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"CROWLEYANITY"

SOMETHING NEW IN CEREMONIES.

AUSTRALIAN GIRL AS HIGH-PRIESTESS.

LEILA WADDELL IN A NOVEL ROLE.

The name of Leila Waddell is known in Australia—and beyond the seas—as that of a capable musician. In future it bids fair to rank eminently in another sketch. A "new religion" has captured her. She is to-day a High Priestess, prophetess, and a leader generally of a new sect, followers of a more or less known poet, Aleister Crowley, who has set up a creed in which the main idea is described as being "to plant Eastern Transcendental Buddhism, which attains its ultimate end in Samadhi, in English soil under the guise of Ceremonial Magic.

In these days of religious dissensions and arguments, pro and con on the question of vestments, and church ceremonies, something new will be refreshing and interesting.

Crowley is declared to be quite in earnest in an endeavor to attain such a condition of mind as is called ecstasy, and is said to "believe that the gateway to ecstasy can be reached through ceremonial magic." He turns down the theories of modern metaphysicians, and declares that "if you repeat an invocation solemnly and aloud, expectant of some great and mysterious result, you will experience a deep sense of spiritual communion.

With this briefly-related preface an introduction is afforded to the doctrines of Australian High Priestess, and for the rest it is convenient to accept the description of "R.R.," who writes in the "Sphere" of his experience at a "Crowleyanity" séance.

His entrance to the place of meeting, the writer says was made after climbing interminable stairs, at the head of which he was "received by a gentleman robed in white, and carrying a drawn sword." Add to this that "the room was dark; only a dull red light shone upon an altar," that "various young men, picturesquely clad in robes of white, red or black, stood at different points round the room," and that "some held swords, incense made a haze through which I saw a small white statue

illuminated by a tiny lamp hung high on a cornice," and we have the stage setting around Leila Waddell and her fellow believers."

Then, this investigator of the new religion proceeds to describe the ceremony as follows:—

THE CEREMONIAL.

"A brother recited 'the banishing ritual of the Pentagram' impressively and with true earnestness. Another brother was commanded to 'purify the Temple with water.' This was done. Then we witnessed the 'Consecration of the Temple with Fire,' whereupon Crowley, habited in black, and accompanied by the brethren, led 'the Mystic Circumambulation.' They walked round the altar twice or thrice in a sort of religious procession. Gradually, one by one, those of the company who were mere onlookers were beckoned into the circle. The Master of the Ceremonies then ordered a brother to 'bear the cup of Libation.' The brother went round the room, offering each a large golden bowl full of some pleasant-smelling drink. We drank in turn. This over, a stalwart brother strode into the centre and proclaimed: "The Twelfold Certitude of God.' Artemis was then invoked by the greater ritual of the Hexagram. More Libation. Aleister Crowley read us the Song of Orpheus from the Argonauts.

THE DRAPED LADY.

"Following upon this song we drank our third Libation, and then the brothers led into the room a draped figure, masked in that curious blue tint we mentally associate with Hecate. The lady, for it was a lady, was enthroned on a seat high above Crowley himself. By this time the ceremony has grown weird and impressive, and its influence was increased when the poet recited in solemn and reverent voice Swinburne's glorious first chorus from 'Atlanta,' that begins, 'When the hounds of spring.' Again a Libation; again an invocation to Artemis. After further ceremonies, Frater Omnia Vincam was commanded to dance 'the dance of Syrinx and Pan in honor of our lady Artemis.' "

THRILLED TO THE BONE.

A young poet, whose verse is often read, astonished me by a graceful and beautiful dance, which he continued until he fell exhausted in the middle of the room, where, by the way, he lay

until the end. Crowley then made supplication to the goddess in a beautiful and unpublished poem. A dead silence ensued. After a long pause, the figure enthroned took a violin and played—played with passion and feeling, like a master. We were thrilled to our very bones. Once again the figure took the violin, and played an *Abend Lied* so beautifully, so gracefully, and with such intense feeling that in very deed most of us expected that Ecstasy which Crowley so earnestly seeks. Then came a prolonged and intense silence, after which the Master of the Ceremonies dismissed us in these words—"By the Power in me vested, I declare the Temple closed." So ended a really beautiful ceremony—beautifully conceived and beautifully carried out." The "lady enthroned" is, of course, Leila Waddell.

AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES.

Miss Leila Waddell is a native of Bathurst, and her people, who are well known in the district, reside there now. Miss Waddell showed early artistic promise. Coming to Sydney when she was quite a girl, she studied the violin under M. Henri Staell, remaining with the French virtuoso for some seven or eight years. She was not only an exceptionally brilliant violin student but she was also a brainy girl in other respects. She was besides a plucky girl, and supported herself by teaching, and concert engagements during the last few years of her studentship. For two or three years she was quite a figure in the city's musical life, appearing at most concerts of note. She was a member of the Amateur Orchestral Society and the Sydney Philharmonic Orchestra. Whilst with M. Staell she displayed so much aptitude in her work that he obtained for her the position of junior professor of the violin at the Ladies' Presbyterian College, Croydon, where he holds the chief musical professorship. Before leaving for England she toured the Commonwealth with the "Brescians," a concert company of instrumentalists and vocalists, who found much appreciation in the leading cities and towns of the various States. Miss Waddell has been in England for some three years, and from the time of her landing there she found no difficulty in obtaining engagements. The beginning of this year she was heard of as leader of the ladies' orchestra in a first-class "Waltz Dream" company touring the United Kingdom. Writing to a friend in Sydney early this year, she intimated her probable return to Australia at an early date.