

What Happens in a Modern Temple of Love

One Seer Makes a Little Mysticism Pay Big Dividends; Another Is Arrested on Complaint of His Fair Clients.



Dr. Pierre Bernard, better known as Oom, the omnipotent, who now runs the Braeburn club at Nyack, New York.



Miss Cleo Jocelyn, niece of Charles Quincy Petersen, Chicago millionaire, who told the Los Angeles police that the "Rev." Charles Newman made love to her during a seance.



"Rev." Charles Newman, who ran a hocus-pocus love cult in Los Angeles until the police called.

"HOCUS-POCUS" was what they called it back in the good old days when the magician wore a pointed cap and searched the stars from his lofty chamber in the effort to learn—and turn—human destiny. One could buy love charms from these august metaphysicians equally efficacious in binding forever an errant fancy, or in sweeping the earth of rivals. For even then it was love that most interested struggling humanity.

Then there were later days when the prince of darkness was said to assist certain whom he favored in the rites of conjuring and curbing love and fortune. This was the age when witches were burned at the stake. Nevertheless they prospered, for men and women continued to seek such mystic services.

Still later there was great rushing up and down among folks who wanted things, money perhaps, but always love, who had begun to hear of the 20th century hocus-pocus workers. They obtained for you whatever you wished by the tearfully simple process of setting mind to work over matter.

Did your husband show symptoms of a roving disposition? Merlin-in-a-dress-suit would send his mind into the silence to exhort hubby's spirit to return to the fireside and camp there. Did you feel like marrying the lady you'd glimpsed for the first, last, and only time on the corner of the park a week ago last Wednesday night? Easy! Mr. Adept lighted his sandalwood, switched on the pink light, and commanded her soul to appear and take its orders. The following Sunday you were supposed to be jolted by the impact of the young lady throwing herself into your arms and screeching "Be mine!"

The idea is that if you remember this sprightly crowd you will be more than likely to recall the oscillations of Oom the Omnipotent, otherwise known as the Loving Guru of the Tantriks. And perhaps you will recall the "Reverend" Charles Newman, alias Harry Y. Cohen, "The Man Who Knows All," Los Angeles mystic and founder of a strange love cult.

Oom, whose other name is Dr. Pierre Bernard, now holds forth 25 miles from New York up the Hudson in Nyack, to the consternation and icy disapproval of the staid little town. His "Braeburn club" stretches over miles of emerald

velvet lawn and lies at the northern end of the town, just above the Tappan Zee Golf courses are there; tennis courts; hockey fields. And in the center is a clubhouse, but hardly the sort to call from their mansions for week-ends and longer stays, dominant figures in the most select Knickerbocker society.

What is the lure of the Braeburn club? The wealthy members may enjoy the out-of-door diversions at any of the dozens of vastly attractive country clubs. Conveniences of the clubhouse are in no way to be compared with the luxury of their own homes. It is said by a frequenter of the organization that guests are required to make their own beds, wash their own dishes and cook their own meals!

The very simple explanation is that Oom has succeeded in offering the wealth and fashion of this country and England something they haven't been able to buy elsewhere. The occult! And sometimes the esoteric activities of his Nyack plant wind up in matrimony. Such was the finish at least, to the membership in the club of Mrs. Ogden L. Mills, daughter of Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, and Sir Paul Dukes, noted English author and lecturer. They traveled from the Braeburn club, not long ago, to the office of the county clerk at Nyack and were married, and slipped over to Europe before too much publicity could be drawn by their hasty action.

The "Reverend" Newman does not run to country clubs. His idea of doing the handsome by persons who felt the urge toward the aid of the unseen was a "Temple of Love," a heavily curtained, flimsily lighted, incense-scented, somewhat terrifying place of mystery, with bizarre symbols snapped up here and there from every known age and clime to complete the atmosphere of ghostliness.

And into this absurd staging there poured a steady stream of men and women, all ages, of all degrees of mental, educational and cultural development, and of every possible state of poverty and affluence. They came for advice on financial problems, domestic difficulties, proposed enterprises. But mostly they came for assistance in affairs of the heart. An assistant of the pseudo-reverend, who turned against the temple after an attack of conscience, stated that hundreds of dollars were taken in every day by the sneering man in the ridiculous "priest's" robe who preyed upon his women clients and forced them into the most incredible of sex situations.

Why do they fall for the mystery stuff? Why does superstition retain its hold upon the growing materialism of the day? Why do supposedly intelligent men and women put their faith in hocus-pocus? Is it because the world hasn't as yet

grown up; because the charm of its fairy stories still clings?

Oom the omnipotent first burst upon the startled vision of New York when the veil was torn from before certain of the goings-on in an apartment on Eighty-sixth street. Investigation proved that an ultra-ordinary, unread and under-bred man, once a lemon picker in the orchards of California, had established a grotesque love cult in which he figured as a veritable Rasputin. And like the victims of that arch-villain, these of this American charlatan were of the highest social strata in the land. His assistant and high priestess was—and still is—the former Mrs. Dace Melbourne Shannon Charlot, wife of a wealthy Mexican miner, now known as Mrs. De Vries.

After the exposure and the scurrying to cover of those who haunted the New York quarters, Oom lay low for a while and then opened his Nyack estate. Such wealthy and socially prominent women as Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, allied herself with the club, as did her daughters, Mrs. Barbara Hatch and Mrs. Mills. Mrs. Vanderbilt is said to have put \$200,000 into the establishment, but later was reimbursed \$75,000 of this amount. Mabel de Fuyster Haskell, former wife of Walter Haskell of J. P. Morgan & Co., member of one of the most aristocratic families in America, has been in the Loving Guru's Brahmia temple a number of years.

At the physical culture studios Oom maintains in the city, would-be initiates of the order are given, along with their exercises, instruction in the mysteries of Tantricism. They are taught that it is an ethical science conveyed by a series of shocks, chief of which are the love shocks. Upon the Nyack estate a callistic ritual is gone through by men and women together, scantily clad. That all human experience, together with the entire world is encompassed in the body of woman is one of the important teachings. "Mysticism" is the Guru's name

for it, but other call it "sex worship." Oom's priestly robe is a long, white night-dress effect trimmed up with callistic designs. He wears it on occasions of importance, one of which, no doubt, was that which marked the meeting of Margaret Rutherford Mills and Sir Paul Dukes.

Sir Paul long has been noted as a lecturer on occult subjects. In Russia he is said to have been chief of the British secret service, and the bolshevik put a price on his head. In the only statement he made following his marriage, he championed the Braeburn club as a place of high ideals and stated that he considered membership an "inestimable privilege."

In Los Angeles the "Reverend" Newman fares less well than does the mystic of this coast. Mrs. Lillian Hildreth, a 16-year-old bride, decided the weird ceremony of the wizard who undertook to give her the benefit of his leverage on the spiritual world, was in the nature of indignity to herself. Accordingly she visited the police on her way home from the "Temple of Love" and what she told them caused Cohen to be put under arrest.

It was about this time that a reformed helper of the wizard told of the queer rites of the temple. Women would be ushered into the sanctum and ordered—if young and beautiful—to disrobe. The mystic could not see their spirits through their clothes. First they made their "donation," anything from \$5 to whatever the seer thought they had. His pronouncements all were as filled with mystery as they were deficient in good sense. One of his requirements was \$7 for a brew of "spirit herbs" made of water, vinegar and pepper.

But Cohen was arrested, finally, and he gave his version of why human beings fall for the mystery stuff. Said he:

"Women in general believe that there are life and love mysteries they cannot, of themselves, fathom. They believe some wiser son of Adam or daughter of Eve



"Professor Schotz," "Rev." Newman's assistant, who tells of the buncombe his employer used to deceive men and women into donating toward his 'temple of love.'

One of the passengers hired another negro to place a bag of corn on the sleeper's knees, another bag on his stomach, and a third on his head. As this weight did not wake him, a second bag was laid on his stomach.

For about three minutes he continued to snore. Then he grew uneasy, began to mutter and at the end of five minutes threw the sacks off and sat up and looked about in a dazed way.

"Anything wrong, Sam?" asked the drayman.

"Lawdy, but I's had the worstest dream dat I ever dreamt. I's all in cold blood."

"What was it?"

"Dreamt dat I had sich a sore throat I couldn't swallow, an' de ole woman brought home two chickens, some yams an' a possum, an' done cooked de whole shebang, ut settin' right dere an' not able to open mah mouth. Lawdy, but didn't I suffer when I saw he las' of dem chickens gwine down her ole throat."

Science Calls the Ocean a "Radium Bathtub."

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uranium, from which radium has slowly disintegrated.

Radium does not mix with any other known substance. Hence whatever amounts have been "reduced" in the ocean have remained separate and distinct from the water, slime and growths. They have, however, cast off their rays with marked effect on the life surrounding them, just as radium administered to a patient in the minutest of doses passes out of his system as complete and distinct as it went in, after first shooting its rays to every part of his system.

Whales grow from 9 to 25 times bigger and heavier than elephants. They are about ten times more active and playful, and live nearly five times longer. Why? Because, believe scientists in their latest theory, the whale "sounds" frequently—that is, drops from the surface hundreds of feet into the depths, where it enters a greater and more powerful radio-active field and has its vitality "recharged" proportionately.

The radium reservoir in the ocean likewise explains peculiarities of other ocean inhabitants. There are many legends of sea turtles caught with dates centuries old carved on their backs.

Recently at San Diego Bay a shark was captured in nets. It weighed 62,000 pounds, whereas a healthy beef steer weighs only 1300 pounds on an average. Hammerhead and man-eating sharks weighing five tons have been caught on hand lines, while the heaviest freshwater fish is the catfish, reaching a maximum weight of 500 pounds in the Mississippi river. A manta, or bat-like devil fish, weighing 18,000 pounds, was harpooned in the Gulf of Mexico, while it took a powerful tug five days to tow a whale shark less than 100 miles into the port of Miami.

holds the key to these puzzles. That's the secret of hocus-pocus.

"Usually there is something wrong with a woman's love-life when she begins visiting mediums. They go to seers to confirm or refute their own suspicions. Practically all women patrons ask me 'Is my husband true?' No wise medium answers 'No' to such a question. I immediately propound the counter question, 'are you true to him?' When they shriek 'yes!' I reply, 'Well, he's true to you, too. Go home and be happy!'

"My system is to outguess them and evade their questions. It's a battle of wits and, to my mind, perfectly legitimate."

A Sad Case.

Some passengers, waiting at a railway station for a belated train, were amused at the sight of a negro, employed on the freight platform, who had fallen asleep,