too grim to contemplate. What does the future hold?"

Certainly a number of people and organisations have become more dedicated in their efforts to expose the burgeoning cult and a number of newspapers have campaigned determinedly to bring home the danger of its practices. But as our permissive society grows still more permissive, there are a growing number of people prepared to condone the activities of the Satanists, labelling them as "Seekers after

Truth" and men and women "trying to overcome the stifling attitudes of our rigid morality in order to free themselves to better things by sexual and philosophic freedom". If the reader can accept debased sexual orgies, perversion, cruelty, blackmail and fear as "better things", I regret I cannot.

A few years back, the Reverend Montague Summers, a passionate opponent of Satanism wrote: "The Cult of the Devil is the most terrible power at work in the world today." As we read now of businessmen, clerks, secretaries and factory workers joining the ranks of the Satanists, of churches being defiled in broad daylight and people living in fear of their lives and sanity because of the devil worshippers, can we deny that his words are even more apposite in 1972?

THE WITCHES OF AMERICA

"For generations in this country we've been working against nature, destroying whole species of wildlife, polluting the air and the water, spraying poisons on our food. Today's witches are trying in their own way to reverse this trend, to act in harmony with nature. The Old Religion is a nature religion. And sex between men and women is an integral part of our ritual."

Anonymous, New York Witch.

In America the extraordinary situation has arisen of witchcraft and Black Magic gaining acceptance and support in geographically separate parts of the country. On the East Coast the "white" witches are established and flourishing while across on the other side of the continent in the sultry heat of California, Black Magic and Satanism hold sway. Middle America, that often underestimated factor in determining the fortunes of American political history, remains undecided about the attractions of either faction and undoubtedly must at some time play a rôle in the fight for supremacy which the two cults are currently waging. Because the emphasis in this study has been on witchcraft, let us consider this cult first.

The history of witchcraft in America is, of course, inextricably bound up with Salem, the small Massachusetts village which revealed the existence of "diabolical concourse with the devil" in 1692 when twenty people were tried and executed by the local authorities. Today Salem capitalises on its "notoriety" and has become a tourist attraction. Can there be a more suitable place to begin our enquiries?

It all started in 1692, in the home of the local parson, the

Gerald Gardner,
'father figure' of modern
Witchcraft.
(*Black Star*)



Witch High Priestess,
Eleanor Bone.
(*Daily Mirror*)

High Priestess Monique
Wilson and her husband
'working' magic
(*News of the World*)

Eleanor Bone and members
of her coven prepare for an
open-air Wicca ceremony
at Halloween.
(*London Weekend Television*)







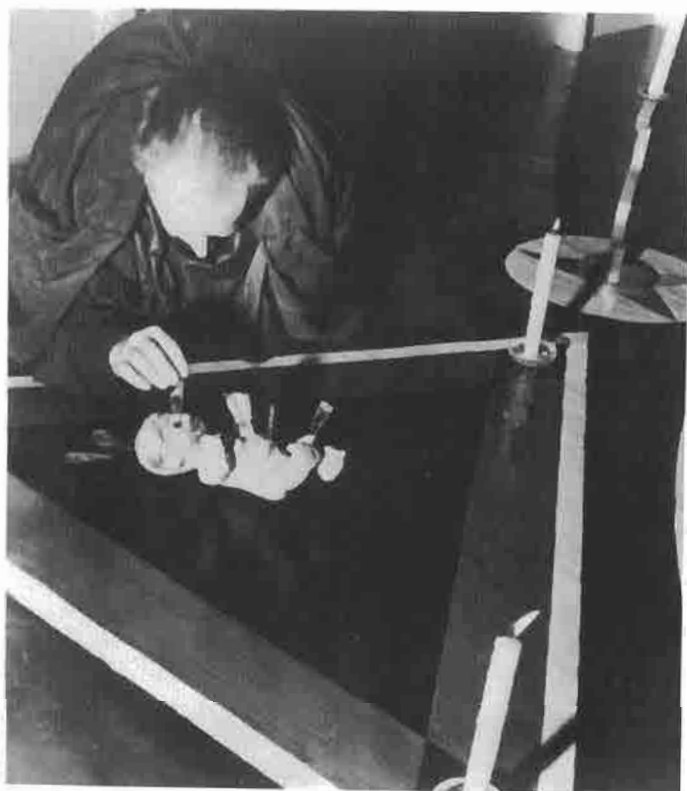
(A) Cecil Williamson, Witchcraft expert, demonstrates the making of a 'poppet' used to carry out a curse. First, the collection in a graveyard of poison ivy berries for the eyes.
(Author)



(B) In his cellar, Williamson mixes the ingredients for the 'poppet'.
(Author)



(C) Having 'shaped' the ingredients into a human figure, Williamson 'breathes' life into the 'poppet' over the ritual circle.
(Author)



(D) In the climax to the ritual, Williamson symbolically 'kills' the 'poppet' with splinters of glass and thereby lays the curse.
(Author)



Alex Sanders, the self-proclaimed 'King of the Witches'.
(*Jack Smith, Chester*)

Sanders and his coven worship the symbolic 'Great Mother'.
(*Mercury Press Agency*)





An open-air ceremony performed to raise 'a cone of healing power' by Alex Sanders and his followers. (*Rex Features*)

Aleister Crowley 'The Great Beast' in magical garments.
(*Harry Price Library*)





Black Magic Altar.
(Conway Press)



A Black Mass in progress.
(Tom Oxley)

Rollo Ahmed,
(*Sunday Pictorial*)



Two types of witchcraft
curses found recently in
public places: a sheep's
heart stuck with thorns and
two clay effigies pierced
by nails.
(*Sun*)





A graveyard desecrated by
Satanists at Clophill in
Bedfordshire.
(*News of the World*)



America's leading witches,
Raymond Buckland and his
wife, Rosemary.
(*Look*)



Sybil Leek - a High Priestess on both sides of the Atlantic. (*Conway Press*)

Anton Szandor La Vey, High Priest of Satan.



The commercialisation of Witchcraft 1: A scene from the film 'Legend of the Witches'.
(Border Film Productions)



The legendary meeting place of witches in Europe was the Bocksberg in the Harz Mountains. Today the event is still marked by an annual gathering of local people on May Eve when the 'devil' is summoned from the skies. (*Keystone*)

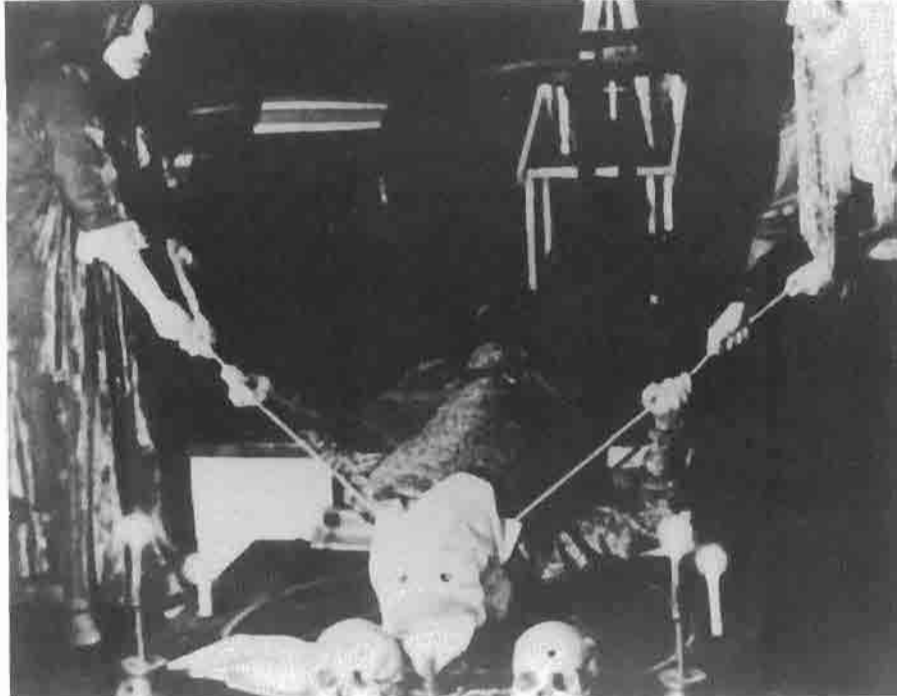




A photograph from the trial of German 'witch master' Hermann Dreher and those who conspired with him to declare a young housewife a witch. (*Keystone*)

A secretly taken photograph of a group of young French students celebrating a Black Mass in the grounds of a mansion on the outskirts of Paris. (*Paris Match*)





A Black Magic ritual being conducted by a group of young Italians led by Franco Meroni, here masked and bound. (*Keystone*)

A Witch Doctor in Nairobi attempting to remove an evil spirit from a bewitched client with the aid of a snake, a glass jar and a telephone directory. (*Keystone*)





A young Negress performing one of the secret rituals of Voodoo.
(*Transworld Features Syndicate*)

Reverend Samuel Parris, who had recently arrived from Barbados bringing with him two black slaves, a woman named Tituba and a man called Indian John. The Parrises had a nine-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, who had several friends. These older girls were charmed by Tituba and her knowledge of African witchcraft. Among the group was 12-year-old Ann Putnam. That winter, the group was entertained in the kitchen of the parsonage by Tituba and when the girls began laughing and crying and even throwing fits, Mrs. Parris became alarmed and reported the matter to her husband. Mr. Parris summoned a doctor. The girls, groaning and spitting, went down on all fours and bit his ankles.

"They are most plainly bewitched," declared the doctor. This was a lucky diagnosis for the girls, for it meant that no one would ask them questions that might have led to a confession of the witch tricks they had learned from Tituba. It was also a diagnosis that pleased Mr. Parris who is believed to have been largely responsible for the witchcraft trials. People would now turn to the church for protection against the devil who could change them into witches. Instead of quieting the terror, the minister helped to increase it.

"Elizabeth," he asked his daughter, "art thou and thy friends bewitched?"

All at once the girls shouted, "Osburn, Good, and Tituba!"

And so began the terror that led to the deaths of 20 persons and the accusation and jailing of 150 more, before sanity was restored.

On February 29, 1692, warrants were issued for Sarah Good, a 70-year-old beggar-woman, bedridden Sarah Osburn, and Tituba. Preliminary examinations by Magistrate Jonathan Corwin started at once. The two Sarahs were subsequently convicted and Sarah Good was hanged.

Sarah Osburn died in jail and Tituba was held for over a

year. She was then sold to pay her jail fees—her food and the manacles she wore.

The hysteria which gripped the village led to further accusations and the testimony still preserved at Salem shows how the examining magistrates meted out their "justice" with bigotry and prejudice. When, eventually, a higher court revoked the sentences, the villagers' black record of persecution was too deeply engrained and too widely known to ever be forgotten. Even the subsequent attempts to compensate the descendants of those executed as witches could not obliterate the stain.

Today the courthouse, at 34 Federal Street, has an exhibition of the evidence of the trials. Here, one can see the County Seal (dated 1687) which was stamped on the warrants for the arrest of those charged with witchcraft. Here, too, is the death warrant of Bridget Bishop, believed to be the only such warrant in existence. Mrs. Bishop was the first woman hanged as a witch in Salem.

Ten pins, two of them twisted and bent, which were produced in court as the pins the witches allegedly used to pierce their victims, are also on view. Nearby, manuscripts in the handwriting of the Reverend Parris contain the direct examination of Rebekah Nurse, who was also convicted and hanged.

At the back of the exhibition case, beside great volumes of testimony, is a yellowed print of the Witch House (corner of North and Essex Streets), the home of Magistrate Corwin. It is the sole surviving home of the period, having been restored and furnished in comfortable 17th-Century style.

A further and more comprehensive collection of witchcraft memorabilia can be found at the Essex Institute at 132 Essex Street, which includes typed transcripts of courthouse records and a library.

It is probably true to say that America has never quite got over her shame about the Salem outrage and indeed the

modern practitioners of witchcraft I met after my journey to Salem tended to agree with this. Several maintained that the old religion of witchcraft was never practised in any form at Salem; the remnants of medieval superstition in the minds of one or two people were the root cause of the plague of superstition. *Wicca*, the real Witchcraft, say these people, has only been established in the United States for the past hundred years.

A subscriber to this viewpoint is New England's most famous modern witch Mr. Ted Rabouin who lives in Westboro, Massachusetts and belongs to a coven which meets in the vicinity of Salem. He describes himself as a hereditary witch and proudly makes this known when he lectures to psychology classes or appears on radio or television. The house where Mr. Rabouin lives is instantly recognisable by its black paintwork; yet he is anything but a sinister person. He has exorcised harmful spirits from haunted houses, helped authorities to find fourteen missing persons, and on one occasion, according to a magazine interview, projected himself astrally to attend a witches' convention in Chicago.

It is difficult to pinpoint in time *when* a significant number of people were seriously practising the art, but records do indicate that at the turn of the century a Scottish immigrant named Longfellow was leading a rather unsavoury cult in Boston, that New York boasted two covens under the auspices of a European antique dealer and there were vague stories from the West Coast of witches conducting a nude ritual on the beach at Malibu on Midsummer Eve.

Perhaps the most obvious part of the country was Pennsylvania in the area of the German (miscalled *Dutch* by the corruption of *Deutsch*) settlements where "wise" men and women openly sold cures and "drove off" the spirits of evil demons.

In 1828 one of the strangest trials on record took place

in York County, Pa. when a man and two teenage boys were tried for the murder of an alleged witch (or "powwower" as they were called) who was said to have "hexed" them. During the trial it was revealed that the three men were also witches and that beneath the surface of this apparently tranquil community there existed a veritable hive of "supernatural practitioners" whose services were much used when those of traditional helpers failed. The citizens who sat in judgement, however, were not convinced and the judge directed them to ignore such "tales of devilry". The story of the trial was relayed in newspapers throughout the United States and undoubtedly resulted in a number of small, (and thankfully not fatal) witch-hunts.

Another area which housed such unsavoury business was the Kentucky Hills, a part of America where it has been my pleasure to stay while researching this book. In this area rural magic has been an accepted part of life for generations, the power to perform it passing from father to son and mother to daughter. Superstition and legends of witches and warlocks abound in the hills and while the people are reluctant to speak of them, a picture of their craft can be assembled.

The Kentucky witches are, in the main, "healing" witches, not unlike those "wise" men and women of Europe who have been so often persecuted through the ages. Secretly much in demand among their kinfolk, they have been credited with miraculous cures and even the restoring to life of the dead. (Through these stories one or two of the most remote settlements have become known to outsiders as "Villages of the Devil's Children").

While some of these witches rely on the use of roots, bark and various herbs to heal the sick, others are believed to have certain inherent psychic powers, so that they can heal simply by the "laying on of hands". This is of course a very old belief dating back to Biblical times. Some of the

men and women actually specialise in certain kinds of healing and there are, for instance, "Blood-stopping" healers. They need only touch a patient who is bleeding to stop the flow. Other witches are said to be able to heal even severe burns with a touch of the hand, accompanied by a particular spell or charm. Still others specialise in curing less serious ailments such as sprains, boils and warts.

Unlike most of their brothers and sisters elsewhere in the world, the healing witches of Kentucky are invariably loners and there are no records of a coven, or covens, ever having been established in the famed Blue Hills. (It has been suggested that many of the witches' charms and skills worked in this area are of English origin and as it was much settled by people from the British Isles this seems not an unreasonable suggestion: certainly I learned here a number of spells which are recorded in English *grimoires* long before America was colonised.)

However, all this only adds up to a scattered and passing interest in witchcraft in early America, and according to my informants the rise of the cult coincided, as did that in Britain, with the publication of the works of Margaret Murray, (with her revelations about the ancient fertility religion in *God of the Witches*), and the practical experiments of Dr. Gerald Gardner.

As far as the general public was concerned, the crucial date was probably 1958 when what had been expected to be a modestly successful film, *Bell, Book and Candle* based on a play about witchcraft by John Van Druten and starring Kim Novak and James Stewart became an overnight box-office sensation. (Its phenomenal success has probably only been repeated by one successive movie, *Rosemary's Baby* the satanic tale by Ira Levin!) The crush to see the film prompted *Look* magazine to interview Van Druten and in his comments he claimed that witchcraft was still practised, and indeed flourished, right there and then in the

heart of sophisticated New York. In the subsequent articles *Look* scoffed at the claim—only to be overwhelmed by calls and letters from those who said they were modern witches. Other papers and television took up the story—and witchcraft in twentieth century America was on the map!

Enquiry since that date has shown a similar growth in the craft to that in Britain with the membership likewise drawn from a cross-section of the community and scattered across the continent—with a predominance, as I have said earlier, on the East Coast. Serious adherents call their practice the "Craft of the Wise" and frequently use the old Anglo-Saxon word of *Wicca*. As in Britain, the craft attracts its fair share of perverts and cranks and the increasing interest of young people in the occult in recent years has led to a number of outrageous attacks on its people and practices. To counteract this as much as possible most of the genuine covens have tightened up their methods of admission and it is now no easy matter for the insincere to get in or, if they do, hold membership for very long.

Witchcraft in America is, not surprisingly, closely modelled on that in Britain and Europe, and although there are variations, the main ceremonies and litanies practised are those devised and modelled by the late Gerald Gardner. This has led to many witches referring to themselves as "Gardnerites" and also explains why the two most important figures in American witchcraft are not only of English origin, but also followed closely in the footsteps of Dr. Gardner. They are Raymond Buckland and Sybil Leek.

Raymond Buckland is certainly the most important Gardnerian witch in America and perhaps the cult's most level-headed and convincing spokesman. A tall, bearded man with striking blue-grey eyes, he is High Priest of the New York coven and has modelled his life-style on his master, the late Gerald Gardner. Buckland and his attractive,

statuesque wife Rosemary came to America in the 1950s and settled in the quiet New York suburb of Brentwood. Unlike several of their more publicity-conscious compatriots, the Bucklands have kept their beliefs very much to themselves and live a typically tranquil suburban existence.

Raymond was introduced to witchcraft by Gerald Gardner who fired what he called a "latent interest in the great craft of life". On his induction to the cult he was given the name Robart and his wife became Lady Rowan. For the first years of their life in America the Bucklands worked unobtrusively to cultivate *Wicca* and slowly built up a coven of their own. Raymond then decided to lecture publicly and write for magazines on the craft to counteract the spate of derogatory and one-sided media attacks on them in the early fifties. He also began assembling a museum of witchcraft items on similar lines to that of Dr. Gardner back on the Isle of Man. When the interest in the cult really began to burgeon a few years back, Raymond gave up his job with a national airline to devote himself full-time to the museum, (now established on Bay Shore, Long Island) and his lecturing. Perhaps, though, his most important product is a monthly magazine *Beyond* which he has run since 1968 and which presents the cult to the interested in simple and easily understandable terms. It is a model of what a specialist publication should be. He has also written a handful of books of which *Witchcraft from the Inside* is perhaps the most popular.

Raymond Buckland is most scathing about his companions in the craft who voice their claims to be "Kings" and "Queens" of witchcraft and has gone to great pains to point out that such positions do not exist. He is also greatly amused by those who press their claims by stating that they have been "voted" to the titles by ballot among the witches. "As we are still a highly disorganised and scattered body of people, this sort of statement is just laughable," he says.

The New York coven which Buckland heads meets once a month in his ranch-style house in the basement which has been specially prepared for the purpose and contains a permanent nine-foot witch circle drawn on the floor. There the traditional ceremonies are conducted with the witches themselves "Skyclad"—the term used by American devotees to describe their nudity. The group is very tightly knit and has steadfastly refused the requests of outsiders (and particularly journalists and photographers) to attend their meetings. "We are like a family and that is how we see ourselves—working to help each other and grow in the strength imparted by the Old Gods."

During the course of each year, Buckland makes contact with a great many witches, both those professing to be "Gardnerites" and those practising other minor variations of the craft. He finds himself in disagreement with these others on perhaps only two major issues—the longevity of the cult in the United States and the necessity of nudism in the rituals. He firmly believes the craft has existed in America no longer than twenty years (coincidental with his own arrival?) and that the tales of practitioners of *Wicca* being around at the time of the Salem Trials are impossible to prove. He also feels that nudity is absolutely essential in the successful practising of the craft—while those who disagree maintain it can be worked wearing robes and that it is the "atmosphere" which is of the utmost importance. (Several groups say that the vital power emanates through the witches' right hand—the left hand, apparently, being negative.)

One person who agrees with this latter statement is the most famous female witch in America today—and perhaps the best-known member of the craft in the world—Sybil Leek. Sybil, who is short, maternal, effervescent and light-years removed from the traditional image of the ugly old crone with pointed hat and broomstick has become an inter-

national favourite on television "talk" shows and enjoys instant recognition wherever she goes. Whatever complaints may have been levelled at her for her exhibitionism and the commercialising of witchcraft through publicity stunts, she is a friendly, open person who received me with courtesy and charm.

Sybil Leek arrived in America in 1964 after a somewhat startling career in England where she made headlines by attending public meetings dressed in a purple cape and stockings, bedecked in bronze jewellery and amulets and carrying a large jackdaw named "Hotfoot Jackson" perched on her shoulder. She caused a sensation at one meeting called by a professor to debunk witchcraft as "superstitious stuff-and-nonsense" by arriving with a dozen fellow witches and offering to stage a ceremony for the unbeliever. (Perhaps, though, she somewhat undermined her credibility by posing outside the hall with some broomsticks specially brought along by the press photographers.) Despite all this flamboyance Sybil was a woman of considerable influence in the cult and held the position of High Priestess in one of the most active covens in Britain. Speaking of this at the time, she said: "We of the Horsa Coven have a long history—both as a group and individually. Everyone is dedicated to witchcraft as the Old Religion, everyone has a flair for healing and we are all determined to use our powers for good and to deflect some of the evil which Black Magic tries to create throughout the world. If we can remain true to these basic ideals, so rooted in tradition, then we are doing our duty.

"We do not interfere with the way other covens, old or new, decide to go about their way of business, and we expect to receive the same respect. New covens are springing up all the time all over the world, but the heartbeat of witchcraft must always reside in the old established covens, such

as Horsa—the sign of the Horse in the New Forest in England.”

Unfortunately—and perhaps predictably—Sybil’s notoriety eventually worked against her and in the spring of 1964 her overly-sensitive landlord ordered her out of her country cottage. Having already nurtured a strong desire to see America and perhaps promote her beliefs there, Sybil took this opportunity to cross the Atlantic. Her background and forthright personality made her an almost instant success.

Now in her late forties, Sybil Leek comes from a long line of witches and claims to be able to trace practitioners of *Wicca* on her mother’s side as far back as the twelfth century. Her father, a Shakespearean actor of no mean repute, was also an astrologer and descended from a family of Russian Occultists. It was an aunt on her father’s side who actually conducted her initiation into a coven at a wild and perhaps not inappropriately spot named *Gorge du Loup* in the South of France. Sybil describes the ceremony:

“There was a clearing in the woodland which had been specially prepared for the gathering. My relation and an antique dealer who was High Priest of the coven were my sponsors. I had been well primed to be aware of what would now take place.

“The altar had been built of the rough stones which lay around. The protective nine-foot diameter circle was inscribed on the earth and the incantations asking for protection to all within the circle were said. Then I was brought by the High Priest to be presented first to the High Priestess and then to the other members of the coven, none of whom I had ever met before. Only their witch names were known, but afterward I would know all of them in their private capacity as citizens of Nice and the surrounding district.

“The vessels containing water and salt were consecrated and the initiation ceremony began. The ritual sword and the blade of the *Athame* gleamed in the moonlight. I was bound

and a knife was held close to my heart as the High Priestess carefully explained all that becoming a witch would mean. Like all prospective witches I was given an opportunity to decide whether or not to go on with the initiation. I did not turn back and I have never heard of anyone else who reaches this point and refuses.

"The oath of fidelity to witchcraft was next given and I joined in the ritual dances and incantations with the other members of the coven. I was at last a fully-fledged witch."

In the years since then she has immersed herself in study of the Old Religion—and despite her publicity and acclaim has suffered considerable personal persecution and intimidation. (Not long after her eviction, for instance, she was approached by a member of a Black Magic group who offered to "take care of her" if she would attend their "festivities" and become their "Queen of Darkness".)

Once her presence had become known in America she was overwhelmed with radio, television and newspaper offers, plus a never-ending stream of telephone callers seeking advice and assistance. The strain was enormous and Sybil believes it was only the sustaining power of her beliefs which kept her going.

She says, "A witch today still has to battle against ignorance, superstition and unkindness, but in order to survive she must learn that she cannot herself resort to these things. A witch must learn that the Old Religion comes before her own wishes, her family, or her friends. Because of this, she has to face moments of intense loneliness, for the more she progresses into occultism, the more she finds herself alone.

"To say quite frankly to the whole world, 'Yes, I am a witch' and then put up with the trials, misunderstandings, personal abuse, and insults which are flung at her, means that there has to be a great inner power to sustain her. Witchcraft is the only religion which enables a woman to take a major part in it when initiated, to retain her feminine

identity and be a complete human being, not a second-class member of the religious fraternity. The orthodox religions do not seem to encourage women to lead—only men. In my religion, the High Priestess is respected as a woman and a spiritual leader. There is no division between the two.”

The recent changes in the social climate in America have, of course, aided Sybil considerably and the many strange cults which have sprung up overnight based on the occult and the supernatural have made her ideas almost *passé*. She now lives in Houston, Texas, (where her two sons work) and has opened a restaurant, “Sybil Leek’s Cauldron” from which emanates a nightly one-hour “Sybil Leek Radio Show”. On the side, she runs a boutique and classes in occult subjects. She also has her own monthly magazine on astrology and rushes to and from appointments in a chauffeur-driven limousine with licence plates SIBIL I. (She can’t drive, hence the chauffeur.)

“Is all this affluence the result of witchcraft?” she was asked not so long ago by a sceptical journalist. “What else?” she replied with a most disarming smile.

Apart from Raymond Buckland and Sybil Leek, America boasts a number of other self-professed witches—perhaps the most striking of these being Louise Huebner who, as some commentators suggest, is challenging Sybil strongly for the title of “Witch Queen of America”, at least in the publicity, if not occult, sense.

Louise is a young and beautiful Los Angeles housewife who first came to public attention a year or so back casting horoscopes and appearing on television. The descendant of a long line of witches who originated in Yugoslavia, she learned much of her craft from her grandmother. Unlike Sybil Leek she does not belong to a coven and lives somewhat eerily in a house reputed to be haunted, with her husband and three children. It was as a result of the suc-

cess of her television ventures that she decided to seek national recognition. Her message was pitched sensibly and directly on one platform—Sex Appeal.

She made a long-playing record, *Seduction Through Witchcraft* and wrote a book, *Power Through Witchcraft* in which she set forth a number of spells and chants to do with sex, potency, and getting a man. Making full use of her own good figure, long dark hair and lustrous eyes, she tried to project the image of a witch as an alluring enchantress. Witches possess special powers, she reasoned, so why couldn't they create an aura of good looks and win popularity?

For Louise, witchcraft is fundamentally a tool to use to get what one wants out of life. She is practical and pragmatic. To her, witchcraft is a way of disciplining the subconscious so that one can achieve success. In spite of her emphasis on sex, her brand of twentieth-century magic seems cold and calculating to those who grew up on traditional lore. But for the do-it-yourself, businesslike types intrigued by both witchcraft and success, Louise has all the answers. She also believes strongly in letting everyone know just what she practises and how it can help them. She was in her element, therefore, when in 1970 the Los Angeles parks commissioner asked her to go up on a hill and cast a spell for sexual vitality over the county. In exchange she was given the title of "Official Witch of Los Angeles," of which she promptly began to make widespread use in her publicity and which has since ensured her prominence in all reports on American witchcraft.

Louise Huebner is, in fact, typical of a new breed of witchcraft practitioners in America who owe little of their success to their *Wicca* origins, but a great deal to their own ability to make use of acknowledged occult powers. Dr. Leo Martello is also just such a person.

Dr. Martello lives and works in New York City where he runs a coven, lectures on the craft and writes books. He is also one of the leading figures in a new occult organisation WICA—The Witches International Craft Association. This is in his own words, “an association of witches and their friends, to fight for religious freedom and civil rights, to obtain all benefits for the Old Religion, as accorded to others in this country under the Constitution, to come out of the shadows into the full light and confront prejudiced minds with their biased, stereotyped and untrue opinions about us.”

It was through the WICA newsletter that I came into contact with the tall, bearded and youthful Dr. Martello who has also taken his ideas for promoting witchcraft to the extent of holding a “Witch-In” in New York to instruct interested members of the public on what the cult is all about.

“Like other minorities,” he says, “witches have been the subject of other peoples’ evil fantasies. They need someone around on whom they can project their unacceptable desires. In fact if you examine the history of *Wicca* you’ll find the root cause of all the hatred is the fact that we’re liberated—we have no guilt about sex and nudity and we believe in the basic forces of nature while others struggle to give them the names of Gods and religions.”

Dr. Martello has crystallised this feeling into what he calls the “Witches Liberation Movement” and went as far as calling on the New York Civil Liberties Union when the City’s Deputy Commissioner recently refused to let them hold a meeting in Central Park. After some strong words, Dr. Martello and his witches got their way.

For those Americans who want to make contact with witches, the WICA newsletter is a good place to start, for it carries news of worldwide witchcraft, covens, meetings, and articles about the Craft.

Then there is WEB, the Witches' Encounter Bureau, which is for "contacts, correspondence, covens, and a chance for witches and those interested to meet one another, form friendships, and apply for initiation." However, as witches agree, it is one thing to apply for initiation and quite another to be accepted. But WEB does provide a starting point for anyone in search of contact with witches—the rest is up to the individual.

Although many American witches, even today, prefer to remain underground, or feel that they must do so for social and economic reasons, Dr. Martello is not one of these.

"Witches have to define themselves—challenge the stereotyped rôles forced on them," he says. "We'll get nowhere being timid. We've been pushed around too long."

Another newsletter perhaps equally as important as that of Dr. Martello's, is *The Waxing Moon* which is published quarterly and appears most appropriately on the days of the major witch festivals: Halloween, Candlemas, May Eve and Lammas. It is totally committed to *Wicca* and while the main body of subscribers consists of practising witches, it is also available to those seriously interested in the craft. The publication is produced in Topeka, Kansas by an Air Force sergeant and first generation witch, Joseph Wilson, and has not missed a deadline since the first issue in 1965. It is modelled on an English journal of the same name and contains both information on the cult and details for the interested on how they can make contact with covens in their part of the country.

Joseph Wilson, the editor of *The Waxing Moon*, is an alert, sensible and convincing man who has not always enjoyed complete understanding for his beliefs among his colleagues. Nevertheless, as he says, fellow witches have helped sustain his faith and the newsletter keeps him in touch with a great many kindred souls. "Witchcraft," he says, "was a religion smashed by Christianity which is now

rising again. I'm very pleased to be playing a part in this revival."

Perhaps, though, even he is not aware of the total world-wide extent of this revival. And when a copy of this book reaches him in Topeka, he'll no doubt see how concerted efforts like his have led to a phenomenon un-paralleled in occult history.

EVIL ON THE COAST

"We must even face the possibility
that California has allowed itself
to become a principality of the
Devil and that the rest of the
country is not far behind."

"ESQUIRE"

March, 1970.

To those who know California it is really not surprising that it should have become the centre for diabolism and Black Magic in the United States. As one visitor remarked to me when I was in Los Angeles: "There is so much more attention given to the quality of death here—to death styles, to dying the good death, to all-electric dying."

It is a fact that despite living in perhaps the most beautiful area of America (even if there is a serious problem of air pollution in many of the major cities) the suicide rate is the highest in the country and practically in the world. Despite amazingly blue skies, miles of golden beaches with surf which is so white it hurts your eyes and a social and economic development making it the richest community in the world, California covets darkness and death. The people are bored and satiated with all they possess and have turned to the only excitement left—the ultimate excitement of dicing with the black unknown on the far frontier of life.

The upsurge of occultism in general and Black Magic in particular has centred itself on the coast and made Los Angeles its heart. Los Angeles, smog-shrouded, carved from the wilderness by pioneers and now basking in almost unbelievable affluence. A city on wheels, a city where anything goes—nude bars, simulated sex shows, hippies ped-

dling drugs on Sunset Strip, Hell's Angels, and a frantic search for anything to relieve the monotony of living. A city now, to quote one authority, "celebrating death".

What more natural spot, then, for those who would seek a new avenue of experience through the practice of evil, to settle? Here, where no-one looks surprised at anything and "doing your own thing" was less extraordinary than not doing it; where the propagandists of drugs like Timothy Leary and Alan Watts have stated that real beauty can be found only in the horrors which accompany the bad trip. If the acid vision can bend good into evil, white into black with no apparent change, they argued, why should the attraction of Satan be any different from that of Christ?

Seeking this new experience in typical California-style, the citizens of Los Angeles added their own special brand of exhibitionism to the magic, their own love of ceremonial to the practice of evil for evil's sake. The shade of Aleister Crowley looms large in the area, but his excesses pale into insignificance compared to today's devil worshippers.

The views of observers on this scene vary, from the moderates who see it as just another symptom of California's overall sickness carrying its people headlong into perdition, to those who feel it to be part of a monstrous conspiracy. A city councillor in L.A. put it to me this way: "The Second Coming has already arrived—only it was Satan that arrived not Christ. It hit Los Angeles first, naturally, we being the city of lost angels. Now there is a huge league of people, 'Devilmen' I've heard them called, who have let the Devil into themselves and who work for the Devil."

As for the world at large is concerned, this whole movement towards evil and black magic was symbolised in 1969 by the terrible butchery of the film star Sharon Tate and her friends by Charles Manson, self-proclaimed "God and Devil" and his male and female disciples, widely referred

to as "Satan's Slaves". The story of their hideous killings has been well documented but there are certain salient points which need repeating here.

There can be no doubt that Manson exerted complete authority over his followers and when he preached to them that evil was good and that nothing he, as their Christ/Devil asked them to do could be wrong, they accepted it without question. Their lives were his for whatever purpose he chose.

At the time of the killings "The Family", as the group became known, had settled on an old ranch once used for movie making and named after its owner, a former wrangler George Spahn. There they lived in commune style, sleeping together indiscriminately and foraging for food outside supermarkets and restaurants; devoting themselves to drugs, music and magic, while following the dictates of Manson.

The murders began before the Tate case. The first victim was a musician named Gary Hinman. He was killed on August 6, 1969, when three of Manson's followers went to his house and asked for money. They were two girls and a man named Robert K. Beausoleil. The girls were holding a gun on Hinman, while Beausoleil ransacked the house. When Hinman threatened to get away from the girls, Beausoleil took over. By accident the gun went off and the half dead Hinman was then stabbed to death. Beausoleil's fingerprints were found on the murder scene and he was arrested later in San Jose.

Drug-crazed and seemingly inspired by their first foray with death, another group of disciples then went out two days later, under orders, to strike at society again—this time against the very epitome of California wealth, its film stars. So followed the massacre of Sharon Tate and her four friends at Roman Polanski's palatial home in Bel Air.

Two days later they struck a third time, killing a Mr. and

Mrs. Leno LaBianca in their home in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles. The group daubed "Death to the Pigs" and "Rise" and "Helter Skelter", the title of a Beatles' song, upon the walls of the house. On Mr. LaBianca's stomach, one of them wrote the word "War" with either a knife or a fork.

These scrawled words provided the police with the link between the killing of Hinman and with the deaths on the Tate estate, and in due time resulted in the arrest of the entire group.

The bizarre and gruesome trial which followed (there were ten women and three men charged in all) proved one of the most extraordinary in American legal history. It also dramatised the weird society of drug-induced obsessing, upside-down values and the adoration of the diabolical that was developing in California.

A statement made by one of the girls during cross-examination was highly significant in this context. Counsel for the Prosecution asked the young woman if it was true that she regarded Manson as Satan and that she was one of his witches:

"Yes, sir, I am."

"And you consider that witches have supernatural powers?"

"Yes."

"Would you tell us what you thought your powers as a witch were?"

"I could do anything I wanted. I was made to believe I was a witch, right from the beginning. Charlie (Manson) said we were going to build this new culture and learn to control others by witchcraft."

One of the men also expressed similar beliefs and devotion to Manson's cause in the witness box:

"It's hard to explain. It's like nobody else counted but us and we would learn how to have all our desires fulfilled

by using the same kind of magic that the witches used in ancient times. He told us that there wasn't any right or wrong. Just what was right for us.

"He was a strange man. He could talk four or five of the girl slaves into a circle and make each of them believe he was talking to her and the others weren't there. He was so attentive all the time, so caring that sex with him was natural. That's what he said, it was just a natural part of every day.

"He was magnetic. His motions were like magic. One of the girls told me she fell under his spell the first time she heard him sing. He had this song he made up: 'There is no good, there is no bad. There is no crime, there is no sin.'"

Later in the trial it was reported that Manson had made a point of speaking to one of the girls just before she left for the Tate residence and said, "Leave a sign. The girls know what I mean—something witchy." This, indeed, was to be his undoing.

How, though, did Manson manage to exert such influence over so many young people? One of the group giving evidence for the prosecution probably came closest when he said:

"How did he do it? Well, by the time Charlie was 35 he had done just about everything there was to be done. We were all terribly impressed by his experiences. He had been in jail a lot, bummed around the country and always had harems of young chicks. Everywhere he went he got this suicidal loyalty from everyone. He was big on Black Magic. It was pretty powerful stuff. He was continually hypnotising us, not the way they do in night clubs but more like mental thought transference."

Drugs, of course, figured largely in the "influence" as indeed they do in most Black Magic in California. Some American psychiatrists have drawn a strong parallel be-

tween today's practitioners of the occult who take drugs and the witches of the Middle Ages who used hallucinogenic ointments and potions to give themselves a "high" in which they believed they were flying. Manson, too, doubtless convinced his drugged disciples that they were "flying" and could carry out his "work" of destroying society with impunity.

A member of the U.S. Federal Drug Abuse Control Agency to whom I spoke not long after the trial about the link between Black Magic and drugs was most forthcoming on the whole subject.

"You see, for a start, we just don't know how many individuals practise some form of Black Magic today," he said. "Many are members of pseudo-religious cults. These cults can be divided into several categories. Among them are those that carry orthodox religion into a psychotic realm, genuine witchcraft cults and superficial or phony cults which use Black Magic as a pretext for sexual orgies and other kicks.

"About six or seven years ago, while gathering data on drug abuse we estimated that there were as many as seventeen million cultists in the country, many of whom used drugs—and I do not mean addicted to them. Since then the number, from all indications, has greatly increased.

"The most dangerous type of 'cult drug' is the hallucinogen, which we also call the mind-manifester or the consciousness-expander. You can readily see how a drug with these properties and psychedelic factors appeals to many modern witches, genuine and spurious.

"The most alarming in this category is LSD-25, lysergic acid diethylamide. When a psychiatrist, the late Dr. Max Rinkel, introduced LSD clinically into the United States it could only be obtained legally from either the Federal Drug Administration or the National Institute of Mental Health by qualified medical and psychiatric research scientists.

"After studying a great many case histories, Dr. Rinkel reported that under the influence of LSD the orgasm was enhanced, especially in females. Then, when Dr. Timothy Leary, former Harvard psychologist was quoted in a national magazine as saying, 'LSD is the most powerful aphrodisiac ever discovered,' the rush was on. I'll go as far as to say, it gave impetus to witchcraft and Black Magic especially in Southern California where numerous new and far out cults are created every year."

How accurate the agent's words were, soon began to manifest itself when I started my enquiries into the occult circles of Los Angeles. From my dossier I have extracted the following reports as being typical of the groups practicing there:

The Solar Lodge of the Ordo Templi Orientis

This cult, the O.T.O. as it is widely known, specialises in sado-masochistic and sodomitic sex magic, blood drinking and manifests a violent hatred of coloured people. Originally founded in Germany in 1902, it claims to carry on the work of the Knights Templar and to have had Aleister Crowley in its ranks for a time. The world headquarters of the O.T.O. are alleged to be in Switzerland, but the most flourishing group is said to be that in Los Angeles with students from the University Campus as the most prominent group involved. Reports indicate that the members sacrifice animals at their gatherings, drink the blood and then pour it over themselves while having sexual intercourse.

The Process Church of the Final Judgement

Originally founded in Britain (where it is now defunct) the presence of the "Church" was first noticed in Los Angeles when Charles Manson claimed to have been a member. The followers wear black capes and profess their major commandment to be "Thou Shalt Kill". They say they are dedicated to bringing about the end of the world

by murder, violence and chaos—but they, the chosen, will survive to build a new world of Satanic glory. The Processors conduct a service of devil worship in which sex and drugs play a major role. They claim to have branches in San Francisco, New Orleans and even New York.

The Order of Circe

This is a more personalised cult with the members dedicated to worshipping the "Devil Woman" who heads the group and is believed to be a reincarnation of the Greek Goddess, Circe. Adepts of the order carve the so-called Star of Circe, a four-pointed star emanating from a rectangle, on to their chests, evidently as a mark of adoration of the Goddess. The Circe group hold outdoor ceremonies twice a month, on the new and full moons, on the secluded beaches of Los Angeles and Ventura counties, where they sacrifice black animals such as dogs, cats, roosters and goats.

The Chingons

Another cult of animal sacrificers who meet in the Santa Ana Mountains just outside Los Angeles. Dedicated to "The Worship of Evil" the members steal family pets and ritually disembowel them, eating the hearts as a sign of their obedience. The leader of the group is known simply as The Grand Chingon and current rumours have it that he is a very wealthy Los Angeles businessman. An unwitting and unsuspected observer of one of the cult's meetings said they assembled around an altar which was decorated with dragon symbols and slew several animals on a table beside it. The witness also reported they had a portable crematorium for disposing of the bodies!

The Four P. Movement

An off-shoot of the Chingons, formed by a group of dissatisfied members who felt there was too much sacrifice and devil worship and not enough sex. They specialise in sexual perversions carried out at night in churches and the

desecration of holy buildings with the words "Satan is the Master" scrawled in menstrual blood.

The Hollywood Cults

Innumerable groups abound in the Hollywood Hills and along Benedict, Laurel and Topanga Canyons—most practising Satanism, drug-taking and attempting to utilise all the old rituals of Black Magic as contained in the Medieval *grimoires* which are now being reprinted cheaply. The most important figure is undoubtedly the "Princess Leda Amun Ra" now virtually a legend who lives in a castle-like home in the hills. A former Los Angeles housewife who discovered her "status" through drugs, she is surrounded by a bevy of disciples who follow her every command and assist her when she ritually slays swans in the special temple in her home. Her followers believe that Leda can "capture" souls and the high point of their month is the symbolic "crucifixion" of a young male (usually high on drugs) in the gardens and the "transplanting" of his soul into a swan.

In a house close to Leda's, lives Hollywood's most famous Warlock, Samson de Brier who professes to practise a kind of solitary white witchcraft, but says he can use his powers for evil. He calls himself the most important witch in California and the head of a dozen or so covens. A tiny man, always dressed in black, he rarely receives visitors in his huge gothic home, but if encountered, prefers to talk more of his friends from the "old days" such as André Gide and Anaïs Nin, than witchcraft.

In the vicinity are a dozen or more houses used for Satanic ceremonies—some the particular preserve of homosexuals who practice a form of devil worship allied to bondage in which the central figures are bound with leather thongs, wear crowns of thorns and are beaten by other men dressed as nuns. Others cater for Lesbians and their fantasies while among the traditional "open" groups, drugs

and perversion are thinly disguised beneath the ceremonial rites and chants.

And so on. Even as I write, some Californian high on drugs will see himself as the new Messiah and band together more bored people into a new cult of evil. It was all put very neatly in an article by Hollywood observer, Tom Burke, who quoted a long-time Los Angeles resident on the new scene:

"If you sense an evil here, you are right, and I'll tell you what it is: too many people turned on to acid. If you make a habit of tripping—well, acid is so metaphysical—you are going to be forced into making a choice, between opting for good, staying on a goodness or Christian trip, and tripping with the Lord Satan. That's the whole heavy thing about too many people turned on to acid: to most of them, the devil just looks groovier. And that's one of the reasons I wear a cross, too, I believe in powers you can't explain. And if these sick Hollywood heads *are* into these powers—well, I want some protection. It freaks them to see a cross, if they're wearing a cross upside down. They just can't touch you, wearing the mark of the Lord Jesus."

And if that sounds to you a little like the old medieval superstition of being afraid of the unknown reappearing, it does to me, too. But with a real difference—today fears of those who dabble with the deadly powers of evil are in the main fully justified. Gary Hinman, Mr. and Mrs. LaBianca and Sharon Tate and her friends found that out—tragically and shockingly.

Of all the witchcraft cults in California, whatever their shades of white, grey or black there is perhaps none quite so strange, or developing as quickly, as the Church of Satan based in suburban San Francisco. The cult proclaims openly to practise Black Magic, put curses on all opponents, preaches a philosophy of "indulgence instead of

abstinence" and conducts a vigorous campaign of ridicule against white witchcraft in general and *Wicca* in particular. At the head of these people is Anton Sandor La Vey "High Priest of the ineffable Kingdom of Hell" and the "Black Pope of America". A tall, fearsome-looking man with shaved, glistening head and dark goatee beard, he is a self-publiciser par excellence, and an occultist of considerable skill. All this he has devoted to creating his new world of Satanic power.

San Francisco, the beautiful city on a hill with its cable cars and dramatic Golden Gate Bridge, is a most unlikely place to find a cult such as La Vey's. And indeed the house where he lives and works stands out prominently from the picturesque pastel-coloured frame and stucco buildings which cover the rest of the Bay Area of the town. It is Victorian in appearance, three stolid brick storeys high and painted black all over. The shutters remain tightly shut day and night and a notice on the door warns casual enquirers, "Do Not Ring Unless You Have An Appointment". For those who are invited, Diana La Vey, the small, pretty,



The Satanic Pentagram

blonde wife of the High Priest, will open the door and show them courteously into the "Ritual Chamber" as the main lounge is called. Dominating the room are a tombstone

with legs (serving as a coffee table), an old operating table, a skeleton and a vast array of occult books—primarily on Black Magic.

Anton La Vey, who calls himself a Doctor of "Satanic Theology", had become known as the most notorious practitioner of the black arts since Aleister Crowley and obviously delights in heightening this legend by his life style and setting. He dresses in a black suit with Roman collar and wears the Satanic Pentagram of Baphomet, the Black Goat, on a silver chain around his neck. (Illustrated on page 123.) Outdoors, he strides along in a flowing black cloak.

Born in 1930 of Russian parents (who brought him up on tales of vampires and the supernatural, he says) La Vey was a circus artist, animal trainer and police photographer before founding his cult on *Walpurgisnacht*, April 30th, 1966.

"In effect I started the church even before 1966," he recalls, "because I had set up a magical circle in the Bay Area of San Francisco for people who were already students of the Black Arts. We had about 50 members with a hard core group of 25 or so meeting once a week for seminars of practise. I had developed a synthesis that I was putting into practice and I found that it worked.

"Basically the principles of Satanism are contained in the first words of Faust's *Homunculus*, 'I live, therefore I must act.' We're here, and we'd damned well better make the best of it and not look beyond this life. There is a demon inside man and it must be exercised, not exorcised—channelled into ritualised hatred."

The impact of the cult was not long in being felt and today La Vey claims to have a membership of around 10,000 people in the United States and "branches" in most major countries of the world, including several European nations, Great Britain and even Australia. According to him, these people are aged between 25 and 45 and practice

a "controlled form of hedonism". In this they acknowledge Satan as a symbolic personal saviour who advocates sexual freedom. They make a great point, too, of informing everyone that the word traditionally associated with their master, EVIL, is actually LIVE spelt backwards. Their ceremonials, as we shall see later, are designed to eliminate all inhibitions and include a naked woman as the "altar" and the use of phallic symbols for benediction.

La Vey encourages his members to indulge in the Seven Deadly Sins because they are the things we do naturally, he says. They hurt no one; besides, they were invented by the Catholic Church to instill guilt in the faithful. Actually, the Seven Deadly Sins are virtues, he reasons, because they all lead to physical or mental gratification, and how can you be good to anyone else if you aren't good to yourself?

"If we didn't have pride, we wouldn't have any self-respect. Anger? If people exploded, there might not be ulcers. Lust? If it weren't for that we wouldn't be here. Envy? How could one get ahead if he didn't envy? It's the same for gluttony, greed, slothfulness."

He practices what he preaches, too, and points to what happened to attorney Sam Brody as proof. Brody was the boy friend of actress Jayne Mansfield, who was a member of La Vey's church.

"Jayne and I were very close," the Satanist leader says, "but she had strong masochistic tendencies, a self-destructive urge.

"Sam Brody hated my group. He threatened to make trouble, all kinds of scandal for me. I told him I would see him dead within the year, and I went through a ritual Satanic curse, conjuring up forces to destroy him. I told Jayne that he was under a dark cloud and that it was foolish for her to be with him. I urged her to stay out of cars with him and not be alone with him. I made it clear to her that it would happen within a year."

Within a year, in June 1967, Brody was killed in a car crash on the road to New Orleans. Jayne Mansfield, who had been named co-respondent by Brody's wife in a court suit, was decapitated in the same accident.

"She was the victim of her own frivolity," pronounces La Vey.

If this statement gives the impression that the High Priest has a certain lack of compassion, he can be heard at his most disparaging when it comes to discussing white witchcraft.

"Satanism differs greatly from all self-righteous and supercilious religions who protest that *their* members use the powers of magic only for altruistic purposes. Satanists look with disdain upon 'white' witchcraft groups because they feel that altruism is sinning on the lay-away plan. It is unnatural not to have the desire to gain things for yourself.

"Satanism advocates practising a modified form of the Golden Rule," he goes on. "Our interpretation of this rule is: 'Do unto others as they do unto you'; because if you 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you', and they in turn, treat you badly, it goes against human nature to continue to treat them with consideration.

"White witchcraft groups say that if you curse a person, it will return to you three-fold, come home to roost, or in some way boomerang back to the sender. This is yet another indication of the guilt-ridden philosophy which is held by these neo-Pagan, pseudo-Christian groups. White witches want to delve into witchcraft, but cannot divorce themselves from the stigma attached to it. Therefore, they call themselves white magicians and base seventy-five percent of their philosophy on the trite and hackneyed tenets of Christianity.

"Anyone who pretends to be interested in magic or the occult for reasons other than gaining personal power," he

maintains, "is the worst kind of hypocrite. The Satanist respects Christianity for at least being consistent in its guilt-ridden philosophy but can only feel contempt for people who attempt to appear emancipated from guilt by joining a witchcraft group, and then practise the same basic philosophy as Christianity.

"White Magic is supposedly utilised only for good or unselfish purposes, and black magic, we are told, is used only for selfish or 'evil' reasons. Satanism draws no such dividing line. Magic is magic, be it used to help or hinder. The Satanist, being the magician, should have the ability to decide what is just and then apply the powers of magic to attain his goals."

To summarise all his beliefs, the High Priest of Satanism recently wrote a book titled characteristically "The Satanic Bible". In this he propounds his tenets which, simplified, read:

1. Satan represents indulgence, instead of abstinence!
2. Satan represents vital existence, instead of spiritual pipe dreams!
3. Satan represents undefiled wisdom, instead of hypocritical self-deceit!
4. Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it, instead of love wasted on ingrates!
5. Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek!
6. Satan represents responsibility to the responsible, instead of concern for psychic vampires!
7. Satan represents man as just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all fours and who, because of "his divine spiritual and intellectual development", has become the most vicious animal of all!
8. Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification!

9. Satan has been the best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years!

And so on. The book is a history not so much of blasphemy as complete opposition to all the teachings of Christianity. La Vey claims, "What we advocate is what most Americans practise whether they call it Satanism or not. We are the new establishment and ours is the way for the future."

It is perhaps only in the State of California, that La Vey could report truthfully that his "Church" is recognised by the government and the state as a religion. "We have all the advantages from the point of view of taxes and our weddings (in the name of Lord Satan) funerals and baptism (also held over the body of a nude woman) are recognised and registered."

La Vey has carried out these rites in the full glare of publicity and, not surprisingly, has received a great deal of abuse and condemnation—particularly when he "baptised" one of his own two daughters, Zeena, aged 6. All this he accepts cheerfully and indeed the new visitor to the house (or "Devil's Chapel" as he prefers to call it) will invariably be shown his bulging scrapbook. A conducted tour of the house is also reminiscent of a guided tour of occult history, crammed as it is with horned masks, crystal balls (La Vey is also an accomplished hypnotist and this does give a pointer to the basis of some of his skills) a black coffin, an organ and the Master's study which bears a head-board "The Den of Iniquity". As if this were not enough, there is also a bed of nails which La Vey claims to use regularly.

During the week, apart from being regularly consulted by would-be members of the Church (admission fee \$10), Anton La Vey answers a voluminous mail, writes for magazines and shows private clients how to cast their own spells. Friday he gives over to the preparation of his weekly

"Satanic Mass" which takes place in the evening and draws a dozen or so followers from around the San Francisco area. My schedule in the town did not permit me to stay on for this ceremony, but the following graphic report was specially prepared by a young and perceptive journalist, Judith Rascoe. It describes, as Miss Rascoe puts it, "just exactly what goes on in a quiet backwater of San Francisco every week . . ."

"Late on Friday evening I drove to San Francisco to attend a Satanic High Mass. A heavy fog, like the background of a Flemish hell, smothered the city; the streets were empty. I knocked on the door of the Church of Satan—it was so dark and misty I could not find the bell—and a young security guard in a black uniform admitted me cautiously.

"Several young warlocks, wizards, and priests were lounging and chatting in their black robes in the little hallway. In the hyacinth parlour half a dozen more people were waiting for the service to begin. Two elderly fellows sat on the sofa, dismayed or pleased by the fact that the other Satanists were a youthful lot.

"Looking around, I saw that everybody except me and the old fellows and a young girl in the corner wore the familiar Satanic medallion: a ram's head in the centre of an inverted five-pointed star.

"The light dimmed. Wagner filled the room, and soon we sat in warm, voiceless darkness, submerged beneath waves of the Ring Cycle. After a long, long time, Wagner subsided, giving way to organ music from another room.

"Suddenly the door opens and a priestess carrying a candle beckons us to follow her to the Ritual Chamber, where we grope our way on to folding chairs and are plunged into impenetrable darkness once again. The organ booms on and on, making me wonder how the organist can find the keys.

"Finally the lights flicker a little at the other end of the room, flare up, and reveal half a dozen ministers of Satan, some with their heads covered with pointed black hoods, gathered before the altar. On the altar-fireplace the red-haired girl lies nude and artfully disposed on a fur rug, so that her nudity is more suggested than explicit, especially to the obliquely seated congregation.

"A very tall hooded figure steps forward and rings the bell, and then Anton La Vey, who has been standing in the shadows, his robed arm lifted before his face, begins the 'Satanic Solemn High Mass'.

"Tonight he is wearing a horned satin cap and heavy satin robes. He seems seven feet tall rather than six; his gestures are slow and lordly; his voice is full, cold and dramatic. From one book he reads a Gospel of Satan; from another he recites the Enochian invocations. He chants the names of Satan in litany with the congregation: '*Abaddon, Apollyon, Asmodeus . . . Demogorgon . . . Moloch . . . Typhon!*' Priests and congregation respond smartly with: '*Shemhamforash! Hail Satan!*'

"Members of the congregation are invited to come forward and make their wishes known to Satan. A talkative wizard steps forward and heaps curses on the name of his enemy: 'A snivelling swine, a rotten churl, a crawling, contemptible cur.' . . . 'May slimy shapes rise from brackish pits and vomit forth their pustulence into his puny brain.' The ministers chant, the organ music rises to a crescendo, and a blast of sound and a rifle crack of 'Hail Satan' hurl the curse towards the victim's doorstep.

"Then a sexy young Frenchwoman steps forward and—we cannot hear her. Is she cursing somebody or using the conjuration of lust? ('Send forth that messenger of voluptuous delights!') Another enthusiastic '*Shemhamforash! Hail Satan!*' sends her wishes on their way. The horned

salute is given, the bell rings, the service ends, and the congregation wanders back to the hyacinth parlour.

"Perhaps it was the late hour, but after it was all over it occurred to me that, as Tolstoi might have said, all happy churches are alike. Frank smiles and firm handshakes welcomed me to the congregation. And one of the elderly fellows even asked me how I liked the service. . . ."

Explanation of this ritual is hardly necessary although a few comments on certain specifics may be enlightening. All the participants wear black robes (symbolic of the Powers of Darkness) with cowls, so that the participant is free to "express emotion in the face without concern" to quote the "Satanic Bible". The females are, however, urged to wear garments which are "sexually suggestive" to stimulate the male participants "and thereby intensify the outpouring of bio-electrical energy which will ensure a powerful working".

The reason for the nude girl forming the altar is that Satanism is a "religion of the flesh" and apart from serving as a focal point, "woman is the natural passive receptor and represents the earth mother"—to paraphrase from the "Satanic Bible" again.

The bell-ringing also plays a significant rôle in the ceremony. The priest rings the bell nine times, turning counter clockwise and directing the tolling towards the four cardinal points of the compass. This is done once at the beginning of the ritual to clear and purify the air of all external sounds and once again at the end of the ritual to intensify the working and act as a "pollutionary" indicating finality.

A phallic symbol is usually displayed at these rites (although it was not noted by our young reporter) and, in the words of the "Satanic Bible" represents "generation, virility and aggression". It is held in both hands by one of the assistants and shaken twice towards each of the four points of the compass, for the benediction of the house.

Further items which may be employed are candles—both black and white, representing the Light of Lucifer, bringer of enlightenment—a chalice made of silver from which is drunk the “Elixir of Life” (a strong wine) “to intensify the emotions” and a ritual sword occasionally used during the invocation of Satan. The use of this sword has led to charges against La Vey that, in the tradition of Satanism over the ages, he continues the practice of human sacrifice.

This he denies—in *actuality*. But he does say it can occur symbolically in a Satanic ritual. Someone who has unjustly wronged a diabolist or his loved ones can be destroyed by ritual curse. The curse destroys the “sacrifice” in ways not attributable to the magician. The police never come knocking at the door, adds La Vey, but the one who has pronounced the curse *knows*.

Anton Sandor La Vey and his “Church of Satan” are just another manifestation of the Californian dream turning sour. He is perhaps better established and more organised than so many of the drug-taking cults of the state and with his increasing membership, a long future seems fairly safe to predict. Doubtless, too, his antagonism towards the practitioners of white witchcraft is going to increase as surely theirs will towards him. Whether either side accepts the fact, both are playing with dangerous powers they may not always be able to control. Should that happen, the dangers could be real for all of us.

APPENDIX

The Satanic Ritual

I

Before the Commencement

1. Person performing ritual stands facing the altar and symbol of Baphomet throughout ritual, except when other positions are specifically indicated.
2. If possible, altar should be against west wall.
3. In rituals performed by one person, the rôle of priest is not required. When more than one person is involved in the ceremony, one of them must act as priest. In a private ritual the sole performer follows the instructions for the priest.
4. Whenever the words "*Shemhamforash!*" and "*Hail Satan!*" are spoken by the person acting as priest, the other participants will repeat the words after him. The gong is struck following the other participants' response to "*Hail Satan!*"
5. Conversing (except within the context of the ceremony) and smoking are prohibited after the bell has rung at the beginning, and until after it is again rung at the end of the ritual.
6. The Book of Belial contains the principles of Satanic magic and ritual. Before attempting the rituals in the "Book of Leviathan" it is imperative that you read and understand the complete Book of Belial. Until you have done so, no degree of success can be expected from the thirteen steps which follow.

II

The Thirteen Steps

1. Dress for ritual.
2. Assemble devices for ritual; light candles and shut out all light sources; place parchments to right and left of the altar as indicated.
3. If a woman is used as the altar she now takes her position—head pointing south, feet pointing north.
4. Purification of the air by ringing of the bell.
5. "Invocation to Satan" and "Infernal Names" are now read aloud by priest. Participants will repeat each Infernal Name after it has been said by priest.
6. Drink from Chalice.
7. Turning counter-clockwise, the priest points with the sword to each cardinal point of the compass and calls forth the respective Princes of Hell; Satan from the south, Lucifer from the east, Belial from the north, and Leviathan from the west.
8. Perform benediction with the phallus (if one is used).
9. Priest reads aloud appropriate invocation for respective ceremony: Lust, Compassion, or Destruction.
10. In the case of a personalised ritual this step is extremely important. Solitude is compatible with the expressing of the most secret desires, and no attempt to "hold back" should be made in the acting out, verbalising, or casting of images pertaining to your desires. It is at this step that your "blueprint" is drawn, wrapped, and sent off to the recipient of your working.

(A)

To Summon One for Lustful Purpose or Establish
A Sexually Gratifying Situation.

Leave the area of the altar and remove yourself to that place, either in the same room or without, that will be most conducive to the working of the respective ritual. Then, fashion whatever imagery you possibly can that will parallel in as exact a way as possible the situation towards which you strive. Remember, you have five senses to utilise, so do not feel you must limit your imagery to one. Here are devices that may be employed (either alone, or in any combination):

- a. graphic imagery such as drawings, paintings, etc.
- b. written imagery such as stories, plays, descriptions of desires and eventual outcome of same.
- c. acting out the desire in tableau or playlet, either as yourself or portraying the rôle of the object of your desire (transference), using any devices necessary to intensify imagery.
- d. any odours relative to the desired person or situation.
- e. any sounds or background noises conducive to a strong image.

Intense sexual feeling should accompany this step of the ritual, and after sufficient imagery is obtained, as strong an orgasm as is possible should serve as climax to this step. This climax should be attained using any masturbatory or auto-erotic means necessary.

(B)

To Insure Help Or Success For One Who Has Your Sympathy Or Compassion (Including Yourself)

Remain in close proximity of the altar and with as vivid a mental image as possible of the person you wish to help (or intense self-pity), state your desire in your own terms. Should your emotions be genuine enough, they will be accompanied by the shedding of tears, which should be allowed to flow without restraint.

(C)

To Cause The Destruction Of An Enemy

Remain in the area of the altar unless imagery is more easily obtained in another spot, such as in the vicinity of the victim. Producing the image of the victim, proceed to inflict the destruction upon the effigy in the manner of your choice. This can be done in the following ways:

- a. the sticking of pins or nails into a doll representing your victim; the doll may be cloth, wax, wood, vegetable matter, etc.
- b. the creation of graphic imagery depicting the method of your victim's destruction; drawings, paintings, etc.
- c. the creation of a vivid literary description of your victim's ultimate end.
- d. a detailed soliloquy directed at the intended victim, describing his torments and annihilation.
- e. mutilation, injury, infliction of pain or illness by proxy using any other means or devices desired.

Intense, calculated hatred and disdain should accompany this step of the ceremony and no attempt should be made to stop it until the expended energy results in a state of relative exhaustion on the part of the magician.

11. (a) If requests are written, they are now read aloud by the priest and then burned in the flames of the appropriate candle. "*Shemhamforash!*" and "*Hail Satan!*" is said after each request.
11. (b) If requests are given verbally, participants (one at a time) now tell them to the priest. He then repeats in his own words (those which are most emotionally stimulating to him) the request. "*Shemhamforash!*" and "*Hail Satan!*" is said after each request.
12. Appropriate Enochian Key is now read by the priest, as evidence of the participants' allegiance to the Powers of Darkness.
13. Ringing of the bell as pollutionary, and then the words "SO IT IS DONE" are spoken by the priest.

THE ANCIENT CRAFT IN EUROPE

"There is good reason for stating that almost every town and city has its witch and almost every village its 'devil's servant'."

West German Government Report, 1971.

Europe is steeped in witchcraft and Black Magic, as much if not more than any other continent in the world, and I include the jungles of Africa and the vast dark regions of South America. Europe, in fact, includes the most witch-haunted country in the world—Germany—and "the cradle of the Black Mass"—France. It also shares with Switzerland the distinction of having the country which last put a witch to death and to have more magistrates still trying "supposed" witches than all the other continents put together. (Last year, 1971, for instance, Germany alone was the setting for some 70 cases of alleged witchcraft.)

Witchcraft in Europe, however, is somewhat different from the cult of *Wicca* and the other variations we have encountered in this book. Here we are referring to the ancient art of "white" witchcraft, of healing by spells, of the laying of curses and the prediction of the future. It is not an organised cult broken up into covens, each with its own individual hierarchy, but solitary male and female practitioners—in the main, hereditary witches—scattered across the continent and working in isolation from, and in ignorance of, each other. These people are perhaps closest to what has traditionally been held to be the witch archetype—they are often elderly, usually living apart from the gen-

eral communities in rural areas and invariably poor. They subsist on what they can earn from the land and putting their occult knowledge to use for the local peasantry—most of whom hold them in awe. There are, of course, witches practising in the cities of Europe—sometimes under the less-evocative titles of fortune-tellers and spiritualists—but they are more difficult to find and more prone to be prosecuted by the law for “false pretences” should a complaint be lodged against them by a dissatisfied client.

The European rural witch has an astonishingly high reputation among the lower classes, particularly in such highly industrial societies as Germany and Switzerland where they are held capable of curing illness (including that of animals) cursing with considerable venom—and even raising the dead. Despite these accomplishments, however, they have been the victims of some terrible persecutions in modern times (not to mention the great, bloody purges of the Middle Ages and the succeeding centuries) and there is no denying that the inborn prejudice which still exists in most people's minds against the word “witch” has caused them some grievous harm at the hands of biased jury-men and women. The general populace itself has also not been above taking the law into its own hands on occasions when sufficiently emboldened to act in a group against a solitary practitioner or two.

Unlike the “modern” witches of other parts of the world the lone witches of Europe do not talk of their craft. Most of them have inherited their skills by word of mouth from a parent and guard these secrets jealously. Even those that can readily be encountered—and I have personally confronted renowned practitioners in the deep valleys of the Southern mountains of Austria and on the Northern plains of Germany—will offer the benefit of their art, but no explanation of its formula. Those who live in their vicinity will not talk easily of the witches either, half-embarrassed

that they should still believe in such things and half-protecting the man or woman who probably belongs to one of the oldest families in the district. Their existence, in fact, comes to light in the strangest ways . . .

In Lueneburg, West Germany, for example, the tragic story of a young boy who was beaten to death by his own father uncovered an entire region in which medieval witchcraft was still alive. The father had been attempting to help his son by "ridding his body of the devil" that the old man believed had taken possession of him. The reporters' curiosity was aroused by the father's story and they began investigating the countryside between the Elbe and Weser Rivers in lower Saxony. The evidence they collected eventually forced the West German Ministry of Social Affairs to make its own investigation.

It was a district little affected by the industrial revolution. The traditions of the "blighting" witch and the "curing" witch had been handed down from parent to child, generation after generation. After the depression that brought the Nazis to power, witchcraft all but disappeared in the enthusiasm for the new Germany. Science and progress aroused the peasants' expectations of a new life of prosperity and happiness. But when Hitler and the New Germany led only to ruined houses, bomb-scarred fields, death, hunger and disease, the people of lower Saxony returned to the old ways.

Today, more than half the population still shuns regular doctors, putting faith in supernatural healing. Before the deluge of notoriety, the old remedies were openly used and openly sold. Most of the potions are purchased directly from the *Teufelsdienerin*, literally the servant of the devil; that is to say, witch.

These cures range the whole gamut of human ills from fever ("eat a piece of black bread dipped in the blood of a cat"), rheumatism ("a mixture of seven beetles and six

laurel berries") to toothache ("wear the tooth of a mouse around your neck") and the removal of warts ("The juices of a skull, human or animal, boiled in water and taken in a glass of lager or beer"). Ludicrous though these cures may seem, those who dispense them are widely believed to be all-knowing and a recent case of witchcraft in Stuttgart underlines this fact.

I reprint the following newspaper account of the trial in full as it also illustrates the varying attitude of the rural populations whenever the topic of witchcraft arises:

VILLAGE SHUNNED WIFE WHO WAS
CALLED A WITCH

She put a spell on farm,
says local 'witch doctor'

All Germany has been talking about the fantastic story of Aloisia Rundel, a farmer's wife who was ostracised as a witch by the 800 people of the medieval village of Gehlen, 60 miles from Stuttgart.

It began when farmer Lorenz Rundel consulted Hermann Dreher, 51-year-old local "witch doctor", about his problems.

The expensive new cows he had bought did not give enough milk and their first four calves died, said the farmer. And his 33-year-old wife could not have the baby they longed for.

Dreher told him: "Your bad luck is caused by witchcraft. I can chase the demons away—for a fee."

The farmer agreed to pay £60. And when Dreher gave him instructions on how to purify the farm, Rundel obeyed them implicitly.

He sealed off the cattle sheds with bits of old shoe leather and pieces of brown paper cut in the shape of stars.

He drew large crosses in milk on the walls and the cows were forced to eat pieces of wet paper dusted with flour and mixed with spiders' legs.

Then Rundel asked the witch doctor to make it possible for his wife to have a baby.

Dreher laid Aloisia on a bed, covered her with a sheet of brown sacking, and made a cross in milk on her chest.

None of the spells worked. The milk output went down. Another calf died. Aloisia became pregnant, but had a miscarriage.

The witch doctor announced: "The trouble is your wife. She is a witch and has cast a spell over your farm."

Farmer Rundel believed him. And so did the people of the village, one of the oldest in Germany, a place where ancient houses lean over narrow cobbled streets lit by gas.

Nobody at the farm would eat at the same table as Aloisia.

She was made to sleep in the hay loft.

Village women would hurry out of the store when she entered. And she had to wash her clothes by herself in the village stream.

After nine months of this Aloisia applied for a divorce. Farmer Lorenz, aged 43, denied her story before the judge. So did his two sisters, Theresia and Josephine.

But the judge was also told of statements made by Lorenz, his sisters, and the witch doctor.

In one statement the sisters wrote: "Her eyes would change colour at midnight and we would often see her talk to the Devil in the middle of a blazing fire."

The divorce was granted. And then the police took a hand.

At a court in Ravensburg the witch doctor was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for making false declarations in public and signing false statements.

The farmer was sentenced to four months and his two sisters to three months.

Aloisia lives now with her sisters in nearby Ravensburg.

"I can never go back to that village," she said.

One explanation for this case, and indeed the several others like it in recent years, is that the "blighting" witches are in danger of losing their centuries-old grip on rural minds—a grip already being loosened by the advances of medicine and education—and are now turning their craft *against* their communities in a bid to retain their authority. The result is that some communities—like that of Gehlen—are soon alive with suspicion and mistrust and the employment of one witch to counteract the power of another (whether real or not) only adds to the mounting hatred. Not surprisingly these circumstances tend to put up the prices of spells and, not long after the affair at Stuttgart, "blighting" witches in the vicinity were charging upwards of 500 marks to remove a curse!

The German government has become aware of this unpleasant trend and not a few of the 70 cases of alleged witchcraft which came to trial last year fall into this category. The authorities have stated their belief that there are something like 10,000 "witch doctors" practising in Germany and the number of people who can therefore be adjudged to believe in their magic is not difficult to assess. A report published recently concluded firmly: "It seems to us that there is good reason for stating that almost every town and city still has its witch and almost every village its 'devil's servant'."

But if Germany is the European centre for witchcraft, France must carry the same distinction for Black Magic and Satanism.

The history of devil worship in France is of a comparatively recent date, although suspected lone practitioners of "white" witchcraft have been burned and hanged since the Middle Ages. (Perhaps the most famous of these was Joan of Arc, put to the stake in 1431 for allegedly being in league with the Devil.) In true Gallic style, though, the French had to make additions to the traditional Black Mass which we mentioned earlier in Section 2, and gave it the most horrifying of all its elements—the degradation of the female on the altar and human sacrifice. These were the handiwork of perhaps the most unpleasant figure in the annals of occult history, Catherine de Medici, daughter of the renowned magician-prince Lorenzo de Medici and later wife of Henry II of France. She took up the serious study of Black Magic after the death of her husband and had soon gathered around her a group of courtiers and noblemen who together conducted the vilest and most blasphemous rites their warped minds could devise, including the Black Mass, an obscene parody of the Catholic Mass. Granted impunity for her actions by her position, Catherine set an example soon to be copied throughout France and later across Europe. The nobles, the wealthy and the landowners saw in the bloody sacrifice of small children and the ensuing licentious orgies not only ways (they supposed) for having their innermost desires granted, but also a new means of gratifying their sexual inclinations.

Later monarchs in France continued the practice of Black Magic and records indicate that young women were defiled and sacrificed as well as children and babies. All were slain with ingenious torture and cruelty, their bowels and entrails being literally torn out, while, when women were the victims, the reproductive organs were chosen as the point of torture.

Throughout France more and more Black Magic groups sprang up, the majority of them controlled by renegade and

defrocked priests who displayed amazing ingenuity in their affronts to the Church. One of these, the Abbé Beccarelli gave his followers small sweets during the mass which were supposed to cause them to change sex, while another named his group "The Goats" and despatched them wearing goat masks to rape and pillage the countryside by night.

Perhaps the most obscene of these ceremonies devised by ex-clergy was the ritual which became known as "The Mass of St. Secaire". This form was used exclusively by priests who wished to avenge themselves on their enemies. They conducted the ceremony in ruined or deserted churches or in caves. At eleven o'clock precisely the officiating priest began the Mass backwards ending on the stroke of midnight. The Host used on these occasions was black and three-pointed. No wine was consecrated, but the priest drank filthy water or, according to some accounts water in which the body of an unbaptised child had been thrown. He used no crucifix, but formed the sign of the cross on the ground with his left foot. It was supposed that this ceremony caused injury or death to the person against whom it was directed, who would begin to wilt and fade away from the time of its first performance.

Inevitably all this "devil worship" was to lead to public outrage and outcry. It was crystallised in a trial which became known as the "Chambre Ardente Affair". As France was alive with stories of concourse with demons, sexual orgies of terrifying obscenity and human sacrifice, the King, Louis XV, was finally forced to appoint a tribunal to investigate the allegations. In the months which followed, the highest and the lowest in the land filed into the "Black Chamber" (a room hung with black curtains and lit by candles) to give evidence. When, finally, the trial led to the King's own doorstep and it was revealed that his own mistress, Madame de Montespan, was herself a practitioner, he

was compelled to quash the enquiry. So, as before, Black Magic continued to flourish.

At the close of the nineteenth century, another great explosion of occult practices consumed France, highlighted again by the activities of a renegade priest, the Abbé Boullan, who surpassed the obscenities of all his predecessors by crucifying small children at his Masses dedicated to Satan. Many of these children—and their numbers did run into dozens—were the unwanted offspring of the group's sexual excesses and it formed part of the ritual for the mother actually to present the newly-born child to the Abbé for slaughter.

These diabolical Masses were usually held in the private chapel of a house belonging to an old French aristocrat over whom the Abbé had a hold. The choristers were young men of perverted sexual taste and the Mass was said by Boullan wearing blood-red vestments on which an inverted crucifix and obscene symbols were embroidered. During the Mass, Boullan would call upon the Devil to grant him and his followers virility, glory, riches and power.

It was said, too, that certain nuns were followers of the Abbé, believing that he could exorcise all evil from them. Boullan's usual remedy was to recommend that during the ceremony consecrated hosts should be used, mixed with feces. He also taught them how to hypnotise themselves into thinking that they were copulating with the Devil and how to enjoy sexual intercourse with him!

Much of the evil work of the Abbé was exposed to the unsuspecting French public by one man, J. K. Huysmans, who indeed did more to explain the horrors of Black Magic *per se* than any other man of his time. Huysmans, at first an occult practitioner himself, became sickened by all the degeneracy around him and turned to the Church for solace. In return for its comfort, he dedicated himself to exposing the evils of devil worship. The high-point of his

work was undoubtedly his book *Là Bas* (1891) in which he laid bare the satanic underworld of France and described events, including a horrendous Black Mass, in which he had actually participated. The book caused a sensation and certainly brought to an end the activities of many evil cults. Not long after the publication of the book, Huysmans was persuaded by a French journal to sum up his beliefs and apprehensions about Satanism in an article for its columns. This he did and I now include the bulk of it here; not only because it has not previously been translated into English and as such will be of particular interest to students of the occult, but also because most of its comments are as relevant now as they were when first written over half a century ago. It makes a particular point, too, of the stealing of the host by Satanists, a trait still much practised today:

For several centuries, demonologists confused certain episodes of severe hysteria with the phenomena of Satanism. Nowadays doctors attribute to severe hysteria accidents which belong exclusively to the domain of the exorcists.

At one time, quite a number of people were burnt who in no way were possessed of the Evil Spirit; now those who are, find themselves treated under a shower. We diagnose in direct contradiction to the Middle Ages; everything then was diabolical, now everything is natural.

The truth seems to lie between these two extremes; but, it must be declared without beating about the bush, nothing is more difficult than to draw a demarcation line between the various forms of attacks of severe neurosis and the different states of Satanism.

It is quite clear in fact that the ignorance of doctors (and, let us admit it, of the priesthood too) in these matters, is not calculated to help us to resolve the embarrassing problem. How, for instance, are we to distinguish, to sift out, in the confusion of a mental hospital like the *Salpêtrière* or the *Saint-Anne*, people who are hystero-epileptics or lunatics

from those who are demoniacs or possessed? The former are treated as mad, instead of being administered liturgical remedies or treated by exorcisms or prayers, they are submitted to all manner of cures; and when all these have failed, we end by taking no more interest in them and relegating them to the oblivion of the incurable wards.

One exception to this rule stood out, some few years ago, at Gif. A girl, driven out of her own mind by the Devil, was examined by mental specialists who decided that she should be shut up immediately in an asylum. The family refused. The Bishop of Versailles sent priests who examined the patient in their turn; they recognised the symptoms of satanic ascendancy, carried out exorcisms and cured her.

This case can be quoted as one of the rare cases of the clairvoyance of a priest, and of certain clergymen of our day.

But this is only one aspect of the complex question of Satanism. Here is another:

People who are not shut away at all, not at all touched, people in good health, people one meets in the street, and who are like everyone else in fact, take part secretly in operations of Black Magic, make contact with the Spirits of Darkness, to slake their desires of ambition, hate, love; in a word, to do Evil.

And it is about these that so many anxious people question one; but are you sure that these acts are possible, do you believe that diabolical societies hold meetings; have you any proof that Satanism is not a hoax?

We must admit, right from the start, that the question of demonism is at present one of the most complicated in existence and this is understandable.

Satanism benefits from the very real difficulty which we find in showing it clearly to the public. And indeed, if demoniacal attacks and examples of underhand practice of

sorcery were for several centuries considered as crimes and tracked and pursued and clearly revealed by the proceedings of laborious, noisy courts, such is not the case today.

Magic is no longer a crime and sacrilege has been crossed off the statute book; magistrates are not concerned with them, and consequently the publicity of the courts and the Press is lacking.

And yet, if you followed attentively the arguments of certain contemporary cases, if you looked very closely for example at the trial of Elodie Menetrey, known as the Villemomble case, or again, if you studied the interrogation of a certain Mathias Hadelt who in 1891 murdered a Trappist of Aiguebelle, you would, by taking the trouble to read between the lines of the evidence, discover the influence, even the intercession of the Devil in these cases.

Let us add that, as soon as an infernal stigma appears, it is covered up; it appears that by common agreement magistrates and clergy blow out the lights and keep silent when the Devil passes by; in these conditions it becomes almost impossible to produce proofs of Satanism.

Facts nevertheless exist, those which could not be hidden, which lead by means of deductions which one can draw from them, to the inference that the reality of Satanism is undeniable.

These are the facts which I wish to discuss.

I will take the best-known; on Tuesday of Holy Week recently at *Notre Dame de Paris*, an old woman, huddled in a chapel dedicated to St. George which is in the apse to the right of the choir, took advantage of a moment when the officials were out of the way and the cathedral was almost empty, to rush to the tabernacle and carry off two pyx, each containing fifty consecrated hosts, as well as the pyx-cloth.

This woman must have had accomplices for she had to hold a pyx in each hand, hidden under her coat, and unless she put one on the floor and so risked being noticed, she

could not, by herself, have opened one of the doors to get out of the church.

Moreover, it is obvious that the woman committed this theft to get hold of the hosts, for in most large towns nowadays the pyx is no longer of sufficient value to tempt people. Everyone knows, in fact, that they are of gilded bronze, copper, aluminium, that only the inside of the bowl is silver-gilt. Let us say, too, that in order to sell them without fear of discovery, the receiver who buys them is obliged to crush or melt them and sell them off by weight, and then, how much can he offer for this material to the criminals who are obliged to have recourse to his meditation and therefore to be exploited by him, in order to get rid of it?

Besides, in thefts carried out in the provinces where sometimes the church treasure still possesses ancient pyx and old chased silver or gold vases, the robber who steals them for their metal gets rid of the wafers because they embarrass him, and might betray him by scattering all along the road as he makes his getaway.

I have examined the stories of a large number of these robberies and I have noticed that the thief who was after only objects of value, emptied the contents of the pyx either on the altar cloth or on the floor; only once, in several years, in a theft which took place at La Pacaudière in the Loire, the thief had the idea of throwing the holy offerings in the latrines.

Now, no wafers were left at *Notre Dame*, either on the floor or on the altar or in the latrines; they were all taken as well as the containers, whose value was nil, but which could add, by their sacred nature, extra sacrilegious spice to the crime.

And this *Notre Dame* case is not an isolated one. I have for a long time past checked in the religious weeklies the thefts of the Eucharist which have been carried out in France in churches.

For some years they have shown an incredible increase in all the farthest corners of the land. In the Nièvre, Loiret, Yonne, tabernacles have been forced open and the Divine Presence taken. Thirteen churches have been robbed in the diocese of Orleans and the pillaging has increased to such an extent in the diocese of Lyon that the Archbishop suggested in a communique that the parish priests should transform their tabernacles into safes.

And the offences reach from the south to the north. I can quote cases a few months apart in the Aude, Isère, Tarn, Gard, Haute-Garonne, Nièvre, Somme and Nord Departments.

A few years ago, it was the Dauphine which seemed to be the region specially chosen as the scene of the crimes by these executioners of God, and that makes one think, if one remembers that this ancient province is one where the largest number of sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin are. Apart from *La Salette*, you find there, indeed, *Notre Dame de Chalais*, *d'Esparron*, *de Casalibus*, *de Croix de l'Isle*, *de la Grotte du Mort*, *d'Embrun*, *de Lans de Beauvoir*, *de Bon-Secours*, *de Grace*, *de Lumière*, *des Anges*, *de Pitié*, *de Fontaine-Sainte de Voiron* . . . and so on.

It appears therefore that there has been a diabolical invasion of this fief of the Mother of God, a challenge by the Devil, pointing the attack against the very dowers of the Virgin.

Let us add that these abominations are not peculiar to France. All the hosts disappeared from the monastery of Notre Dame of the Seven Sorrows in Rome, not so long ago, and the same thing happened in the parish church at Varese in Liguria and in the convent of St. Mary of the Graces at Salerno.

But have the authorities sought out those people who stole from the tabernacles? Nowhere can I find any trace of a judgement, an arrest, a case.

Basically these thefts leave the Law and the Church almost standing; an apology is read from the pulpit, then one or several atonement ceremonies take place, like the ones prescribed by Monseigneur Richard for the sacrilege at Notre Dame, and the case is buried, finished, never spoken of again.

In order to make the Church and the Law and the Press condescend to get excited, they need to come up against a grisly crime like the following:

Several years ago, at Port-Louis, a certain M. Picot made a pact with the Devil, assassinated a child and ate its heart still warm.

Last year, in the same town in January, a sorcerer called Diane tried to win the services of the Infernal Powers by slitting the throat of a seven-year-old boy and sucking his blood straight from the wound.

But, I repeat, except for these cases of mad demoniacs, no information is released to the public on the inroads of Satanism which are made further and more deeply into our way of life.

The question now arises as to why people steal the sacred emblems.

No answer is possible, unless one admits that the Host is carried off to be used in divine obscenities, in deeds of Black Magic.

For what do you think a freethinker would do with these wafers? They are bits of worthless unleavened bread to him, he would not pay 25 centimes for the whole lot taken from Notre Dame. It must therefore follow that those who acquire them believe that these pieces are no longer slivers of bread, but the very body of Christ.

Now, since this Body cannot, under these conditions be used for anything except acts of execration, for the preparation of philtres and potions, for infernal acts, we are forced

to conclude, by the very fact that it is stolen, that Satanism certainly exists.

It is Christianity inside out, Catholicism in reverse; and that this religion has its unswerving and stop-at-nothing devotees, you can judge by the following prayer which I have taken from one of its disgusting rites:

'O God of goodness, O most Loving Father of Fathers, O high and higher Lucifer, great and greater, all powerful and more powerful, we fall down before your divine majesty. From the depths of my spirit I call to you; Lord I am yours, all yours! Let Adonais be spat upon, we reject him, we detest him, and let those baptised with water deny him. Shine, shine, Holy of Holies, Light-bearing Torch, Hearth of the life of worlds, blessed Intelligence, shine, shine, O good God Satan.'

Altogether, this doctrine can be defined also as a new upsurge of the old Manicheanism, which after creeping through the ages is pushing up its foul shoots again in the midden-heap of our times.

Not all Satanists are reduced to obtaining holy wafers by whatever means they can, however, for sometimes an ex-priest is affiliated to each of their little groups, and he can consecrate bread as the need arises.

In any case, it is a certainty, not a hypothesis that these people do exist; that is the real track which we should follow, if we want to find out the real sacrileges, the real Devil's partisans and examine the abominations they practise, and learn, once and for all, how we stand with regard to the more or less hidden powers which they possess.

And I repeat again, those who ought to follow up these tracks, do not. Indeed we should probably be satisfying ourselves with weighing up conjectures, if a few details of information were not given to us, here and there by people mixed up in these things; if by verification, repeatedly, continuously and steadily, we did not find out about people who have formed circles in which they celebrate the Black Mass.

Take for instance, 'Canon Docre', whose profile for a time appeared in the window of a photographer's shop on the corner of the Rue de Sèvres and the Place de la Croix Rouge. This supposed man of the Church formed in Belgium a clan of young Demonists. He attracted them by curious experiments whose aim was to find 'the unknown forces of nature' for that is the eternal reply of people when cornered, caught red-handed in acts of Satanism; then he held them by tempting them with women he had hypnotised, and by the attractions of sumptuous feasts; and gradually he corrupted them and excited them with aphrodisiacs which they swallowed in the form of sugared almonds at dessert; finally, when the neophyte was ready, bound and defiled by reciprocal services, he threw him into the sabbath revels, and made him join the throng of his horrible flock.

However, we must believe that this debased apostolate does not make its practitioners happy, for one of Docre's victims told me about the madness of this priest, who sometimes trembled with agony and cried out, 'I am afraid, I am afraid,'—and only succeeded in reassuring himself and recovering by surrounding himself with lights, by shouting devilish invocations, and committing sacrilege with the Eucharist.

Even as I write, though, people are preparing for themselves the most abominable existence imaginable. They open, as it were, their doors to Evil; very soon they lose their personality and will; their souls become mere reservoirs of ghosts. I know some who have tried everything, who have practised the rites of evil spells, committed sacrilege; they have no doubt exhausted the indulgent pity of God, for expiation has followed soon after. They wander through life like a fish out of water, half mad, no longer belonging to themselves, no longer feeling themselves except in the realisation of their downfall and suffering. They are truly pos-

essed, manipulated by evil forces which they must obey even when they no longer wish to do so . . .

As any one who has read Huysman's horrifying description of a Black Mass which he attended in Paris in his book *La Bas*,* will know, he was a man of practical experience and not given to flights of fancy. Reports in subsequent years have shown that his fears were well-grounded and his predictions accurate.

The intervening years have thrown up numerous other Black Magicians and Satanists in Paris and the other large cities of France. Aleister Crowley was for a time at the centre of Black Magic in Paris in the years between the two wars and an intimate of many of the French dabblers. A man of less serious intent posed under the name of "La Bête" and conducted Black Masses for the tourists in a Parisian cellar until 1942. He provided an extra source of income for a large number of prostitutes who willingly joined in the fleecing of visitors (particularly American) in an atmosphere of flickering black candles, incense and animal sacrifice. Dennis Wheatley was an unsuspecting witness to one of this man's phoney rites when the magician talked a night club owner into letting him produce a Mass as a cabaret attraction! Amusing though this may seem, there is nothing to joke about where serious modern Satanism is concerned.

Today's French practitioners are in the main young, the spiritual "children" of the rebels and Bohemians of the twenties and thirties. They, like their compatriots elsewhere, are not interested in the old magical traditions, but rather in Satanic orgies and drug-taking. Once again, set within the context of a permissive society—and few countries have pushed back the frontiers of sexual and moral freedom

* The first full English translation of this particular sequence is to be found in an anthology of occult stories compiled by the author of this book and entitled "The Magicians", (Peter Owen 1972.)

faster and further than the French—the devil worshippers here have allowed no boundaries to be set to their experiments. At most Black Masses now, I learned in Paris, the attendance can range from a handful to several hundred and among the drugs which generally circulate are hashish, cocaine, LSD, various types of amphetamines and, of course, sleeping pills of differing strengths. The French, being the inventive nation they are, have also introduced the use of breathing apparatus complete with tanks of sodium pentothal for extra kicks and bands of rock musicians to give yet another “high” of excruciatingly noisy sound. (Californians, going in much the same direction, should note!)

At the Mass, sexual elements play as important a role as ever, but increasing emphasis is being laid on the drugs and the kind of “trip” the users experience. According to some sources, the worse the trip, the more horrifying the vision, the more successful it is considered in terms of modern Black Magic. Apparently, too, the drug-takers often compare their experiences the following day to see who has gone “farthest into hell”.

The dangers of drug-taking do not need elaborating, and according to police sources in France a number of recent spectacular suicides have been put down to drug abuse at Satanic ceremonies. The authorities are in fact concerned about the rise of Black Magic and several raids have been made in recent months on flats and mansions believed to be used for such ceremonies. As always, the “hauls” have been depressingly small.

Italy, too, is suffering something of a blight of Black Magicians and from my enquiries it seems that the pattern differs very little from that found in France: it is mainly the preserve of the young, the wealthy and the sexually permissive seeking new outlets for their frustrations. Like Paris, Rome offers its more adventurous visitors pseudo-witchcraft

ceremonies in basement clubs and at least three of its most famous prostitutes rejoice in witch names and promise their clients "supernatural sex"!

The country also has its rural witch doctors in the same style as those in Germany. Here, though, they make a speciality in placing or curing the "evil eye", belief in which is still widespread, particularly in the impoverished southern half of the peninsula and in Sicily. The practice is referred to as "overlooking" and peasants—particularly women—are always on their guard for the malign glance that can affect their lives or their health. Numerous counter-charms and spells exist which are bought and sold to avoid this condition lasting for any length of time.

A peasant who believes he is the victim of the "evil eye" will visit a man or woman reputed to be adept in relieving this particular magical affliction. Placing a bowl of green oil on the table between them, the witch doctor dips his thumb into the oil and anoints the thumb of his client. Then he puts his oil-covered thumb into his mouth three times and exhales the same number of times. Finally he swallows and recites an incantation.

The old traditions of Witch Sabats also dies hard in rural Italy and I was told of numerous groups of peasants who keep vigil on Midsummer's Night to protect themselves, their families, livestock and crops from the witches and their demons when they hold their unholy revelry. In preparation for this night, the local people gather garlic onions and walk about carrying them by the bulbous roots, shaking the long flowering parts in the faces of their friends, in imitation of the wooden phallus that used to be carried in the past. Little feasts of boiled vegetables are also made, as it is believed to incite desire for intercourse; while childless women eat certain snails, in hope of conceiving, though the parents of a child begotten on Midsummer Night would run the risk of its possessing the "evil eye". Young lovers

also seek each other out with love potions and gifts of flowers which symbolise passion.

There is a flourishing business run by the witch doctors in love potions and men or women who want to make someone of the opposite sex fall in love with them are required to furnish them with a vial of their blood. Mixing the blood with herbs, the adept mutters a magic formula and cooks the mixture, which the client must secretly put into a drink given to the person whose love is sought.

If all this is inclined to seem rather harmless, a recent case reported from Sicily shows how any dabbling with the darker secrets of magic can have deadly repercussions. The story concerned a barber in the little town of Barrafranca, Angelo Capici, who was a practicing witch doctor and known throughout the island as "The Sorcerer". Capici was certainly a remarkable man and looked less than half his 54 years; it was rumoured in fact that he was in league with the Devil and had learned the secret of eternal youth. People came from miles around to have him cast spells for them, combat the "evil eye" and make love potions. Then, one night in May 1970 so the story goes, the devil actually materialised during one of Capici's rituals and struck him dead. At least that was the story that Capici's 46-year-old wife told the police.

The woman, Angela, admitted that it was she who actually held the weapon which killed Capici, but that her hand had been guided by the Devil himself! In the ensuing court case an incredible tale of dabbling with the black arts emerged.

Angela Capici told the court that she and her husband had been happily married for twenty-eight years when Angelo set himself up as a part-time wizard. She approved the plan and helped him brew the "wonder" potions which restored youth and vigour and revived the affections of husbands who had tired of their wives.

But she became badly frightened when he began to dabble in Black Magic.

"I'm a good Christian," she said, "I was horrified when he worshipped and prayed to the Devil."

Then in the weeks just prior to his fateful experiment, Angelo forced her to take part in his evil ceremonies. On the night of the last ritual, he put on his special garments just before midnight and summoned her to join him.

As he spoke, Angela recalled, a thunderstorm broke outside.

"I tried to escape from the room, but he spread his arms, the way you do when you chase a chicken, and got me in a corner. He sacrificed a black cockerel to Satan and called upon him to put an evil spirit in my body, to make me the Devil's prophetess so that I could predict the future."

She added that she felt a "tidal wave" of evil in the room. The candles flickered and went out. In the darkness she fainted and fell to the floor.

When she came around, she found her husband lying asleep in bed looking wan and exhausted. And then, so she claimed, the Devil tempted her to take up the ceremonial knife which Angelo had used for the Black Mass and told her to chop off his head.

She obeyed, and slit his throat from ear to ear.

"How did the Devil talk to you?" asked the Judge.

"I believed then that he talked to me in the voice of the thunderstorm," Angela whispered.

Angela was found guilty of murder and jailed for five years, but the court ordered that she should spend the time in a prison hospital.

Many Italians felt the murder was just retribution for a man who had transgressed the boundaries of "white" magic into the realms of black. It served to emphasise, too, the power of the supernatural in their land.

Spain also has a tradition of witchcraft, though it is

mainly the preserve of the gypsies and centred around the casting of spells and selling of love potions. During my many visits to Spain I have also heard it rumoured that the Black Mass is still practised occasionally in Northern Spain by followers of the left hand path, but in great secrecy for this is a Catholic dictatorship and the combination of two such elements could lead to the most merciless prosecution.

Although the gypsies lead a far from easy life in Spain, they are respected by certain sections of the population because of their ability at magic. Part of the overall resentment is doubtless the fault of the gypsies themselves, for they make no bones about the fact that some of their cures may also contain a curse. For this reason the Spaniards try to attend to their own health needs, combining the use of centuries-old recipes and prayers to appropriate saints with the buying of candles and the paid singing of a mass. It is only when an illness refuses to respond to such treatment that the family goes to the gypsies for help. The price for a cure runs high. Worse, they can never feel quite certain that the cure is untainted.

But that the gypsies' witchcraft can work is demonstrated by the following story concerning a Basque peasant which I heard last year. The fellow was a healthy, strong young man who on awakening one morning found suddenly that he was completely paralysed.

The doctor was summoned but, after examining him, proclaimed that there was nothing organically wrong with the man. However, he remained in this condition for two weeks, his vitality wasting away daily.

Finally his mother went to the local "witch doctor" for advice. The witch told her that her son was dying of a curse placed upon him by another witch and that the spell had been bought by a rival for the hand of the girl he was courting. The witch undertook to cure the young man for the sum of ten thousand pesetas, a fortune to those poor peasants.

But the young man's mother begged and borrowed the money, brought it to the witch and in return was given a small human finger-bone which had been ritually blessed, boiled with herbs and buried in a cemetery. The witch told her to bind this amulet to her son's forehead and he would recover within six days. She followed the witch's instructions and her son was soon well again.

Needless to say, if the local priest or the Guardia Civil had heard the faintest rumours of this proceeding, the witch as well as her patient would have been arrested immediately.

Of the rest of the European nations and their involvement with witchcraft, either white or black, we need say very little. If it is to be found in any of these countries at all, it is scattered, rarely practised and in the main only a pale shadow of what it used to be.

In Scandinavia, Sweden remains the only country where any traces of the practice can be found. In the region of the Blockula Mountains stories persist that witches of the old storybook kind, complete with pointed hats and broomsticks, still assemble on the nights of the great witch festivals to feast and dance with their demon companions. This area was traditionally one of the half-dozen great witchcraft centres of the world and, according to the old legends, on Midsummer Eve the devil himself would put in an appearance here dressed in a green coat, red trousers and pointed shoes and sporting a handsome ginger moustache!

In Holland and Belgium one finds conflicting reports about occult practices, but it does seem likely that the recent world-wide resurgence of interest in the supernatural has caused a handful of people in both countries to practise again the old rituals of witchcraft for fertility and curative purposes (not to mention the indulgence of nudity!). Satanism, too, has been noted occasionally and a number of church desecrations in the area around Amsterdam have

been put down to dabblers in Black Magic. In Brussels there was for a time a group of people who conducted sex orgies under the aegis of devil worship, but after several of their number were seized in a drugs and vice raid on a nightclub, their activities seem to have been curtailed.

The most recent trial for witchcraft in Europe actually took place in Switzerland and resulted from the death of a 17-year-old girl, Bernadette Hasler who was said to have been flogged for an hour to "drive the devil out of her". The case was heard in Zurich where six members of a cult, led by a defrocked German priest, were accused of the girl's murder. It contained a number of terrifying echoes from the past which one had hoped never to hear again.

According to the prosecution the girl had been made to believe by the cult that she was "wedded to the Devil" and under the instruction of the ex-priest and his mistress, forced to undergo strange rituals and write detailed accounts of her supposed sexual exploits with the Arch-Fiend—all to "cleanse and free her from his bond". The cult had convinced both Bernadette and her family, who were wealthy farmers in the Zurich district, that she was possessed and only by their treatment could she be saved. She was called "Satan's Mate" and "The Devil's Whore" and in a style reminiscent of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages, subjected to the most cruel and bigoted treatment by people who were said to be convinced of their God-given mission to fight witchcraft.

The final act of the unfortunate girl's life was the ritual beating which was inflicted upon her by the six cultists with whips, canes and plastic pipe. From this savagery she shortly afterwards died. A medical examination revealed that the cause of death was an embolism of the lungs—and that she was still a virgin.

Public opinion in Switzerland was outraged when details of the "witch trial in reverse", as it became known, were

published. Letters and telephone calls urged severe punishment of the accused and threats were made that the court house would be blown up unless the most severe possible penalties were imposed. In fact the ex-priest and his mistress were sentenced to ten years and their associates to terms ranging from three to four years.

Summing up the case, State Attorney John Lohner said he hoped the trial would "serve as a warning to all those still enmeshed in superstitions and in abusing religious faith". He urged Catholic Church authorities to help in "cleansing the soil that nurtures belief in and fear of the Devil, so that such crimes as that against Bernadette Hasler may never be repeated".

A Swiss church historian, Professor Nigg, presented a chilling epitaph on the case when he commented on how little human attitudes had changed in half a dozen centuries:

"Like a witch in the Middle Ages, Bernadette began to play the game that had been forced upon her, so that defiantly, she accused herself of the most repulsive sexual misdeeds with the Devil . . . Abandoned by all human sentiment without the slightest support, she died alone in the night, without any hope of divine aid, an expectation that had long before been destroyed within her very soul."

WITCHCRAFT BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

"Superstition, Witchcraft and the so-called schemes of the Devil are things of the past and have no place in our society."

Pravda,
May, 1970.

Not surprisingly, it is more difficult to find out about witchcraft behind the Iron Curtain than anywhere else in the world. Indeed, the Communist Society frowns on the very word so that any enquiries into the occult have to be conducted with the utmost care and circumspection. The authorities would, of course, have us believe that such things died out with the coming of the new regime, but old traditions die hard, particularly among the country people—and there is evidence that the ancient crafts still exist.

The grim and terrible Russian folk tales serve to illustrate how much witchcraft, or more particularly "concourse with demons" are a part of the nation's social fabric, while the legends of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Rumania abound with reports of deals with the devil and the use of ancient charms and spells to achieve desired objects. Needless to say, fantasy is liberally interwoven with a little fact but the underlying point remains; a religion venerating the old hunting and fertility gods did exist, surrounded by mystery and suspicion and has survived the years and the changes in the ruling classes.

It hardly needs expounding that wherever Communism took over, it immediately began a harsh and persistent campaign against the established religions whether Chris-

tianity, Mohammedan, Confucianism or the Jewish faith. There could be no compromise for the Marxist-Leninist regimes could have no truck with what their doctrine described as the opiate of the people. In many countries, too, the Churches had been either allied or identified with the previous, conservative or reactionary regimes, owned huge estates, drew immense revenues. Religious orders were disbanded, their property confiscated; churches were turned into anti-religious museums and a large-scale atheist propaganda was launched. And though since Stalin's death there have been tactical changes and some accommodation with the established Churches, the basic strategy, the fundamental attitude of the Communist leaders, whether their names are Tito or Kosygin, Kadar or Ceaucescu, showed no real change.

Deprived of the regular ministrations of their spiritual leaders, many of the older (and, surprisingly enough, even of the younger) people have turned back to the practices of the old sects, some reaching across the centuries to the pre-Christian era. Inevitably witchcraft, and to some extent Satanism, have become an integral part of this escape into an occultism which the State either ignored or, occasionally, persecuted.

In the Communist countries all assemblies, associations and groups are strictly supervised by the authorities—but even the most efficient Secret Police cannot be everywhere at all times. And while political resistance, however rudimentary and badly organised, invariably found its traitors, the built-in informers (an ancient tradition in Russia and other Eastern countries), the covens and similar underground units were practically immune from this danger. Thus, though detailed information is difficult if not impossible to obtain and the reports are often contradictory, there is no doubt about it that the Old Religion, the pre-Christian practices, the strangely perverted and twisted

Christian doctrines themselves have survived the Stalinist terror and the seldom-relenting vigilance of the various security organisations from the Danube to the Pacific, from the Carpathians to the Urals.

In the Soviet Union the *babushka*, the grandmother or widowed aunt, is both familiar and indispensable. Because of the deflationary economic policies that have prevailed throughout the Communist world, there are very few families in which both husband and wife are not working at full time jobs. And while crèches and day-nurseries (often attached to factories) are numerous enough, there is still a tremendous need for the elderly female who, practically for her keep, will look after the children and perform the household chores which the young wife is too tired or too busy to undertake. Thus the *babushka*, even after fifty-five years of Communism, is an integral part of Soviet society.

But if she is benign, loving and helpful in one incarnation, she also represents a strongly anti-authoritarian element. Many of the *babushkas* practise what can only be described as white magic, sympathetic witchcraft. And their magic is singularly effective because of the authority they possess in the everyday matters of life. These white witches bring their witchcraft into the kitchen and the nursery, the herb-garden and bus queue, the parks and the beaches. The lore they teach the little ones left in their care is far more powerful than that which the children learn in the kindergarten and pioneer meetings—because it is easily demonstrated. And, however incredible, it often endures far longer than any forcible indoctrination.

There are echoes of this fragmentary but none-the-less mighty magic in the poems of Yevtushenko, in the novels and plays that pass from hand to hand to the *samisdats*, the non-official publishing and distributing channels. A collection has been made of the *babushkas'* spells which is the more remarkable because it contains many, almost literal

parallels, with the *Zaubersprüche* of medieval German wise women and Red Indian tribal magic.

Another stubborn survival of witchcraft can be found among the small tribes of Asiatic Russia. During the lunatic persecution of minorities in the Stalinist times many of these have been reduced to a handful—but the more tolerant, or perhaps negligent, sixties have seen a striking rebirth of these often still nomadic hunting, fishing tribes of the Far North and the Far East. Voguls, Ostyaks, Cheremises, Lapps—they may conform on the surface to the Soviet system but as their settlements are mobile and they are able to disappear in the vastness of the tundra, in the reedy mazes of the lakes, the deep valleys of the mountains, they carry with them their ancient customs, their immemorial magic.

Their shamans are often camouflaged as the humblest, least significant members of the tribe, but when undisturbed and unobserved, are still the true leaders, the spiritual heads of these communities. The magic they practise is animistic, often corrupted and half-remembered rites but still powerful. God and the Devil, light and darkness, healing and harm are intermixed in these rites and as gradually the numbers of the decimated groups grow and get replenished, new elements are added—legends which are an extraordinary mixture of the atomic age and pre-Christian tradition; myths in which aeroplanes and giants, ice-breakers and talking bears, sputniks and ogres seem to co-exist, if not peacefully at least permanently.

In China the extremely rich traditions of demons and devils have also been driven underground—perhaps deeper than in any other Communist country. Mao's social policy has been remarkably consistent, in spite of the setbacks, the disastrous leaps forward, the hundred flowers that failed to blossom, the thoroughly misnamed cultural revolution.

The Chinese Communists set out to destroy, deliberately

and completely, the family clan, the unit of several generations, living within the compound, knitted closely together by ancestor worship and venerated authority, based on age. This was a comparatively easy task for in many ways it had become an anachronism and the tyranny of the grandfather (or, in many cases, that of the grandmother) was resented and even hated by the young. The old, ejected from the ancestral home, were often left to die of starvation during the repeated famines of the early Communist years. Those who survived were frequently denounced, humiliated and even executed as something like an orgy of destruction and annihilation was unleashed, encouraged and even organised by the party cadres.

Next came the attack on the smaller family unit of father, mother and children. The population problem, always present, could not be tackled by birth control methods for the scientific and technological means were lacking. Thus marriages were delayed and often enough the young couple was separated immediately after pledging their troth not in front of the family altar but facing Mao's picture. Even when they were allowed to remain in the same commune, they were often assigned to separate male and female dormitories, with once-weekly opportunities to meet.

Though meeting far more resistance than the first stage, this "operation", too, has made considerable progress. The final stage—which has now been largely reversed—was a programme that aimed at transferring the fundamental human affections to the community, the state, the party. And because it is almost impossible to make human beings feel affection and loyalty to abstractions and doctrines, the deification of Chairman Mao developed into a gigantic, never-before-practised personality cult. Sex was sublimated into fervent attachment to the Old Man of the largest tribe in the world; love had to be de-personalised to the point where all ambitions, passions, instincts and impulses were chan-

nelled into the service of the People's Republic and, above all, its benign, rarely visible, seemingly immortal Master.

Inevitably, there had to be reaction to this dehumanising process. The symptoms and developments are far more difficult to discern than in the Soviet Union, in spite of all the industrious sinologists who watch Peking from the vantage point of Hong Kong or Macao. The land is even vaster, the language even more hermetic, the news even scarcer. The recent relaxation of xenophobia and isolation still provides only superficial and often contradictory information.

But now and then a revealing item slips out. Thus, a few years ago, China banned the practise of geomancy—the method of fortune-telling by taking a few handfuls of earth, throwing them into the air and then interpreting the contours and curves of the resulting miniature hills and valleys. "Geomancers", the official statement said, "are reactionary exploiters of superstition, little better than those who proclaim that demons still lurk in the night and that foxes can turn into human beings."

The witchcraft that is still practised in China seems to be purely defensive—warding off, not the evil spirits, but the intrusion of the state into private emotions and inclinations. They serve more as a smoke-screen than as an active agent.

In January 1970 six women were arrested in Shanghai "for selling spells to those applying for admittance to the local Party School". Such admittance is a privilege granted only to the select whose origins and behaviour guarantee complete loyalty and malleability. No wonder that it is a highly desirable prize. What is surprising is that apparently the spells had worked. Perhaps the underground witches of China were aiming at establishing a fifth column within the innermost citadel of the Party.

In Canton, during the recent International Trade Fair, visiting foreigners were repeatedly accosted by furtive ven-

dors of amulets and charms—both strictly banned in Mao's empire. Because of the risk and the scarcity, the prices had apparently risen, but the would-be customers were assured that these were unusually powerful articles which would infallibly work. One of them, a Swiss businessman, became particularly interested in the origin of these witchcraft-wares. With the help of two Chinese-speaking Japanese friends he managed to trace them—to the local Party headquarters. In other words, for a little hard currency, the Chinese Ministry of Trade was quite happy to defy the country's existing laws and pretend that some worthless piece of junk was "exclusive magic" and its sellers (all agents of the militia) daring defiers of the government.

One would expect that in Rumania, with its province of Transylvania, a lovely, wooded and mountainous area between Hungary and Ceacescu's land, would provide a fertile survival ground for witchcraft. After all, this was the breeding place of Count Dracula, of vampires and werewolves—at least in the imagination and in the numberless books, plays and films which it spawned. It is also a land in which at least three nationalities have been fighting for supremacy with the Rumanians (Wallachians) winning finally the upper hand. The Hungarians, called Szekelys and the Germans, known as Saxons, have little cultural and no political autonomy and their traditions, religious and folkloristic, rarely merge.

Strangely enough, it is in the cities that "black" magic appears to survive—perhaps because the countryside has a harder time to fight for economic survival. (Rumania's foreign policy is fairly independent and she trades with most of the world, including Israel; her home policies are however almost Stalinist in their severity. Not so long ago when Ceacescu returned from a trip to China, he instituted a cultural purge, banning foreign films, books, pop-music,

mini-skirts and other pernicious products of the "degenerate and imperialistic West".)

Two recent reports indicate that behind this schizophrenic attitude there are some strange stirrings.

The first of these concerns a rather unusual cult which sprang up in the Black Sea harbour city of Constanza. It was centred on a dead woman who, in her youth, had created considerable controversy. She was then known as the Devil Girl, and had been examined by a host of distinguished Western psychical researchers, neurologists and psychiatrists. Eleonora, as she was called, was supposed to be haunted by Dracu, the devil who pursued her with bites and pinches, producing all kinds of poltergeist phenomena, telekinesis and other extraordinary "symptoms". Weals appeared spontaneously on Eleonora's arms and neck; bites, clearly visible, marked her skin. Originally a peasant girl, she was rescued from the superstitious villagers who were about to lynch her, by an Austrian Countess who adopted and educated her, wrote copiously about her phenomena and accompanied her to the psychical laboratories of London, Paris, Munich and other places. Later the phenomena ceased and Eleonora returned to Rumania where she opened a hairdressing establishment, married and faded into obscurity.

Now, in the sixties, she was resuscitated—though without her participation or knowledge—as the "Mother" of a coven which worshipped the Evil One, held regular meetings and developed a sort of utopian mythology. They believed in the Second Coming—not of Christ, but of Satan. Eleonora would be reincarnated, not as a poor ignorant peasant girl but as a "Princess of the Abyss" and she would bear the new Saviour—who would be Lucifer, the Light-bringer. He, when grown to manhood, would destroy not only the Christian churches—which, the cultists explained, had failed to prevent the oppression and sufferings of the

Communist regime—but all the party members and functionaries, establishing a new Paradise of Light in which there would be no sin and no virtue, but perfect freedom of individual choice. Most of the members of the sect hail from Bessarabia which the Soviet Union took from Rumania at the end of the second world war; their parents or themselves had fled from the Red Army and then found themselves in a land whose system was little different from the Soviet Union's. With an elaborate ritual, with much confusion and often childish insistence on inessentials, the cult was beginning to spread until a party agent infiltrated it. He naturally denounced all the sectarians—but though several dozen were arrested, it appears that the police spy was only able to gain entry into one group and that others might still be active in the country, though not necessarily in Constanza.

The other sect that has seen a revival, in Bucharest, Jassy and other cities, is that of the *Skoptci*, a particularly violent and life-denying one whose beginnings go back several centuries. Worshipers of the Devil whom they identified with Death rather than Evil, the *Skoptci* men, once fully admitted to the sect, castrated themselves and the women cut off their left breast. By this they expected to gain salvation and survival after death in a sexless, perfect Eden from which all others were excluded. The sect had spread from pre-revolutionary Russia into Rumania and at one time it was said that practically all *dhrosky* drivers in certain Rumanian cities were *Skoptci*. The last twenty-five years were assumed to have wiped out the cult (which was, in a way, self-liquidating in any case) but this must have been a false rumour for groups of *Skoptci* were reported not only in the Rumanian capital but also in Braila, Brasov and the oil-centre, Ploesti. Several of them were arrested and tortured by the secret police. This produced no confessions—for the *Skoptci* actually welcomed physical pain and had developed

a remarkable resistance to it. Their algolagnic, psychological make-up was proof against the most sophisticated methods of questioning and after a while they seem to have been released, with one or two exceptions who were sent to forced labour. Their "Master", the Devil, has protected his followers who had acquired the "Great Seal" which is their name for total castration.

In neighbouring Yugoslavia witchcraft has largely disappeared from the strongly Westernised federal republics of Slovenia and Croatia and only isolated traces of some folk practices can be found in Serbia and the partly autonomous province of Vojvodina, which has a large Hungarian population.

Unexpectedly enough, covens have been reported in Dalmatia, the beautiful coastal province which is attracting so many Western visitors in search of sun and sea. Here the Yugoslav variety of hippies has developed during the past ten or fifteen years, the "beach-boys" who prey, not too assiduously but quite happily on the tourists—especially on unaccompanied women intent on having an amorous fling during their holidays. And it was among these beach-boys that a revival of the ancient cult of Priapus has been taking place. Their Satan is a mixture of a totally hedonistic, cynical deity and of a fertility god; the gatherings, often held on some of the tiny uninhabited islands of the Adriatic archipelago or on deserted beaches of the mainland, involve drugs (smuggled in from Africa or Turkey) and sexual orgies in which Western visitors readily take part. They have developed elaborate, half-humorous rituals which show a certain affinity with the horseplay of college fraternities; and they have added a code that enables the outsider, once initiated (almost all of them are women) to pass on from one locality to the other and making instant contact with the local group. The name of the loose-knit

organisation is changed at frequent intervals, perhaps to make detection more difficult—sometimes it is called CA-VA (an abbreviation of Casanova), but has also been known as PRIAP, SULLAPH (a fairly transparent near-reversal of PHALLUS) and, a little surprisingly, BOGAMI ("My God" in Serbo-Croatian).

As in some other Communist countries, the whole business is more of a revolt against the puritan, hypocritical party spirit (though this is much less in evidence in diversionist Yugoslavia than, say, in the Soviet Union) than a serious cult of His Satanic Majesty. The whole business is probably quite well-known to the authorities who, however, close an eye to it—for any large-scale purge in this respect would be bad for the tourist trade which Tito's country needs desperately to bolster its sagging economy.

Much grimmer and far deeper underground are the black magic practices still surviving in Macedonia. This has always been one of the main trouble-spots of the Balkans, with such a hodge-podge of nationalities that it provided the name for the French *macédoine*. Innumerable assassinations, gory risings and bomb explosions have marked the centuries of attempts to recreate the ancient empire of Philip and Alexander the Great, a totally doomed ambition. Divided between Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece, the Macedonians have resisted the longest and most stubbornly the measures to integrate them into the Yugoslav Federal Republic, though a great deal has been done to raise their standard of living and improve the general economic conditions.

Wooded and mountainous, the countryside is plagued by frequent earthquakes of which the disastrous catastrophe of 1963 was one of the worst. It levelled much of Skopje, the capital, causing over a thousand deaths.

The earthquakes led to a revival of some black magic practices that reached far back into the Middle Ages and

echoed one of the great heresies, that of the Bogumils which at one time was almost as wide-spread and dangerous to the established church as the Albigenses were in the West. But these were inevitably modified and corrupted by contemporary influences. The Anti-Christ, worshipped by the poor and downtrodden to whom often enough the priests and prelates represented oppression and exploitation, was changed into an infernal potentate who was both avenger and liberator. The earthquakes were interpreted among the primitive and often still illiterate people as signs of his displeasure, directed against the distant masters who sat in Belgrade and who, at least to the Macedonian peasant and mountaineer, seemed to care little for their problems and sorrows. That in the process of the hellish rumblings and explosions a number of locals were killed—the toll was especially high among the children—was an indication that to Him they shared the guilt of the party bosses if only by association.

The loosely-knit groups that were formed did not have any clear objective. But several lesser Communist *apparatchiks* were murdered or disappeared without trace. One at least was found obscenely mutilated and nailed to the door of his own office. The culprits were never found. The covens—if they deserved the name—were equally hostile to the Greek Orthodox Church and the Communist Party. Belgrade sent in the security forces but though a few men and a couple of women were arrested, the main body of the Satanists escaped detection. To this day there has been no news of their capture.

There have been no reliable reports of present-day black magic being practised in dour Bulgaria, almost hermetically sealed Albania, the Chinese satellite outpost on the Adriatic, or East Germany (the German Democratic Republic)—though in the last place Herr Ulbricht, the elderly

party boss with his goatee has been nicknamed *der Ziegenbock*, the he-goat, and identified, at least in popular imprecations, with the Great Goat of Celtic demonology. But in Poland, a country in which a quarter of a century of Communist rule could not eradicate or even seriously diminish the importance and influence of the Catholic Church, two interesting applications of witchcraft can be found—and at least one of them in a most unexpected place.

This is Nova Huta, the vast industrial complex that grew up outside Cracow, then the ancient royal city. It is characteristic of the satellite countries that every one of them tried to emulate the Soviet example, create its own Magneto-gorsk or Stalingrad, a showplace of steel and iron production often combined with chemical and other industrial plants. Poland could not stay out of this race—though, of course, in Silesia, especially around Kattowicze, she had her own mining and manufacturing area long before the second world war.

But in Nova Huta a Fire Cult has developed among the steel workers—a strange mixture of Zoroastrian elements and devil-worship. It was fire, in its various forms, they had to deal with during much of their work; fire was the constant danger, the enemy that had to be propitiated. The meetings of the Fire Lovers as they called themselves were held usually at the beginning or the end of the night shifts. Fire was worshipped, cajoled, defied and, according to one report, when a new blast furnace was installed, actual human sacrifice was offered to it. Three newborn babies had disappeared within a year from the local maternity home and no trace was ever found of them. Strangely enough, the parents involved did not seem to wish to pursue the search, or provide any information for the police.

The other Polish witchcraft centre is at Kazimierz, a couple of hours from Warsaw. This is a famous artists'

colony, similar to Barbizon in France or Nagybánya in Hungary. Today it has a large holiday home for journalists and another for architects. But it is the local peasantry, mostly engaged in market-gardening and forestry—that seems to have formed several groups. The demons they have chosen to cultivate have suffered a strange change—for their originals are the Three Magi, their names corrupted, their quest changed into one for the Ancient Evil that would balance and remove the present-day one. A local scholar has translated a fragment of a hymn or prayer addressed to the Three Powerful Ones which illustrates this unusual transformation:

**Thou of the Unholy Trinity, help us
Thou who ride faster than the planes, help us
Thou who carry mightier weapons than tanks
and bombs, help us
Thou whose star is white, blot out the Red Star
Thou whose Evil workes Good, redeem us,
Thou, the Three Riders of the Night, lighten
our days
Thou, Alchior, Jasper and Balsaboob, lead us
to liberation.**

All this is certainly a far cry indeed from the Three Kings who journeyed to Bethlehem and knelt at the manger, bearing gifts of myrrh and frankincense!

Perhaps, though, the most surprising piece of news to leak from behind the Iron Curtain is that in certain Russian universities, scientists are conducting experiments into Extra Sensory Perception (ESP). What has prompted this work is difficult to tell and suggestions that it results from a number of Party officials in certain rural areas having their thoughts "tapped" and their consequent efforts frustrated are no more than hearsay. However, the work is going on in considerable secrecy and one can but hope that if the

Russians do come up with some conclusions they will make these known to the world at large.

In closing this section let me relate a little story concerning Communism v. Witchcraft which perhaps most clearly illustrates that despite revolution, some old traditions remain unchanging. It was told to me by Peter Stafford, one of our most perceptive and informed commentators on the Communist Bloc . . .

The party secretary of the little town of Mohaos, Hungary, felt poorly. His aches and pains were complicated by itches and bouts of excessive sweating. Yet his temperature was normal and the medical tests showed nothing organically wrong. Still, he was so ill that he had to suspend his important activities which was to supervise the local industries and the surrounding collective farms, all of which needed the party whip in the most literal sense to fulfil the high norms set by the Central Planning Office. He was reluctant to ask for leave for he had hoped to produce such excellent results that he would be promoted to bigger and better things.

He stormed at the doctor who specialised in the treatment of party officials and threatened to have him sent to some remote mining village. The doctor shrugged.

"Your trouble is obviously psychosomatic," he said. "Maybe you need analysis—but as you know, that has been banned throughout the country . . ."

"And very rightly so," the secretary declared. "Freud promoted the myth of a thing called the subconscious. We Communists have no subconscious. Nothing exists that is not material. As Lenin said . . ."

At this point he began to feel faint and stopped. Nor did he get any better in the following weeks—until his brother-in-law, an ethnographer and folklore-specialist arrived from Budapest. He was particularly interested in folk customs and folk art and he systematically visited the peasant

cottages and isolated farmsteads of the district. Being a wise and experienced man he kept his relationship to his powerful in-law a complete secret.

It was in a small, thatched cottage that he came across a particularly interesting collection of wooden cooking utensils. The old woman who owned them thawed when he offered her a hundred *forints* for the privilege of photographing them. She turned hospitable and left him alone to fetch a decanter of wine from the cellar. As the ethnographer moved one of the wooden bowls, he noticed a small niche behind them, with something gleaming in its depth. He reached in and then withdrew his hand with an "ouch", for he had badly pricked his finger. Still, his curiosity roused, he persisted. He found two dolls in the recess, elaborately shaped from wax, dressed in carefully fashioned clothes and with certain distinguishing marks that could not be more explicit. His brother-in-law had a rather prominent wart on his left cheek—so had the first doll. The party secretary's nose was bulbous and pitted—so was the doll's. And to remove all possible doubt, there was a party badge in the tiny lapel, with a replica of the Order of the Red Star Third Class dangling from it.

The doll also bore the traditional pins and nails which wise women have been using to inflict pain on chosen enemies since times immemorial. One of these had two sharp ends and had grazed his skin. As to the second doll—the iron-grey hair, the beetling brows, the walrus moustache identified it as the great Stalin himself—and the master of the Communist World (the date was 1952) had been transfixed with a rusty hat-pin, apart from several lesser needles and nails.

At this moment the old woman returned and, with a hoarse cry, tried to wrest the dolls from her visitor's grasp. But the ethnographer who was tall and sturdy, held them

well out of her reach. The woman, frustrated, began to cry.

"I don't mind going to jail," she whimpered, "but I've got my pets to look after—they'll starve to death . . ."

The folklorist smiled.

"You won't go to jail," he reassured her. "Let's trade—you take the pins out of *this*—", and he proffered the mannikin of his brother-in-law, "and I won't say a word about *this* . . .", and he indicated the wax doll of Stalin.

"You . . . you know . . ."

"I know that it only works if the pins are taken out by the person who put them in," he told her gravely. "Is it a bargain, then?"

She nodded hastily and, mumbling incantations, began pulling the pins and nails from the party secretary's image . . .

It would be much too neat to end the story by saying that from that moment onward the ethnographer's brother-in-law enjoyed perfect health. As a matter of fact, he developed a particularly violent case of hives. His kinsman advised him, while he was still in hospital, to ask for a transfer, which he did—though only after the ethnographer told him about the doll and the needles.

Of course, no Marxist could believe in such black, reactionary superstition—but why take chances?

VOODOO—BLACK WITCHCRAFT

"Today the power of Voodoo is as great as it ever was. One might say with certainty that ninety-five per cent of the black population are in varying degrees adherents, active or passive, of the cult."

RICHARD A. LOEDERER,
Voodoo expert.

No study of witchcraft would be complete without an examination of some kind of Voodoo, the mysterious Negro practice which now has disciples on both sides of the Atlantic, throughout Africa, the Caribbean and in certain European capitals. Like *Wicca* and Black Magic, it has a long and uncertain history and has given rise to its own fair share of blood-letting, violence and persecution.

In Britain, the cult has a widespread following in many of the larger coloured communities and its presence, and authority, has been occasionally revealed in newspaper stories of "curses" being laid on recalcitrant followers and even the rare report of a death being caused by a Voodoo ritual.

In America, where it is officially banned, Voodoo nonetheless has followers from one end of the country to the other; from the back-streets of New Orleans through to the slums of Harlem. New York has in fact become the unofficial "headquarters" of Voodoo and in a recent report from the city's Commissioner of Public Markets, it was estimated that the cult took in excess of two million dollars per year. The report added: "Tens of thousands of New Yorkers take Voodoo drugs on the advice of witch doctors and we now have the situation where technology has moved in to aid the

market and 'powerful jinx chasers' are being dispensed in a handy spray can."

On my visits to the city I have seen a number of the shops which specialise in the dispensing of these Voodoo prescriptions, most of which are known by the Spanish word, *botanicas*. They are invariably small and cramped and filled with a variety of bric-à-brac, ranging from crucifixion scenes, statues of Christian saints and Voodoo gods, to endless rows of jars full of powders, ointments and potions of every colour under the sun.

Voodoo, or Vodoun as its practitioners prefer to call it, is in essence the combination of numerous ancient superstitions and Christian beliefs added to African sorcery and sacrificial rites.

To look for the origin of Voodoo we need only examine the word itself—it comes from the Creole word "vaudou". Creole is a comparatively recent language derived from French just as French is derived from Latin. It preserves phonetic habits and grammatical structures which, in origin, are clearly African. And so it is not surprising to discover that "vaudou" is merely a corruption of "vodu" a word of the Fon language group of West Africa. In West Africa "vodu" means a god or spirit, or a sacred object or fetish. Hence the extraction of Voodoo from West Africa and its definition as the worship of various West African gods or spirits.

To trace the cult's history it is necessary to go back several centuries, for it is meshed inextricably with the story of the slave trade and the island of Haiti in particular. Environment, in fact, has made it one of the strangest of all the world's cults.

It evolved in the form we know it today at the end of the seventeenth century, virtually the creation of slaves on Haiti. These unfortunate souls had been snatched from their native land of Africa by raiding French ships and carted off to work on the island's sugar plantations. Many

of them came from different tribes and consequently had different religions. The absence of a common form of worship was, not surprisingly, soon the cause of unrest among the communities.

But being forced to compromise with life after having been taken from their natural habitat, the slaves were also able to come to a compromise over their beliefs and eventually a new composite religion was born . . . Voodoo.

To the Western mind the religion is a hotch-potch of pagan ritual and Roman Catholic liturgy. To their own African ideas, the slaves added prayers and hymns which they had heard from their masters, the French. The result is that a member of the Voodoo cult can—and frequently does—worship the ancient African gods and Jesus Christ and the saints at the same time and with the same fervour. (Practitioners of Voodoo in Britain today, for example, find nothing odd in attending a Catholic Mass and then immediately afterwards taking part in a ritual that to non-white eyes is sinister and pagan.)

Worship is organised by the priests and priestesses of the groups who are known as *hungans* and *mambos* respectively. They, it is claimed, have the power to inflict disease or death on enemies and can make the dead rise again as *zombies*.

The pantheon of the Voodoo religion is made up of many gods, or *Loa* as they are called. Some are worshipped by everyone and some are private, hereditary gods, usually ancestors who have become deified and who are worshipped by their particular family. By tracing the various *Loa* to their African origin, anthropologists have been able to establish the origin of the present-day Haitian people. Most of them came from Dahomey and the area immediately surrounding that country, a large minority came from Nigeria and certain others came from Guinea, Angola and the Congo.

As the white colonists of Haiti grew prosperous and the

oppression of their Negro slaves grew more severe, a strange uneasiness spread over the island. People, and the landowners in particular, were becoming aware of Voodoo.

As time passed this knowledge grew into a deadly fear. The more the master mistreated his slaves the more he feared their hatred and the more he dreaded the occult powers which he came to feel his slaves possessed.

The records of the eighteenth century reflect an ubiquitous terror solidifying in an obsession with poison which was undoubtedly used by many slaves to revenge themselves on tyrannical masters. But the fear which reigned in the plantations had its real source in the deeper recesses of the soul. Any slave even suspected of belonging to the dreaded sect called the "Voodoos" was branded and tortured.

In the late 1700s a Frenchman, Moreaus de Saint-Méry, in his book "Description of the French Part of Saint-Domingue" gave the first detailed account of the Voodoo religion.

Saint-Méry translated the word voodoo as "an all powerful and supernatural being". He identified it as "the snake under whose auspices gather all who share the faith". Here he was identifying the popular Voodoo god *Damballah-wedo*, the Snake God who is, although Saint-Méry did not realise it at the time, just one of many Voodoo gods.

Voodoo gatherings, said Saint-Méry, took place secretly at night in "a cloistered place shut off from the eyes of the profane". The priest and priestess stood near an altar containing a caged snake. After various ceremonies and a long address from the priest and priestess, all initiates approached the altar in order of seniority and asked the snake for their desires. The priestess stood on the box in which the snake lay and, said Saint-Méry, at the climax of the ritual "she is penetrated by the god; she writhes; her whole body is convulsed and the oracle speaks from her mouth".

The snake was then put on the altar and each member brought it an offering. A goat was also sacrificed and its blood, collected in a jar, used to "seal the lips of all present with a vow to suffer death rather than reveal anything, and even to inflict it on whoever might prove forgetful of such a momentous pledge".

Then began what Saint-Méry called the "danse vaudou". This was the moment when the new initiates were received into the sect. Possessed by a spirit, the novices went into a trance and did not come out of it until a priest had hit them on the head with his hand, wooden spoon or, if he thought necessary, an ox-hide whip.

The ceremony ended with a "collective delirium" which Saint-Méry believed to be the result of "magnetic emanations". As proof he cited the paroxysms of whites who had merely come as spectators. "Some are subject to fainting fits, others to a sort of fury; but with all there is a nervous trembling which apparently cannot be controlled. They turn round and round. And while there are some who tear their clothes in this bacchanal and even bit their own flesh, others merely lose consciousness and falling down are carried into a neighbouring room where in the darkness a disgusting form of prostitution holds hideous sway."

By 1789, the year of the French Revolution, Voodoo in Haiti was an organised religion different from the Voodoo of today only in that it bore a more distinctly African character. But it was beginning to adopt certain Christian elements and added part of the Catholic liturgy. With the Revolution, and the subsequent war for Haitian independence, Voodoo entered a new era.

The French Revolution affected the white settlers and landowners because they wanted greater independence from the King of France. It aroused the free mulattos because they wanted equality as citizens. With a population of 30,000 whites, some 40,000 mulattos, but well over half

a million Negro slaves, it is hardly surprising that this fervour for freedom should have spread to the latter.

On the night of August 14th, 1791, a great number of slaves met in a glade of the Bois Caiman. A pig was sacrificed according to Voodoo custom and Negroes pledged themselves to the destruction of their white masters. A few days later thousands of whites were massacred and their plantations reduced to ashes. Thus began a war which was to last twelve years and end in triumph for the Negroes who established Haiti as the first all-black state in the world in 1803.

Attributing much of their success to the power of Voodoo, the Haitians have continued its observance and practice ever since—each succeeding ruler being the leader or Chief Hungan of the cult.

Observations made over the intervening years show that this ritual has changed very little, but according to some reports it is not normal practice now to have a real snake representing the god, *Damballah-wedo*. In fact this god is said to be most commonly shown by a picture of Saint Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland!

Christianity is nonetheless widely observed, but the Haitian people are reluctant to give up the *Loa* and their magic. They believe that Voodoo contains supernatural truths of which the Catholic hierarchy is ignorant, or at any rate, with which it will not concern itself. Haitians believe in the power not only of black magic but also of white magic. Even the sophisticated collect their cut hair at the barber shop and carefully destroy finger-nail parings to prevent these from falling into the hands of enemies who might use them to create evil curse-charms.

The power of Voodoo is certainly held to be considerable by the practitioners in Haiti. But how about in more sophisticated areas of the world? Do followers in Britain, say, feel that their *Hungan* or *Mambo* can bewitch them?

Or in ultra-sophisticated America, that primitive rites can grant the petitioner his most intimate desires? In order to find the answers to these questions I asked the generally accepted head of American Voodoo, a large, attractive Negro woman known simply as Madame Arboo who lives in New York, to give me her views on the cult today. Her reply came, as did so many of the other statements in this book, in the form of a carefully prepared report. Like other occult leaders, she was wary of being misquoted and wished to give an accurate picture of the present practice of Vodoun, as she insists on calling it. This is the statement as it was handed to me on a dozen carefully hand-written sheets of paper:

The Afro-Christian cult of Vodoun, vulgarly called 'voodoo' is vibrantly alive, in various sects, from Brooklyn to Bahia—a communion whose dominant symbols are so universal that Negroes of different countries and languages may use them to communicate and get acquainted.

Its following is probably eighty-five percent Negro because of its African roots that had to find such difficult holds in the soil of slavery. But it does not exclude whites if they do not come as thrill-seekers or religious slummers. Millennial in its hopes, it looks forward to the time when *Damballah* the chief of many spirits will resurrect the sunken Eden of *Bamboula* as a paradise of amity and equality for all His children. Indeed, by the tenets of the old *shamen* or Vodoun doctors, He gives the different races varying skin hues only to prove, through contrast, the brotherhood of man.

I can speak authoritatively of these things. What I know about Vodoun does not come from sensationally false movie scenarios, or from the crude stories about the Old Religion published in sleazy magazines.

For I am an ordained high priestess of *Damballah*, a

consecrated Messenger trained in a secret seminary to manifest the revelations received through his spirits. I am a native of Georgia, where I grew up in the atmosphere of the Old Faith two generations after Abraham Lincoln struck the chains from the black people.

And in its own way, Vodoun had contributed to that emancipation all over the Western Hemisphere. Mack-ander, of the Ancient Religion, had been the very evangel of Haitian emancipation. Mary Ellen Pleasants, a Vodoun priestess, had raised money for John Brown before he made his desperate, gallant stand at Harper's Ferry in our own country. And one of the first martyrs to religious freedom in the New World was Tituba, the West Indian Negro seeress, grilled by the pharisaical Puritan magistrates during the witchcraft hysteria in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.

Africa is my motherland, America my country, Vodoun my religion. But I was not required to renounce Christianity when I was anointed. I use the Bible constantly in my ministry, as well as statues of Christian saints whom we believe to be the later incarnations of benign Vodoun sub-gods.

I am now permitted to lift a few strands of the Veil of Vodoun, but only a few. More than any other nonconformist sect in America, we have known the lash of persecution with an extra thong—religious persecution, to make the sting more piercing. Since 1873 we have been unable to hold those great public ceremonies in which we commemorate the Summer solstice on June 23rd—St. John's Eve—of each year.

White mobs in Louisiana suppressed these venerable rituals though we still celebrate them in concealed temples back in the dense swamps and forests of the Deep South. Unto this very sad day, our priests are arrested and prosecuted on fabricated charges of swindling for earning their living from clerical services rendered.

We have been as defamed and oppressed by representatives of a dominant race in America as the slandered, somewhat kindred witch cult of Western Europe was by the authorities of a dominant religion. In some fulfilment of my life work, I should like to dispel the accretion of untruth that has gathered about Vodoun, as Dr. Gerald Gardner has done for his sect of the witches.

Even so, I am enjoined to speak guardedly.

Vodoun has no central hierarchy of any kind, though a prominent practitioner is often accorded the honorary title of bishop. But responsible members of the joint male and female priesthood—the *Papaloi* and the *Mammaloi*—do consult together on matters of paramount importance to the whole cult.

After much debate, consent was finally given me to make a limited statement of our religion. This is the first public pronouncement of our faith to be issued during these furtive centuries when we have had to function underground, lacking the protection of the religious liberty clause in the Federal constitution.

What is Vodoun? The answer is: Anything but the murky junk that you see or read.

It is not virgins being raped on unhallowed altars by lustful satyrs. Nor assemblages of depraved heathens knowing no bounds of law or morality. Nor councils of evil witch doctors plotting the destruction of human society and the county courthouse to boot. Nor a grisly outfit functioning by the sacrificial slaughter of human beings. We affirm what a famous anthropologist, Erika Bourguignon, wrote in an authoritative encyclopedia a few years ago that, 'There is not a shred of evidence for the much-repeated assertion that voodoo involves human sacrifice'.

For how could we indulge in the disgusting practice of slaughtering humans, when so much of our work is centred upon helping them?

Afro-American Vodoun is a first cousin of the cult

called by the same name in Haiti, of *Santeria* in Cuba, of *Shango* in Trinidad and *Macumba* in Brazil. More distant is the relationship to a sect of Yoruban Vodoun transplanted to the West Indies—particularly Jamaica—by slave and lately, in a non-Christian form, to the United States by immigrant African *shamen*.

Brazilian Vodoun reflects some Moslem influences derived from Mandingo slaves whose ancestors were forced converts to the Moslem faith. Cuban sects reflect a strong Christian impact since our persecuted religion tends to synchronise with accepted ones in all those Western Hemisphere countries which once sanctioned slavery—it has been the only way our religion could survive, and Catholic countries have generally been more tolerant of the fusion than Protestant ones.

But some Haitian sects are militantly anti-Christian. These tend to be generally more polytheistic than Afro-American Vodoun, which has reduced all gods except *Damballah* to the status of sub-deities popularly called 'spirits'. Some of the Haitian *shamen* consider us Afro-Americans to be diluted heretics. We often find any rapport with them to be very difficult.

Yet all these divisions of Vodoun have, in common, a certain *élan*, a peculiar psychology expressive of the mystical African mind which produces so much rich creative imagery in all the five continents where Negroes never forget the art of joy, even while being enslaved labourers.

We are a people who like feasting and talking, who love and rejoice, who sometimes fuss and fight but generally always make up.

All Vodoun cults, without exception, personify the Greatest Spirit of the Universe under the form of the Serpent, and generally refer to him as *Damballah*, though he has still other names in various local sects. In many other old religions, this Figure is the symbol of wisdom and heal-

ing. True the Serpent can be poisonous and dangerous as well as wise and beneficent. By parallel, Nature, personified through *Damballah*, can be threatening and destructive as well as fulfilling and benign. Nature and its deities must keep working towards perfection so that man and his fellow-creatures of Earth need not fear them.

Wherever the law permits Vodounists to function as healers, we use serpents' flesh in a complex system of ancient *medica* to heal or correct aberrations of the body or spirit. By current analogy, snake venom, in limited quantities is employed in standard medical therapy. Frontier Americans—white, Negro, and Indian—applied a primitive liniment, rattlesnake oil extracted from certain glands, as a remedy for rheumatism.

Herbs and roots, seldom found in the North, form the bases of most of our medicines. These compounds are sold under colourful names through various outlets in Negro communities over the country. Often our *shamen* practitioners make special trips to the South for necessary flora.

Vodounists were about the only healers that our people had during the brutal nightmare of slavery, so they keep coming to us out of long tradition. But most modern *shamen* realise that our medical system is too limited in terms of the present.

Increasingly our function is that of practical psychologists for people whose education has been limited by segregation. We can recommend solutions of problems to those who would scarcely know the meanings of such terms as ego, id and super-ego. During slavery, we knew how to comfort those whose children were sold on the auction block or who faltered under the whip of the plantation overseer. Today, we know how to advise those trying to cope with the terrifying culture of cities after having spent lifetimes in Southern farm communities where existence was simple and daily functioning traditional.

Vodoun, itself, is probably becoming more sophisticated as a result of the epochal Negro migration northward. But what is a contemporary service really like in this day of our exodus from that South which we are already beginning to call the Old Country?

Is the cult of such renowned *toi* as Marie Laveau, Andrew Jackson Tobias and the Seven Sisters destined to become just one more offbeat religion in this nation of sects and schisms?

Not by our calculations. There is a great stir in our ranks, a terrific feeling of anticipation after all these centuries of the clandestine mold. We see our race emerging in Africa, in the West Indies, in Alabama and Chicago and New York. And we know that the black people are finally daring to claim the soul with which *Damballah* so richly endowed them.

For He chose them to be a race of artists. They were the poets and singers and dancers and drummers of His heaven, *Zombesa* (Man's Home before He dismantled it to crush a destructive rebellion led by *Umbara Zomba* (Anti-Man) or the Devil. Since beauty and art are also manifestations of *Damballah*, He has let His favourite folk be dispersed throughout Earth to bring it the joy of music, the fullness of poetry, the ecstasy of the dance. But like all artists, the blacks must suffer till the world realises beauty is as needful as bread and a drum a finer instrument than a bomb.

Naturally the drum is the favourite source of music for Negroes wherever they live and create. According to our old scriptures, largely destroyed during the Moslem invasions of Africa, it was designed personally by *Damballah* and presented to His elect people as an eternal token of their mission.

By the drum, Negro could always speak to Negro whatever their different languages of the tongue; by the Star,

His accepted devotees would forever identify each other—a five-pointed star for women followers, a six-pointed one for men; by the Flute, that exquisite accessory of pastoral religions the world over.

Star and Drum and Flute; those memorials of *Damballah*, the Wise Spirit, whose worship spread across Africa in various forms till it reached the cotton patches of Georgia and the asphalt pits of Trinidad. Symbols of unity they were, too, for our people whether the master's harsh tongue cracked order in English or Spanish or French. Symbols of reunion now they have become with Africa; sleeping motherland arousing from its slumber.

Each month, at the time of the New Moon, we Afro-American Vodounists gather in little groups of fifteen or twenty to reverence our personification of the Supreme Deity worshipped under many names by many people.

The drums are beating as we enter our secret chapel at midnight. The flutes are keening in tunes that we are not ready, as yet, to let become public property. Drum throbs frighten off the bad spirits of *Umba Zomba* and his evil crowd from the farthest reaches of infinity. But the flutes sweeten the welcome of the spirits obeying *Damballah*.

Some of these have never known mortal flesh, being His special creations, fashioned to be His messengers and trusted emissaries back in the *Zombesa* of twelve original celestial tribes. Others are ex-mortals still doing penance by good deeds for sins committed during their life spans before being born into new bodies for merciful new chances. Vodoun has no concept of burning hells. Our spirits continue being reincarnated in flesh till, through balance of deeds, they join *Damballah's* Nine Orders of Angels or *Umba Zomba's* miserable legion of those who have mis-spent every chance.

But we believe that each worshipper brings into the service emanations of good spirits if he follows the threefold

Vodoun Way of Faith, Love and Joy. One or two at a time the disciples of *Damballah* drift into the meeting place. They wear their very best clothes for the gathering; the women have generally visited beauticians for impressive hair-dos before the service. Each member bears the star image suspended from necklaces or embroidered on some article of dress. (Illustrated here.) Incidentally, Vodoun



The symbol of *Vodoun*

also embodies certain elements of a very old system of astrology, but I am not at liberty to reveal them.

The surroundings are colourful, including images of *Damballah*, the Serpent God and of other members of the animal creation which figure in our elaborate *cultus*. The Goat signifies power and fertility. The Eagle represents majesty. The Turtle exemplifies caution and patience. The Vulture is *Damballah's* sanitation department since he keeps the fields free of carrion that would otherwise breed germs and maggots destructive of other life. The Alligator symbolises Man who is born, wild and stubborn like this beast, yet can be tamed and gentled like him.

The service officially begins when a combined sexton-deacon called the *Zomba*—meaning simply, man—moves down the aisle towards a long, very wide stone altar on which various colour combinations of candles have been placed. The *Zomba* generally wears a dark purple robe on which are stitched curious designs having their origin in African symbology. In his hands, he carries a lighted torch. Back in the old South, it would have been a burning stick of pitch pine. Most often, these days, it's a battery-operated affair with an open flare like that of an automobile cigarette lighter.

He dips the torch towards a closely-bunched cluster of four candles—white, yellow, brown and black. These colours signify the four basic races of man. The black candle is lighted last because *Damballah's* crowning messages to humanity will come through His oppressed children who have waited longest on his will by enduring the sufferings inflicted by their brothers.

Next the *Zomba* lights off a collection of twelve candles of various shades. These symbolise the basic twelve heavenly groups. Each of these tribes was represented by a month of the year in an old Ethiopic calendar which became a casualty of Arab conquerors knowing little of what Mohammed, their great master, actually taught.

All this time, the drum and flute will have been rising

in gradual crescendo. Some in the congregation will begin intoning prayers that are half-word, half-moan; others will fall into trances or semi-trances. Twitchings and gestures indicate that they are seeing visions or receiving spirits. Additional candles representing other Vodoun traditions or attributes of *Damballah*, are lighted singly or in clusters. The volume of prayer grows louder; the tempo of the music gets faster.

Then from an anteroom, the *Papaloi* and the *Mammaloi* enter, wearing richly coloured robes. They advance towards the altar and take their places behind it. Their voices begin chanting one or another of the traditional Christian spirituals which every member of the congregation knows. The audience joins in. Nobody feels that there is any inconsistency or any sacrilege towards any deity. We adore the Lord Jesus; a dark-skinned Oriental man slain by white conquerors for trying to help the poor and downtrodden, with only the black wayfarer, Simon of Cyrene, offering to bear His heavy cross towards Calvary.

The spirituals continue; the slow-beating drum and the soft flute seem to become articulate in word as in sound. At intervals the *Papaloi* and *Mammaloi* call for recesses, in which members may recount visions or receive messages from spirits transmitted through either priest.

The *Mammaloi* is believed to attract the male spirits, the *Papaloi*, the female spirits since male and female represent the polarity of life and nature. Sexes are equal, like races, in Vodoun thinking, but express that quality through different functions and different characteristics. Priestly succession is transmitted from male to female and female to male, as it is in Europe's remnant witch cult.

As fervour mounts in the Vodoun service, individuals break into solo dances then converge in groups, keeping time with pounding feet and clapping hands to music that has become high and assertive. Joyous shouts emphasise

the ritual; pendant stars vibrate on necks and chests and garments. Those with the liveliest feet begin a sinuous winding dance. Others fall into the Serpent Dance of *Damballah* represented by the Sign of the Serpent.

Other dances commemorate our brother of the animal creatures. There is the Turtle Dance, low and measured; the Eagle Dance, swift and stately, done to high, leaping steps imitating the sweep of the bird king; the Frog Dance, with rhythmic hops a part of the choreography. The dancing generally continues to sunrise, when everybody goes home.

Such nature-centred rituals are also to be found in the culture of that other oppressed folk, the American Indian. Steps and turns may vary from ours; many of the meanings are identical. We are trying to learn more about the art forms of our red brothers because these dark ones also live by all-inclusive religions of nature—that divine essence which is all around us and is manifested in everything.

Indians have only recently won the right to practise their old faiths without being hounded by narrow-minded missionaries and bigoted government officials. When will we of Vodoun be granted that right? Our religion touches, directly or indirectly, the life of almost every American Negro; but only about one out of every hundred coming to us for advice and help has ever seen the inside of one of our chapels. Large-scale proselytising could bring only peril, and of peril, we have already had a bitter overdose.

We want our fellow-countrymen to realise that our cult is not one of grotesque savagery. We seek the constitutional right of every American to worship his deity in any manner that he chooses.

Forthright and revealing though I believe that statement by Madame Arboo to be, I do not think it is quite the whole story. Like all basically secret cults—and this is

equally true of Witchcraft and Black Magic—there are certain mysteries which are kept secret from the enquirer, however sympathetic and well-meaning he may be. These are usually the ones most open to misinterpretation and probably considered most suspect by the uninitiated. Sacrifice of small birds does take place in Voodoo, for instance (although Madame Arboo makes no mention of it in her report) and the violent ecstatic rituals do lead to copulation in many instances. But I am not taking a moral stand on these issues—only making sure that they are not forgotten, in the same context as it would be wrong to write of Christianity without mentioning the violence and bigotry that were its features over the centuries.

In Britain I found considerable conflicting evidence about the power of the Voodoo spell. In both newspaper stories and through personal contacts I discovered indications that many followers of the cult believe their leaders have magical powers which can be used to heal or harm. For instance, a number of West Indians have claimed that after incurring the displeasure of a priest they have suddenly developed strange pains in their bodies which have defied all diagnosis by doctors. Others say they have heard "voices" which have awoken them suddenly in the night and threatened them with violence or even death.

More than one authority on Voodoo has gone so far as to say that the priests can kill by witchcraft. Certainly in the West Indies there are unexplained cases of perfectly fit men who have defied Voodoo being taken ill with crippling suddenness. Some have died without leaving a trace of any physical disease which medical science could find. In this country, though, my enquiries show that the worst that has happened were unpleasant illnesses—though admittedly some of these have been quite serious.

The curses are apparently put on people in a number of ways—the most popular form being the method common to so many types of magic, to make a little figure of the person and then push pins or thorns into it. This can also be done in Voodoo with a photograph or drawing of the subject.

The actual "cursing" is performed by the priest—usually when the members are assembled for worship. The whole company "wills" pain on the intended victim.

Students of Voodoo with whom I have talked are convinced that this ability to harm another person, even if he is miles away, is possible. The one factor they say is most necessary is that the unsuspecting subject must also believe in Voodoo. A recent newspaper cutting (*Daily Mirror*, August 20th, 1970) illustrates this point clearly:

BAFFLED—BY VOODOO MAGIC

A "spell" cast by an African witch doctor shadowed a man's life in London . . . and defied treatment by some of Britain's best psychologists.

It even brought a touch of creepiness yesterday to the international congress of psychiatrists in London—in the midst of discussions on more realistic problems such as divorce, unmarried mothers and the behaviour of family pets.

Miss Irene Herzberg, a psychologist at the University College Hospital, London, told of the 27-year-old Nigerian student who appeared to be the victim of Voodoo. When he came to the hospital for treatment, said Miss Herzberg, he was tense, anxious, agitated and wrung his hands incessantly.

"He described his pains as sharp, needling and burning," Miss Herzberg added.

"He was convinced that some people he had prosecuted in Nigeria—in his job as sanitary inspector—had

contacted a Voodoo priest to get their revenge on him.

"He had himself visited the priest before coming to England and had been treated with an ointment which contained a poisonous snake's head.

"He was given psychotherapy treatment for several months. It was quite ineffective.

"The symptoms did not improve, and it seemed that our magic was not strong enough to counteract the Voodoo priest's."

Other reports indicate that this is by no means an isolated incident. Occasionally, the Voodoo priests have employed more down to earth methods to achieve their ends—viz. this story from *The Sun* of May 19th, 1971.

VOODOO LANDLORDS SCARE TENANTS

Money-grabbing landlords are alleged to be using voodoo and "witch doctors" to get rid of unwanted tenants.

The case of the frightened tenants is being probed by a London council.

They have already decided to prosecute one landlord for using a dangerous Eastern "devil plant".

Three times he was alleged to have used the reddish-brown powder of the cowhage plant on the two-year-old daughter of tenants he wanted out.

The little girl got an instant and severe itch when it was sprinkled inside her cot—while her parents were out.

She came out in large boils within minutes, and had to be treated in hospital. A summons for harassment has been issued against the landlord, an African, who is to appear in court for an offence under the Rent Act.

The case has been fully investigated by the council's harassment officer and a doctor who analysed the substance.

The doctor said: "It has a far more severe effect than any itching powder obtainable in the West."

The same council is now investigating a spate of cases where landlords are frightening tenants.

One man with several houses is said to have pinned bloodstained "voodoo" dolls on the doors of tenants who refused to go.

Another sent a local "witch doctor" into a rented house to leave a candle stuck to a saucer filled with blood.

All are cases of controlled tenants, usually paying about £3 a week for a flat, which would otherwise fetch £5 or more on the open market.

In an effort to get to the bottom of these reports, I made contact with a West Indian priest or *Obeahman* (as priests from the Caribbean are called) and asked him about the allegations made against Voodoo. The man works as a leading warehouseman in a London furniture company and is the head of a cult based in South London. He came to England from Trinidad shortly after the war and claims to have been one of the most important *Obeahmen* in his homeland. He began by speaking generally of the cult.

"Our religion is not evil—we worship our *Loa* just as Christians pray to their patron saints. Many of my people also worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

"White people do not understand us—and because they do not understand they condemn Voodoo as evil. But what is wrong with worshipping ancient deities so that they will protect us from bad spirits?"

Is it true that curses are put on members who disobey?

"That is not the case at all. Curses are only brought upon people by themselves because they do not have a strong enough faith in Voodoo. Those who believe it with their whole heart cannot be hurt by spells or magic," he replied.

Next I turned to the recent reports that some of the cults held ceremonies which developed into sex orgies and frequently involved blood sacrifices.

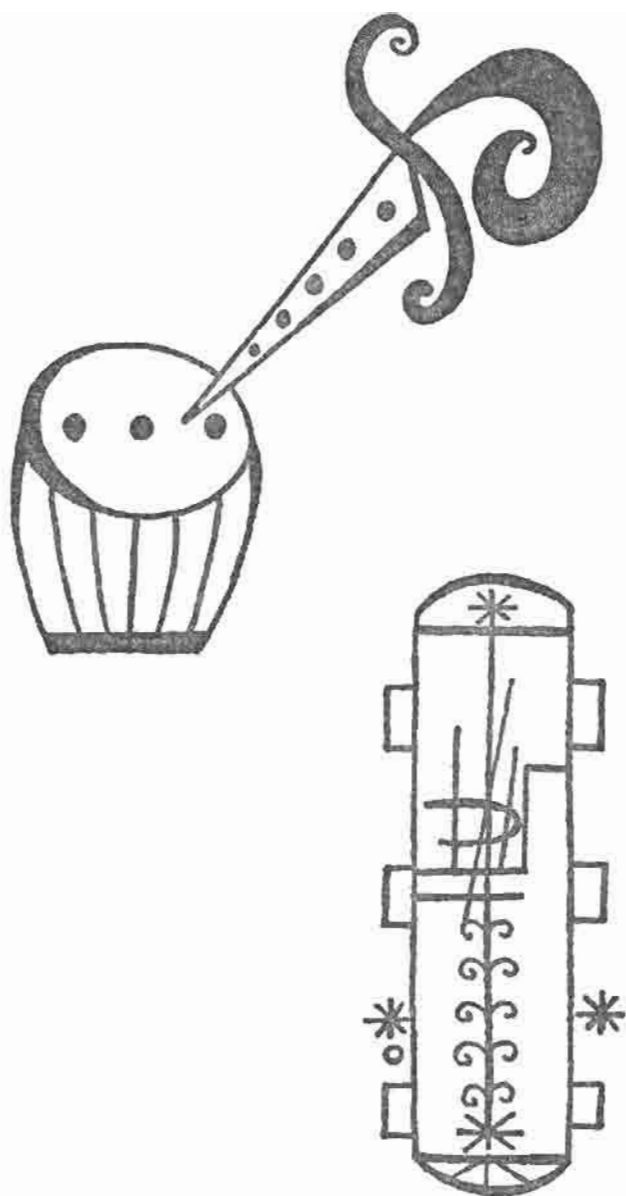
"Well, of course they do happen here, but nowhere near as often as in places like Haiti and Brazil where they are commonplace. Blood, you see, is important to our worship and to this end we need to sacrifice small birds and animals. You can completely discount stories of human sacrifice, though, they are only the invention of our enemies."

Was there also any truth in the stories of priests like himself being able to raise the dead as zombies?

"That idea originated from Haiti where I am told the *hungans* can raise zombies. Here, though, our powers extend no further than exorcising ghosts."

He went on to tell me of his skill at concocting potions to cure illness and making charms to ward off evil spirits. His authority, he claimed, extended over much of London and he could command several thousand West Indians at the drop of a hat. His group meet virtually every week at their *houmfort* or temple (a basement room in a small back-street) and conducted the normal ritual of homage to *Damballah*. On their altar, or *Pe*, would rest the ritual tools, including the sacrificial knife and cup, magic amulets, jars containing potions to appease the spirits and in the centre the body of a stuffed snake, the *Damballah*. On the floor nearby are the drums used to accompany the dancing, and in the centre of the room, drawn with chalk, the symbols of the ceremonial to be performed. (Illustrated on the next page are the symbols used for the sacrifice, *Linglessou*, and the character used in the treatment of illness.)

"If you are prepared to accept witchcraft as a cult which should be allowed to proceed unhindered, I believe the same thing should apply to Voodoo," he went on. "It is the



Two Voodoo symbols: (top) *Linglessou* and (below) the sign for magical treatment

belief of the coloured people and evil only to those who look for it."

As we parted, the *Obeahman* asked to demonstrate his good faith by giving me a copy of the sacrificial ritual so that I could see its importance to Voodoo and its serious intent. I have reproduced it here as an appendix to this section.

Without doubt there are various aspects of Voodoo and indeed its more "civilised" version, Vodoun, that are disturbing and even repulsive. But if one is prepared to give *Wicca* a fresh hearing in the light of twentieth century thinking, perhaps the same should be accorded to this black cult. One is certainly not prepared to tolerate the butchering of small animals; but if, as some Voodoo followers say, it is possible for the act to be performed without this, the time has surely arrived for a reassessment of our views?

APPENDIX

THE VOODOO BLOOD SACRIFICE

To bring forth the power of the *loa* it is necessary to make a sacrifice to them. It should be done in this way.

First he must stand beside his altar and making three turns around it in each direction holding the sacrifice, repeat:

"In the name of Bha

"In the name of Dan

"In the name of Lah"

The sacrifice should then be despatched into the Invisible accompanied by a few pieces of money, and it must be consecrated in the following traditional manner:

1. Sprinkle it, making the sign of the cross;
2. Make the sign of the cross over it with flour;
3. Place over it three piles of "food" in the form of a triangle;
4. Sprinkle it with the ritual beverages;
5. Cause part of it to be eaten.*

When offerings other than water are used, the celebrant strikes them three times against the ground which is to receive them and says:

"*Ke Ecumale Gba, ku dyo.*"

* This eating of a part of the sacrifice is done to signify sharing with the *loa* and to show that it is a wholesome gift.—Author's note.

Then after he has declared his wishes, he buries or hides the offerings on the spot where, at the beginning of the operation, he had made the sign of the cross upon the ground.

To ensure that the desired wish is granted a prayer can also be addressed to the particular *loa* who controls blood, *Erzulih*, in the following words:

"By the power of Madame la Lune (Mrs. Moon) La Belle Venus (The Fair Venus), in the name of the woman Brilliant-Soleil (Brilliant Sun), in the name of SAH-MEJI, Madame Magic (Mrs. Magic) who precedes Loso-Meji (the mystere who takes the veve and the wish of the celebrant and transports them to the sky), in the name of Negresse Gba-a-Dou, Negresse Loko, Negresse Yalode, Negresse Lihsah, Negresse l'Arc-en-ciel (Rainbow), Maitresse Agoueh-Tha-Oyo, Maitresse La Sirene, Maitresse La Baleine;

"By the power of Maitresse Erzulih Frayja Danhome, Negresse Imamou Lade, Negresse Freda Rada Congo Pethro Nago Caplaou Ibho, Negresse Freda-sih Freda, Lih Freda-si Freda and l'Freda Lih Danhome in agreement, Lih Can, Negresse Fla voodoo'n' Cisaflour voodoo'n' Negresse Thabor Mangnan Voude, Negresse Cibracan, Negresse Cordon Bleu (Blue Ribbon), Negresse Coquille Doree (Gilded Cockleshell), Negresse l'Ocean."

It should be further noted that in the case of using a cock for the sacrifice, the following method of killing it must be observed:

1. The cock is given something to eat on the ground while the drums beat;
2. Sprinkling of the cock with kerosene or other alcoholic beverages reserved for the ceremony;
3. Making the sign of the cross over the bird with flour;
4. Breaking the feet and the wings (one for each of the cardinal points);

5. Plucking the crop and placing the down upon the altar;
6. Rubbing the cock against all sides of the altar;
7. The second sprinkling with alcohol;
8. Again making the sign of the cross over the bird with the kerosene;
9. Holding the bird over the altar, and
10. Twisting the neck as though winding a spring; the priest holds the bird by the head and swings it with a circular motion until the head is torn off (or nearly so).

After this, the desired objective will surely be granted whether for the priest himself or his people.

THE REST OF THE WORLD

"It does not seem to matter where you go in the world, various concepts of witchcraft continue to play a strong part in most societies."

DR. GUSTAV JAHODA,
University of Glasgow.

In this survey of modern Witchcraft and Black Magic the emphasis has been laid very much on that which is being practised in the Northern Hemisphere, but it would be wrong not to consider, in conclusion, albeit briefly, a little of what is happening in Southern climes.

Africa, for instance, in many people's minds the traditional home of witchcraft and witch doctors, is still very much in the grip of the old superstitions. Beneath the veneer of civilisation now spread across most of the newly emergent nations, old spells and curses are used and the authority of the practice is rarely challenged. With so much of the continent continually torn by internal strife and revolution, it is perhaps not surprising to find witchcraft at its most evident in the conflicts. From the Congo have come reports of peasant soldiers hurling themselves against the guns of their enemies believing that they have been made impervious to bullets by witchcraft.

In this area witchcraft is known as "Dhawa" and it demands of its followers, mainly tribesmen and people from the jungle areas, that they avoid all contact with white people, swear allegiance to the cult in blood and partake of its secret potions and mixtures. In return the craft promises them health and happiness—providing charms and

amulets made of leopard skin, bird feathers and sprigs of trees to be worn at all times—and potions to make them immune from danger. These are concocted in the main from the plant juice of the *chanvre* or blue lotus and give a sense of wild exhilaration followed often by severe depression. Witnesses have observed men “high” on this juice who continue to fight and charge for some moments after having been fatally wounded. One white mercenary made this report recently on an action in bush country:

“The rebels, having taken their potions, advanced several hundreds strong, making no effort to lay ambushes, to take cover, or avoid rifle fire. They were so close together that a dead man was often carried along by the pressure of bodies around him. They chanted and waved their weapons but did not quicken their pace.

“If they suffer a defeat, it is said to be because their ‘*dhawa*’ or witchcraft was not strong enough, but that they will rise again on the third day.”

Ambitious men in Africa are exploiting the witchcraft cult, men with contacts in the Russian and Chinese Embassies. Nevertheless it is a genuine force—as genuine perhaps as the wearing of caste marks or lucky charms—and there can be no denying its unique ability to stir men into battle against all odds when all other inducements have failed.

Witchcraft has also shown itself in less strife-torn areas of Africa and from Nairobi I recently received a report of witch doctors bringing their influence to bear on football matches! It is said that several teams have retained their own “magic men” who wander along the touchlines muttering incantations and casting spells. Not surprisingly this is causing problems for the referees when confronted by players who feel that they are being outplayed because they are bewitched.

A recent article in the Nairobi *Sunday Nation* describes

how one witch doctor raced back and forth along the sidelines during a soccer game, waving the thigh bone of an ox, which he claimed was endowed with magical powers. Wearing soccer shorts and shirt and a feathered headdress, the witch doctor followed the game like a linesman.

Whenever his team won a free kick near their opponents' goal, he pointed his bone at the ball. This seemed to give confidence to the player who made the kick for he invariably sent the ball speeding towards the goal with such force that on several occasions the ball actually deflated in the goalkeeper's hands.

"Something must be done to curb this new element," one referee said. "But you can't impose a penalty simply because a player complains he's been bewitched."

Amusing though this report may be, it does underline the influence of "black" magic in Africa. That this particular manifestation of the age-old practice should have developed in Nairobi is most interesting, because it is from here that the authorities are conducting their most determined efforts to stamp out witchcraft. Not surprisingly they are encountering a considerable amount of opposition, not to mention the normal inborn resistance to change. However, they are meeting with the occasional success as in the case of the witch doctor who presented himself at a government building and admitted that during the practicing of his craft he had killed nine men. Nevertheless he wanted to co-operate with the authorities and handed in all the spells, potions and charms of his art!

One of the most unusual results of this campaign has been the emergence of a cult named the "African Repairs Union". Ostensibly an anti-witchcraft movement, it is widely felt to be a rival cult preying on the same superstitions and powers of suggestion. For instance, it instructs its followers that if they are ill they should go to hospital, but if they feel they are bewitched, they should come immediately to the

"Union" as it "has stronger charms to use". The cult imposes rigorous laws on its followers and anyone suspected of breaking his oath is subjected to the "lie-detector" test. In front of his fellows, the member is made to swallow a small frog; if the creature struggles and refuses to be swallowed, the person is believed guilty, if it goes down easily he is felt to be innocent.

The rituals of the "African Repairs Union" include the putting of burning sticks into the mouth, burning and cutting the arms and legs and fasting. The cult has no written ceremonial, but one source reported recently that the "book of rules" used by the leaders among the illiterate followers was in fact the East African Post Office Directory "in which can be found a cure for all things!"

Despite official action in Kenya and other countries, witchcraft flourishes throughout the Continent and has its unofficial "head witch doctor", an elderly South African Negro known simply as Khotso, meaning "peace". Believed to be in his late eighties, Khotso has reached his position of pre-eminence and wealth by a shrewd combination of exploiting the old fears and business acumen. Coming from the humblest of backgrounds, he received a grounding in witchcraft from his childhood and, though illiterate, sensed in it a method for advancing himself. By the time he was in his early twenties he had a flourishing business selling charms and potions, and through a remarkable series of successes quickly gained a reputation for excellence. People travelled huge distances to visit him and his fortune grew by leaps and bounds. However, rather than hoard the money in distrust of the white man's banks, Khotso began to invest in stocks and shares and once more demonstrated an eye for the main chance. By the time he was 30 he was worth several hundred thousand pounds, owned considerable property and had half a dozen wives. Not merely content with local success, he also employed over one hundred

"salesmen" to travel throughout the Republic selling his concoctions!

Today "Doctor" Khotso, as he is referred to, is a millionaire several times over and owns several palatial farms and many horses. Stories of his life and achievements are legion and it is said he has discovered the secret of eternal life and is prepared to make this available to customers in the form of an elixir for a mere £1,000,000! His more reasonably priced potions vary from a "sex appeal charm" for £5 which will make the wearer irresistible to the opposite sex, to an "invincible spell" for £15 which will prevent any enemy from harming the owner. According to analysts the basis of most of these concoctions are powdered snake skins, the roots of herbs and crushed ostrich eggs.

Apart from the flamboyant Khotso, each country has its own lesser practitioners who occasionally make the headlines in some surprising way. In Johannesburg, for instance, a factory owner plagued by pilfering decided to hire a witch doctor to put a stop to it. The effect of this psychological approach as against trying to implement punishments, was immediate. The owner made sure that every employee saw the witch doctor going on his rounds chanting and laying spells and after that the old superstitions came into play: temptation was removed by the fear of the curse.

In Salisbury, Rhodesia, where there is a powerful Witchcraft Act, a witch doctor was recently prosecuted for obtaining £1 notes from Africans on the pretence that he would make more money from the notes, but he first needed the strip of metal foil running through the paper!

In Nigeria, certain factions opposing the government have been instructing rural witch doctors in modern techniques to increase their power and in return sought an undermining of the ruling authority. These techniques have included the production of "voices" from skulls by hidden radio microphones, the manifestation of spirits using con-

cealed accomplices and the carrying out of miracles with film cameras and tape recorders.

And so on—in African country after country the same pattern emerges of the old practitioners continue to hold sway over large sections of the population. Occasionally, too, they have moved with the times to add a commercial undertone to their work and thereby set themselves apart from the rest of the people both financially and because of their skill in the secret arts.

After Africa, South America, and Brazil in particular, is the next continent in the Southern hemisphere where witchcraft figures most prominently. Here the practice, known widely as *Macumba*, is utilised in ways we have noted before: for attacking enemies, and in reverse, as a protection against them, and for providing the means of having a better and more satisfying life. *Macumba* also has its two separate factions practising "white" and "black" magic—the former known as *Umbanda* and the latter as *Quimbanda*.

However, circumstances have created a unique occult practice in Brazil and the intermingling of African witchcraft, European spiritualism and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church have shaped a form of witchcraft unlike any other, although certain authorities have seen parallels with Haitian Voodoo.

The "black" and "white" witchcraft practised today has its origins in African traditions brought to South America by black slaves and is undoubtedly one of the strongest cultural forces within Brazil. Although most widely represented within the society descended from the African slaves, the spirit-oriented witchcraft practices affect all levels of society. They have received attention from Roman Catholic authorities, who fear that the use of such Christian elements as statues of saints and sacramental aids has blurred the boundaries between the witchcraft practices and Christian ritual.

As Padre Pascoa Lacroix, a Catholic priest and sociologist has reported: "Brazil is saturated with magic. The medicine men have a prestige greater than the leaders of our destinies and I doubt if there are more than ten per cent of true Catholics. However, there is an extremely large number of neo-pagans and spiritualists in every locality, however small it may be, and a very high percentage also in the cities."

According to some authorities, close on one-third of the population of Brazil believe passionately in this witchcraft and the vast majority of the rest are either sympathetic or actually attracted to it. It is said to figure prominently in everyday life and its influence has often been noted in political campaigns.

Macumba groups apparently vary in size from two or three people to several dozen, and are led by a high priest or *Babalao*. Their rituals are primarily based around frenzied dancing and the use of the power of suggestion to affect victims. The "possession" by spirits or gods comes as a result of mass ceremonial. Spells used by the *Babalao* utilise many of the well-known items such as herbs and plant juices, in addition to "the powder of brains" and "graveyard dirt".

According to Brazil's leading expert on witchcraft, Pedro McGregor, the practice of genuine *Macumba* calls for tremendous emotional concentration. "It exhausts anyone engaged in it," he says, "and must be practised in a jungle environment, which seems to renew the emotional and physiological strength that it demands."

Much of the doctrine of *Macumba* has evolved from a work entitled, *The Books of Spirits* which was written by a Frenchman, "Allan Kardec", the pseudonym of L. H. D. Rivail, in 1856. The book first appeared in Brazil two years later and presented answers to all the ailments of mankind as—allegedly—dictated to the author by spirits "on the other side". It propounded methods of contacting the dead, work-

ing spells and worshipping the unseen forces. In the space of a few years it was eagerly adopted by spiritualists and believers in the old religions and had formed an integral part of *Macumba* as we see it today.

The figure of Jesus Christ appears frequently in the rituals where he is referred to as *Oxala* and several of the disciples are also mentioned. Allied to them are a whole host of spirits, many of extreme antiquity.

The *Umbanda* or "white" magic followers, for instance, reveal their cultural links with Africa each year during the New Year's ceremonies that appeal to the most important figure, *Yemanja*, "Goddess of All Waters". The rituals take place at Brazil's coastal points and rivers. Ceremonies begin at dusk. A priestess, or *Mae de Santo*, lights candles in honour of *Yemanja*, and young priestesses are purified and ordained. Then, as the sun sinks, a small wooden boat is made ready for launching; it is decorated with candles, flowers, and figurines of saints. At times, doves are placed on the boat. At midnight it is pushed from the shore and the followers wait eagerly until it disappears under the waves. This signifies that *Yemanja* has heard their prayers and will answer them positively.

Very similar ceremonies also take place up and down the coast, from Rio Grande del Sol in the south to the Amazon Delta in the north. Inland, there is a difference in ceremony; the launching of boats from the East Coast is a symbolic link with Africa, across the South Atlantic. Ceremonies on the large and small rivers must provide a different setting for the sacrificial ritual. Rocks, surrounded by raging waters, are turned into tables—complete with gold-embroidered cloths and flower decorations—set as if for a meal. Knives, forks, plates, bottles of wine, and dishes of fish or meat are placed on the precarious "tables". Once these have been prepared for the "Goddess of the Waters", the *Umbanda* followers sing and dance near the shore, wait-

ing for the raging river to carry the sacrificial meal downstream; this, too, means the *Yemanja* has accepted their sacrifice.

"The Earth Mother" symbolism of this legend is like so many others we have encountered in the study of witchcraft around the world and not surprisingly, the Brazilians equate *Yemanja* with the Virgin Mary. Also represented on their altars is Satan or *Exu*, "God of the Crossroads", to whom sacrifices of burning candles, liquor and slaughtered chickens are made.

There can be no denying the importance of *Macumba* in Brazil or that its deep entrenchment in everyday life ensures it a long and flourishing future.

The third and final continent that has been thrust into the headlines of late because of renewed outbreaks of witchcraft practices is, strangely enough, Australia. The craft here is very much the preserve of the Aborigines and their skill has come to light through extensive study of their life and customs by a number of scientists. The main findings have shown the great power exerted over people by witch doctors' spells and curses and their ability at a specialised form of telepathy.

The enquiries into aboriginal magic were begun as the result of an extraordinary event when a teenage boy was almost "sung to death" by a witch doctor. The lad, who lived with a group of Aborigines on the outskirts of Perth, accidentally stumbled across a group of elders with their witch doctors while they were holding a secret magic ceremony. Immediately one of the witch doctors turned on him, pointed a bone at him and "sang" a ritual curse at him.

The terrified boy was well aware of the implications of what he had done and froze with horror on the spot. Some hours later, when the group of magical practitioners had finally dispersed, he was found in exactly the same position, scarcely breathing. He was rushed to a hospital in

Perth, but doctors held out little hope for his recovery as previously only one Aborigine had ever recovered from this kind of curse. Usually after such an experience the recipient went into a coma and died.

However, the doctors decided to place him in an iron lung and after a month of life-or-death struggle, the boy finally pulled through. Today he is fit and well but because of the curse he can never return to his tribal lands.

Greatly fascinated by this case, a group of scientists began their study of the Aborigines and their magical practices and learned that they were of a highly suggestible nature and could literally "think" themselves doomed to death. During their enquiries they found, too, that there had been instances where ordinary white men had also been cursed in a similar manner and died in a coma after struggling for hours to breathe.

Another virtually inexplicable power of Aboriginal witchcraft which came to light was the people's ability to "summon" their loved ones to them from hundreds of miles away. It was discovered that the witch doctors particularly had this power and put it into effect by whirling a *churinga* around their head while mentally calling to the required person. The *churinga*, or "bull-roarer" as it is sometimes called, is made of human hair attached to a stone, and has to be swung around the head at great speed for maximum effect. The scientists actually studied a witch doctor performing this act and waited for several days until, as predicted, the man's wife appeared at his side. She had travelled a distance of nearly a hundred miles across barren outback, it was later calculated.

In their conclusions the scientists agreed that the Aborigines appear to be able to use telepathy to a conscious level across many miles of countryside and that their oral knowledge of ancient magical secrets may well be among the most profound in the world.

In fact we can see that they are just one more link in the amazing network of witchcraft practitioners spread across the world who, as we have read through the pages of this book, leave us with more puzzles and more unanswered questions than perhaps any other group of people studied on the "Frontiers of the Unknown".

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