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Brahmins, Vampires and Shantyboaters

BY BURTON RASCOE

Former small town American boys all, Seabrook, Brooks and Burman, each with a jolly good new book to his credit this season,¹ certainly illustrate the diversity of cultural pursuits and entertainment available to Americans. Such have been Willie Seabrook's hardened and multifarious experiences among weird cults all over the world that he is nonchalance itself when, on being invited to lunch by a man like Aleister Crowley, he is greeted by a woman who at the moment is "on the astral plane of Astarte" and, as Willie says, naked as a jaybird; or if he perhaps finds another naked woman hanging by her wrists from the ceiling to induce astral wanderings, in the same room where Seabrook and Crowley calmly drink whiskey and soda. Nor is he surprised, while resting after a swim in which he has cut his shoulder against a jagged rock at Antibes, to have a beautiful female companion suddenly go crazy, fasten her lips on his shoulder wound, suck his blood and announce she is a vampire. Awful fancy begins to try to picture what sort of evening it would be if a party could be arranged to include one of Burman's shantyboatmen, one of Brooks' flowers of the Indian summer of New England culture, and one of Seabrook's scions of British nobility who is under the delusion of being a werewolf.

1—*New England Indian Summer*, by Van Wyck Brooks. E.P. Dutton & Co. \$3.75. *Big River to Cross*, by Ben Lucien Burman. John Day. \$3.00. *Witchcraft, Its Power in the World Today*, by William Seabrook. Harcourt Brace. \$3.00.