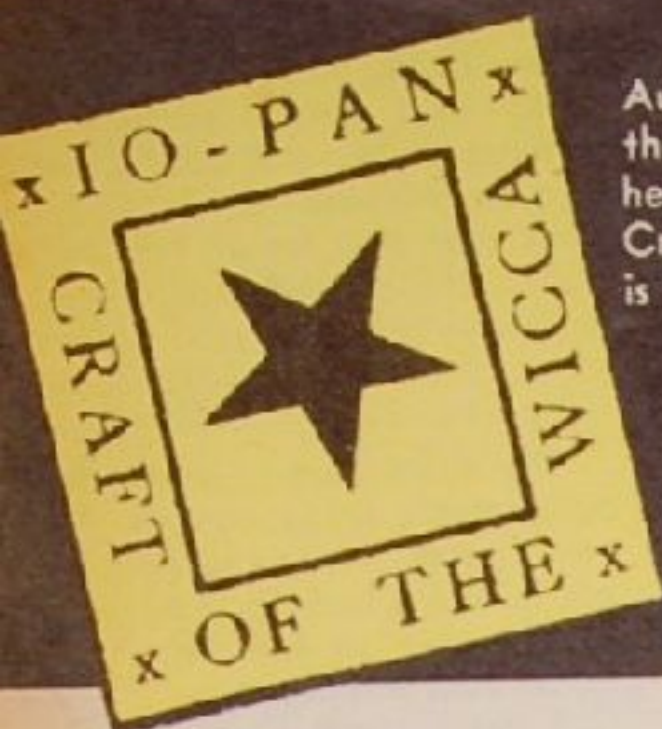


NUDE RITES

WITCHES ARE ACTIVE AGAIN



Australia's head witch uses the device (left) as his letter-head. It is the seal of the Craft of the Wicca. Wicca is an Anglo-Saxon word which means "wise" and from it the word witch is derived. Witchcraft thus means the craft or the art of the wise.

But they claim their practices are now directed toward good, not evil

IN Sydney recently a young man and a girl, both nude, jumped hand in hand over a broomstick held by two others within a "magic" circle traced with the point of a ritual knife.

They were self-styled witches performing a "pairing" rite in the presence of other self-styled witches.

The witchcraft they were practising, and which other witches throughout Australia are now practising, is claim-

ed to be an almost benign and socially acceptable art. Its devotees say that the new sorcery has been cleansed of the evils (real and imaginary) of the bad old days, such as blood sacrifice and sex orgies.

Whether the new witchcraft is con-

sidered socially acceptable, juvenile, in bad taste or irreligious, depends largely on one's personal view of communal nudity and the worship of Pan, a nature and fertility god of the ancients.

What is interesting is that the public reappearance of witchcraft in Australia after certain sensational occurrences a few years ago, is part of a pattern that is almost world-wide. And the manifestations abroad are not as harmless as the latest practices in Australia are claimed to be.

Sociologists abroad are watching with concern the reappearance of witchcraft, not in the few remaining primitive societies, but in highly sophisticated, technologically advanced nations which have turned the hydrogen atom into a nightmare and the universe into a terrifying and impersonal infinity.

Some see in it a retreat from monstrous realities, an atavistic attempt to return to a dreamworld of comprehensible and manageable proportions. Among its educated and "civilised" devotees, this may be so, but in Europe at least, the modern sophisti-

cated witchcraft comes up against the age-old witchcraft that survives among the peasantry — a dark thing of death and blood and fear. The difficulty is to prevent the two streams from mingling.

It is significant that while the naked young couple in Sydney were jumping over their broomstick, uttering a little jingle about union, other events were happening elsewhere, or had happened within the recent past.

- In West Germany last year 70 cases of witchcraft came before the Courts. Only a year or so before that a young German farmer murdered his child, because it had been born prematurely, and he believed such children were destined to become witches.

Hanged as witches

- In Switzerland a man strangled his sister-in-law because he believed her to be a witch.

- At Oxford University, students and black-clad girls were said to be practising black magic and satanism and holding black masses.

- In France, a boy was strangled by his sister during a ceremony to exorcise the "spirit of death" from him.

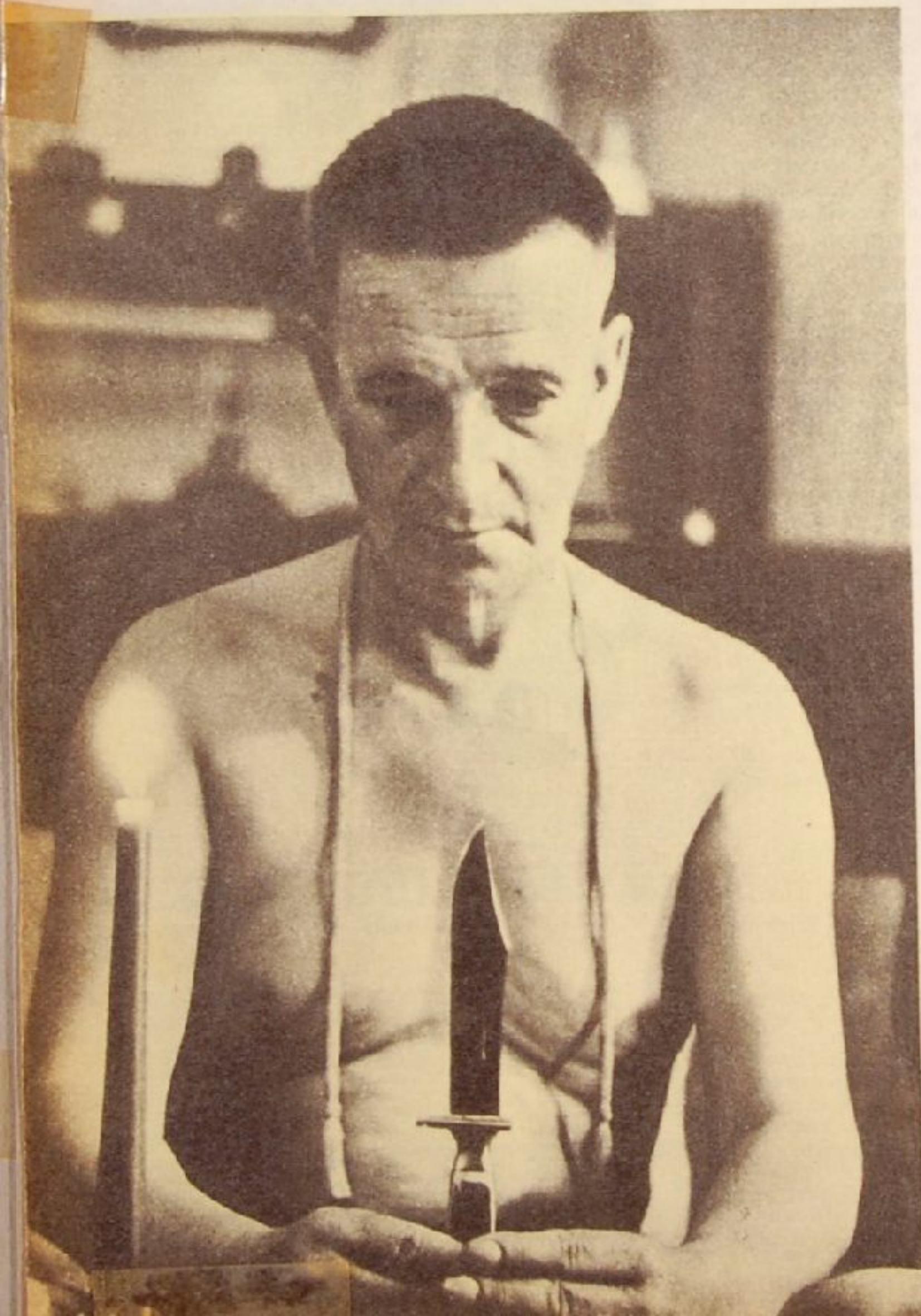
- In Mexico, two brothers were hanged as witches. On the Isle of Wight there were rumours that a baby had been sacrificed during witchcraft rites.

- In the United States adult men and women were resorting to voodoo to kill their enemies, avenge themselves on faithless lovers and gain wealth. In London, an educated woman used witchcraft in an attempt to harm a man who, she believed, had spurned her.

These are only some of the more disturbing manifestations of witchcraft abroad. Australian practitioners of the new witchcraft of the atomic age, say that their practices have nothing in common with barbarities committed in other countries, which, indeed, they abhor.

Partly because of the world-wide upsurge of witchcraft, latest developments in Australia in the cult have a special interest.

The man who claims to have led the revival of witchcraft in this country and to be the master of all witches



Soon after this picture was taken in the Hermits' Cave, Rajburi, Thailand, Australian head witch Anton Miles, then a Buddhist monk, was initiated into the Siamese Witch Cult. At left, Miles as he is today.



Benice

in it is Anton Miles, a 49-year-old Englishman. Miles earns his living as a decorator and house painter, and has studied the occult in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. He became a Buddhist about 10 years ago, and in 1953 founded the first Buddhist society in Queensland. Later he returned to Asia, and travelled and studied in Thailand. On his own account, he studied witchcraft and magic during his Eastern travels.

Later still, he returned to Britain. His interest in the occult had dated from childhood, and in 1959 he attended a coven or meeting of witches in Watford, North London, that lasted two and a half months. He returned to Sydney in August, 1959, and, according to himself, the revival of the cult in Sydney dates from then.

Meetings in the nude

Miles insists that his witchcraft is nothing like that of blood sacrifices and orgies. To quote his own words, "I find witchcraft in its proper sense is a means of establishing harmony between man and the natural laws. Witchcraft is the oldest form of religion known to man. It is based on fertility rites."

The group of witches on which the rites centre is known as a coven, and, according to Miles, a coven should consist of not less than 13 witches. There can be more.

There is a circle and a small "altar" in the centre. No more than 13 may be within the circle, though a greater number may stand around outside. Miles says, "Witches meet in the

nude partly because it's tradition, partly because it's one of the things that help us overcome the inhibitions of life, and partly because we think there cannot be mental freedom without physical freedom.

"Nudity is not difficult. There's nothing licentious about us. It's all done in a natural way. If an initiate cannot accept nudity, he or she cannot go further."

Miles says the witches' altar is consecrated, but the secrecy enjoined on him by the cult forbids him to say how. During ceremonies, a candle is lit and incense is lit from the candle. Wine and cakes are placed on the altar, these two being symbols of nature's productivity.

Initiates are questioned by a master witch (who can be of either sex) seated on a cushion placed within the circle. They are asked these three questions:

1. Do you wish to be a witch, practise the craft and attain witch powers?
2. Do you promise to respect the craft and its teachings?
3. Do you promise to learn the craft and to keep secret all that which you are forbidden to reveal?

When the candidate has answered "I do" to all questions, the first "esoteric secret" is revealed to him (or her).

Three objects feature in the initiation as practised in Sydney. They are a knife, a cord and a small candle. The knife is handed to the initiate as a "symbol and working tool." The knife must have a point and cutting edge and is used, among other things, for scratching the circles in which the

rites are held.

The cord is placed around the initiate's neck as a symbol that he or she is bound to the unswerving service of "the master."

The small candle is held by the initiate and lit from the candle on the altar. At the same time, the initiate is commanded to "take the flame, for it is the symbol of the witch's power."

The initiate is then marked with a personal mark, often with charcoal, and admitted to the coven. The mark may represent a circle or a snake.

Making lucky charms

Though there are no rules against drinking, Miles says that Australian witches rarely drink beer or spirits. Sweet wine is usually drunk at covens, and not much of that. (In this they resemble one English group of witches in which the rule is that only sweet wine may be drunk and not more than two glasses at a meeting.)

One of the harmless activities of Australian witches is making lucky charms. One of the charms used in Australia is an arrangement of three pieces of wattle—regarded as specially powerful. There are no "evil spells."

Witches range from teenagers to elderly people, and all classes and many walks of life are represented.

"The girl next to you may be a witch," says Miles. "There is nothing apparent to indicate it."

He likes the story of a Sydney model (a witch), who went along to a TV station for an audition. As a lucky charm, she wore her witch's cord tied to her shoulder strap, and

The pairing rite of Australian witches entails jumping over a broomstick within a magic circle which has been traced with the point of a knife.

she is convinced that this charm was responsible for the success of the audition. At the same time, other witches in Sydney stood in chalk circles and cast "good" spells to help her in her quest.

All this is far removed from such European manifestations of witchcraft as the killing of a baby and the strangling of a boy.

Miles has revealed that at covens, a sex symbol is prominent on the altar in the circle. During the rites, the presiding witch stands at the altar, on which are the cakes and wine, symbols of productivity.

The presiding witch raises his hands and says—

Glory, glory and naked be,
Worship the symbol that is thee.
Sacred the nakedness that is man,
Sacred the glory that is Pan.

A little later, he calls on the assembled witches to recite the three characteristics of a witch which are the simple life, no inhibitions, and the quest of witch powers.



An old German print showing a gathering of witches in the seventeenth century (above) emphasises the medieval origin of witchcraft, so does the cowl, reminiscent of a Middle Ages monk's habit, now worn by head Australian witch Anton Miles, who says modern witches are not malevolent.

Witches' orgies shocked Sydney and led to police action

Oddly enough, the music at most covens is provided by radiograms, and it may be accompanied by ritual dancing, described by Miles as "rather active." After the dancing, members of the coven lounge about and eat cakes and drink wine.

Miles emphasises that his cult does not meddle in an individual's sex life. The pairing rite, referred to at the outset of this story, may be undertaken by a couple already married or by single people.

The jumping over the broomstick is a sign that a couple have "paired," but how long the pairing lasts is entirely up to the couple. A pairing can be broken simply by breaking the broomstick, though this is uncommon. So long as a pair is maintained, no other witch will approach either partner to it.

Miles says that the whole process of witchcraft is to try to establish harmony with nature, which is personified in two aspects, male and female. Witches call the male aspect Pan and the female aspect Diana.

Animals aren't sacrificed

Witches, he adds, like animals and do not sacrifice them.

The version of witchcraft now presented by Miles recalls, by contrast, the revelations of occult barbarism that shocked Australia some years ago, these began in a rather unusual way.

A detective was walking in Sydney's King's Cross when a girl, later found to be a New Zealander, approached him. She asked to be arrested, saying, "I can't stand this life any more. I've got no money, and to eat I have to give my body to their animal lusts. Please vag me while I am still sane. I have been to a black mass . . . I want to stop before it is too late."

The detective asked the girl what she meant by the black mass, and she said "Sex orgies and practices" and named a place run by "the witch of King's Cross."

Following this, newspapers reported devil worship both at King's Cross and on the exclusive North Shore. Pro-



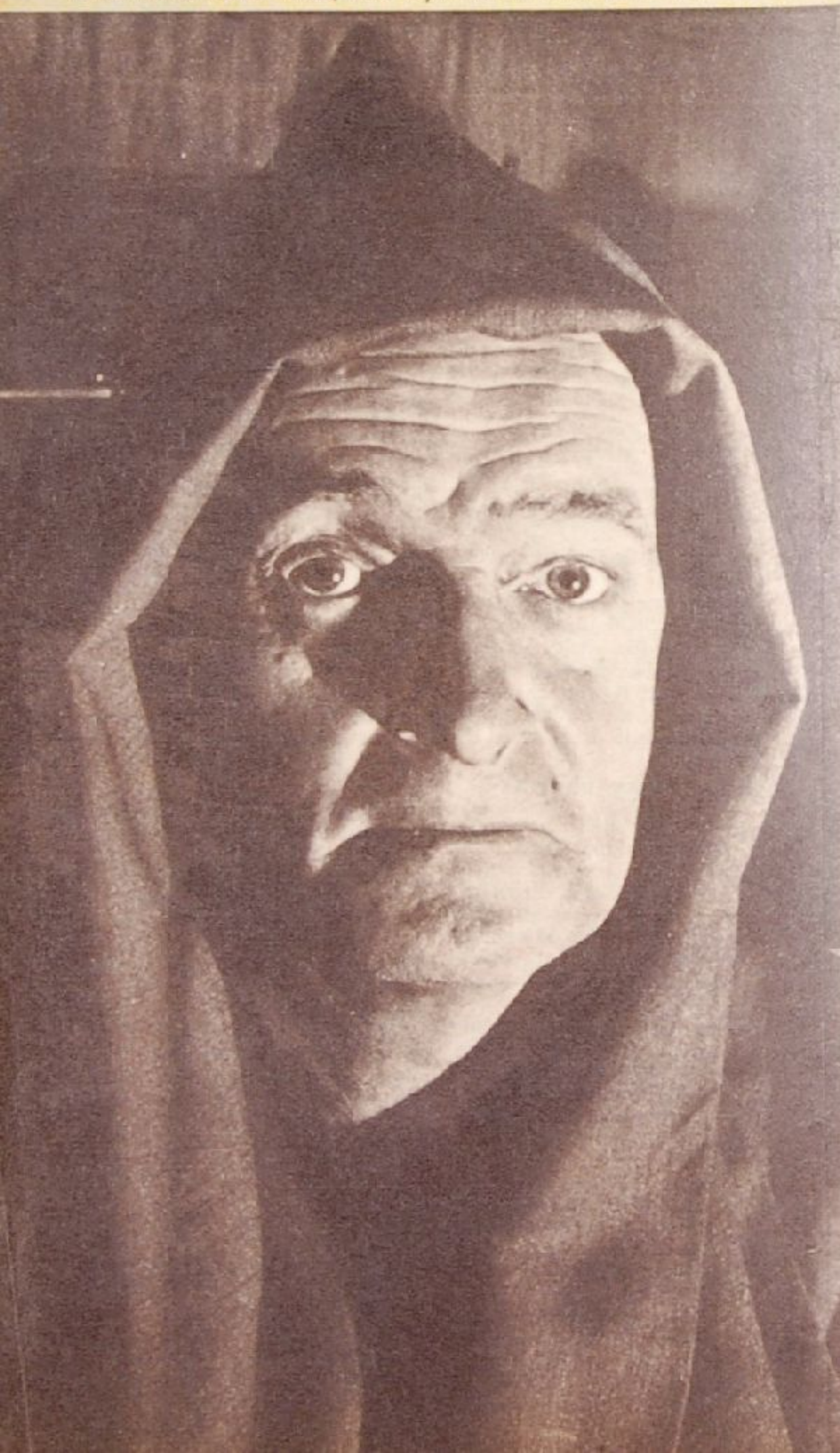
This old Flemish print of a witch preparing a philtre shows that the cult of nakedness was a feature of sorcery five centuries ago.

fessional and radio men were said to be involved in shocking depravity. It was reported that police were astounded at the ramifications of the cult.

A senior journalist who made a special investigation reported "satanically cruel" sex orgies at King's Cross, during which the blood of participants was shed.

He said that the orgies were preceded by drug-taking to stimulate the participants to a frenzy and intensity that would otherwise have been impossible of achievement.

He wrote, "Cult members are taught



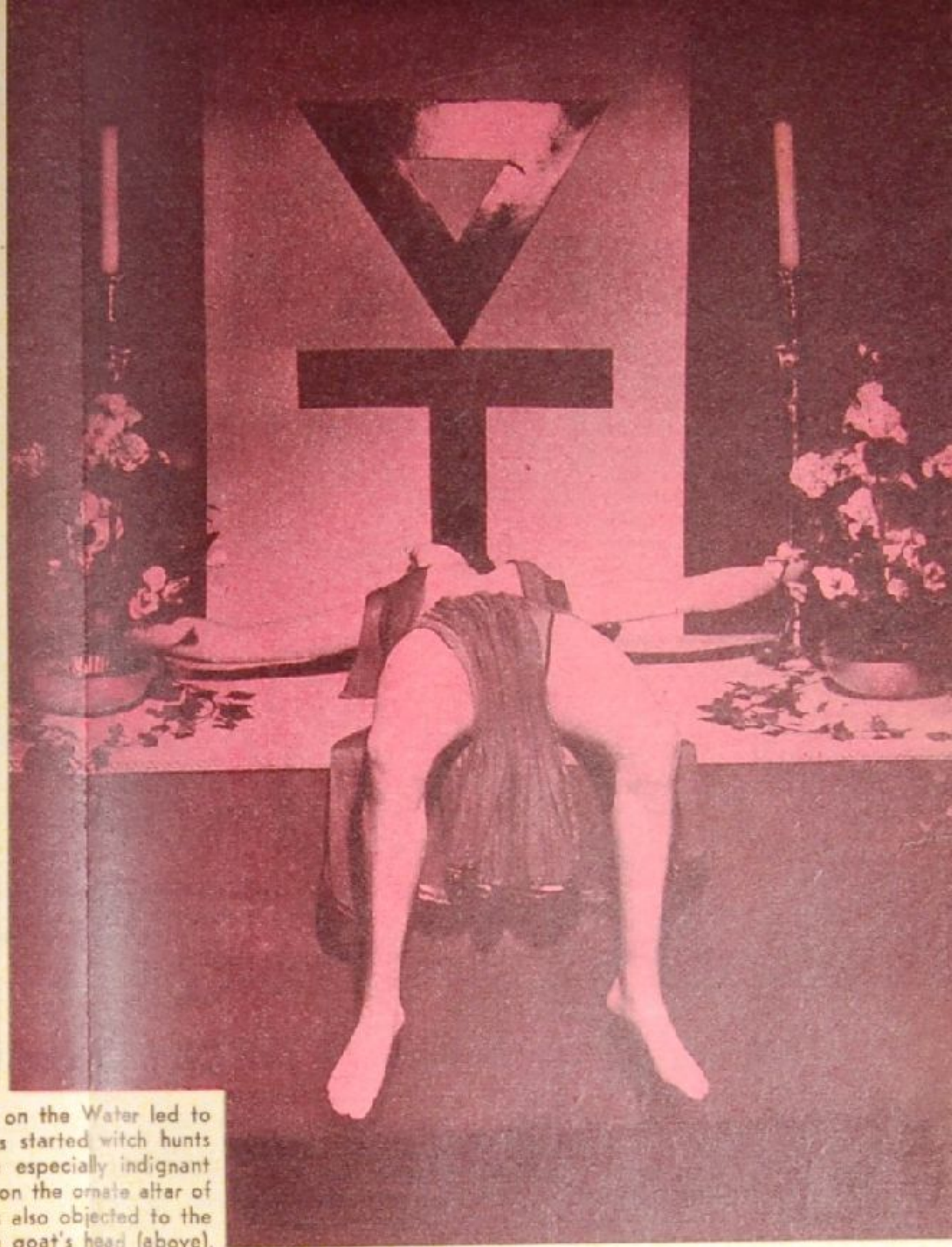
Chief of Britain's witches, 77-year-old Dr. Gerald Brosseau Gardner, is the director of the only museum of witchcraft in the world (on the Isle of Man).



Self-styled "the Beast," Aleister Crowley was reviled for his orgies and black magic masses. Five of his reputed mistresses committed suicide.



Opening of a witchcraft exhibition in the Cotswold village of Bourton on the Water led to violent dissension among the residents. Councillors resigned, mothers started witch hunts and the parish council tried to close the show down. Residents were especially indignant over the realistic reconstruction of the witch goddess Tanat's temple, on the ornate altar of which lay a model of an almost nude young priestess (right). Villagers also objected to the grotesque, white-gowned, horned god in human form complete with goat's head (above).



to believe that they have a double personality — male and female. They are forced to abandon social and moral conventions . . . Study groups of witchcraft, occultism and demonology are held for members."

In March, 1956, there were reports of police investigations into black masses and other devil-worshipping ceremonies which had taken place in luxurious Sydney homes. Aliases such as "Lucifuge" and "Satanachia" and "Nebiros" were said to mask the identities of prominent citizens who had taken part in depraved rituals.

A newspaper of the day reported, "The thing that has most shocked detectives who have spent months tracking the Satanists is the fact that people of culture, wealth, education and social standing have utterly debased themselves in orgiastic ritual gatherings."

These depths of occult depravity recalled (and still recall) a sinister witchcraft figure in England, a man whose evil genius and influence wrecked the lives of many others. This was Aleister Crowley, known as the wickedest man in the world, a title of which he

was particularly proud.

By a coincidence, Anton Miles knew Crowley long ago, but entirely dissociates himself from Crowley's practices.

Crowley was the son of strict non-conformist parents. His father ran a family brewery, and, bequeathed to his son £40,000, a large fortune at the time Crowley inherited it. As well as being "the wickedest man in the world," he was cultured, a lover of poetry, and a brave and skilled mountaineer. He embraced witchcraft early in life and practised it almost continuously thereafter.

On Crowley's witchcraft altars the blood of animals flowed freely, and on occasions the police of England, France, Italy and Germany suspected him of sacrificing human victims to his gods.

Slander action failed

Crowley married twice, and both his wives entered insane asylums. He associated with literally hundreds of women, before, during and after his two marriages, and dozens of children were born of these liaisons.

Once Crowley brought an action for slander against the publishers of a book which described some of his activities. He lost the case, and one of the reasons could have been that he was unable to comply with his counsel's request that he produce two people to testify to his good character.

Crowley wrote poetry, some of it addressed to the god Pan, and on the strength of it regarded himself as Eng-



Artist Rosaleen Norton at one time said she was a priestess of a witch cult which in Kings Cross, Sydney, devoted much time to portrayal of occult subjects. Art critics praised her draughtsmanship, were less happy about its rather barbaric content.



Head of the magical Golden Dawn Society, MacGregor Mathers (above) sued Crowley when he started a rival order. Golden Dawn members wore the horrific habit (at left).



Immediately after leaving Oxford Raoul Loveday took vows which made him one of Aleister Crowley's disciples. Loveday's death started a worldwide scandal.



Thirty-seven years ago Loveday's body was borne by hearse to the village cemetery at Cefalu, Sicily. It was alleged that he died from drinking the blood of a cat ritually killed. Epstein model Betty May (left) accused self-styled witch Aleister Crowley of killing Loveday. Ultimately the Italian police expelled Crowley and ordered paintings of occult sexual subjects he had executed on the walls of his villa to be whitewashed.

BLOOD FLOWED FREELY ON CROWLEY'S ALTARS



What Crowley called the "Mark of the Beast" was branded on his women. He insisted that women should be bought and sold like commodities.



Both Crowley's wives entered insane asylums because of his treatment of them. His first was Rose Kelly (above left). His second, (right), painted by Crowley, was Maria de Miramar, a dull-looking Nicaraguan.

Strange ritual killing on St. Valentine's Day

land's greatest living poet. He also claimed to be a great painter and the philosopher of an all-powerful religion which would replace Christianity.

He illustrated some of the tenets of this religion on the walls of the villa he occupied for a time in Cefalu, Sicily. His wall paintings featured both demons and humans and represented, according to one visitor, "every kind of sexual act in every conceivable position." When he was expelled from Italy, the police ordered that the walls be whitewashed.

One of Crowley's amusements at Cefalu was to sacrifice animals. Visitors saw a cat killed in a witchcraft ritual, and a goat slaughtered on the stomach of one of Crowley's women.

Crowley's life was largely devoted to perpetrating horrors of a deliberate

and very highly informed kind.

On the other hand, in the Europe of today there are still horrors being perpetuated that are rooted in the superstitions, ignorance and cruelty of the ages.

The classic example of this in recent times was the murder of Charles Walton, aged 74, of Lower Quinton, in Warwickshire, eight miles from Stratford-on-Avon. Walton was murdered on February 14 (St. Valentine's Day), 1945.

Walton, a labourer, was found at seven o'clock in the evening in a field, under an oak tree and close to a hedge he had been tidying. His billhook had been driven into his chest and his neck was held to earth by his two-pronged pitchfork. On his throat was a gash in the shape of a cross.

Locals noted two things about Walton's killing. The first was the "sign of the cross" on his throat, a symbol common in traditional witchcraft in those parts. The other was the date—St. Valentine's Day. To the ancient Romans this was the feast of Lupercalia, when the blood of dogs and goats was shed to fertilise the earth.

The villagers were tight-lipped and suspicious to investigating police, but talk of a ritual slaying reached the detectives. It was suggested that old Walton had died so that his blood should fertilise the fields. The method of killing pointed to this.

At first, the hard-headed men who had been called in from Scotland Yard scorned the idea. But as investigations were hampered by silence and enmity, scorn gave way to doubt, and among some of them at least, doubt to acceptance.

Some of the ablest detectives in Britain came to the conclusion that Walton had been a victim of a ritual, witchcraft murder.

Detective's long vigil

So sure is one of the detectives that Walton was the victim of witchcraft that every St. Valentine's Day for years he has gone to Lower Quinton hoping that some perhaps small but significant circumstance or happening will repeat itself and so put him on the track of the killers.

There, then, are the three types of witchcraft — the new cult of Sydney, the deliberate demonology of men such as Crowley, which may still not be dead in Britain, and the traditional, savage witchcraft of the peasantry of the Old World and Latin America, which is still very much alive.

Perhaps the important thing to remember is that they have a common root.



An insatiable appetite for women was one of Crowley's characteristics. Leah Faesi (above left) was his favourite, staying with him for five years. Crowley constantly referred to Edith Y (right) as "the Mother of God."



"Women," said Crowley, "should be brought around to the back door like milk." These women are standing before the rocky hill to which Crowley banished the disciples who erred when they were at the Abbey of Cefalu.

Chief guest at the Sheffield wedding of Pat Dawson and Arnold Crowther was the leader of the 400 witches in England and Wales, Gerald Gardner, who blessed the couple with his own magic wand. Instead of a bouquet the bride carried a magic wand more than 200 years old. Both bride and bridegroom are trained witches.

