

# Will African Juju Win Modern America?

## The Discovery of Weird and Mysterious Practices in a Harlem Cellar Has Started the Popular Belief that Voodooism is Gaining a Foothold in America Despite the Widespread Diffusion of Scientific Knowledge.

**N**EW YORK City was recently astounded by the news that the reporter of an afternoon paper, the Telegram, had visited a Juju temple in a Harlem cellar and observed the weird and mysterious rites practiced by the devotees of the cult. It seemed incredible that, in the greatest metropolis of the world, where civilization and culture have reached their flower, men should be delving in ancient mysteries and devilish superstitions imported from the depths of the African jungle.

Escorted by an African Negro recently come over from the Dark Continent, the white reporter was taken to a cellar near 135th street and 7th avenue, where many other Africans and a few American Negroes were gathered, sitting on the floor waiting for the ceremonies to begin. On the table was a small catalpa tree, four crude images made of wood, and two wooden gongs. The Negroes were seated in weird positions.

### Strange Procedure

Soon an old black man entered and squatted before them. He was the medicine man. He placed a string of heavy beads about his neck. From this necklace were suspended three goat-skin bags containing charms. He placed a feathered headdress on his head, while the other Negroes took charm bags from their pockets and placed them around their necks. They sat there without clothing on their upper bodies, their backs scarred with tattoo marks.

A Negro rose, struck a gong and there was silence. An image from the table was placed on the floor in front of the medicine man. A goat skin was spread, and the old man put the image upon it. All was silence. The image bore close resemblance to a man, was three feet high and newly made.

Then the medicine man requested the image to persuade the moon to help them. A young man began to beat a ceremonial drum. The Negroes swayed, and the old man danced before the image. The drumming stopped, and, producing a handful of large nails, he drove one into the image's forehead. At the last and final blow, he chanted a prayer. Then the hammer was passed around and each person present drove a nail into the hand of the image. One head-man held the nails in place.

### Images

Then an image belonging to one of the members was brought in, and to counteract the evil designs of one of his enemies, the idol was laid face down on the goat skin. The Negro who owned the image drove nail after nail into it while he perspired freely. The last nail being driven, the medicine man beat the drum three times and then rubbed a charm on the frightened Negro's shoulder.

So the ceremonies continued, as man after man came up and repeated the driving of nails into different images.

The strong rumor that the Juju cult is finding more and more adherents in Negro America. Moreover, it is significant that, after three hundred years' of contact with Christianity and civilization, more than half the Negroes in the United States do not belong to any church, and large numbers believe in charms and powders of all kinds designed to drive away bad luck or bring good luck. These beliefs are practically identical with Juju, or Fetichism—the religion or philosophy that is whispered throughout Africa, especially the Congo basin and the Guinea Coast.

Voodooism which is prevalent in Louisiana and other parts of Dixie, and Obeah, which is its name in many of the West Indies islands, are merely vulgarized offshoots of the elaborate ceremonies of Juju, or Fetichism, as practiced by the mighty peoples of ancient Benin and in Dahomey before the French occupation.

### INGROWING NAILS

Obstinate, painful, dangerous. Eaton's new method conquers them permanently, painlessly, without operation. Information free. Write Eugene Eaton, Dept. 119, Bandon, Oregon.

### Fetichism

And what is Fetichism? The word comes from the Portuguese term *feticias*, which means charms, and was applied to the wooden figures, sacred stones, etc., that the early Portuguese travelers saw when they first visited West Africa. It was natural for the Portuguese to apply this term to these objects, because at that time Europe was overflowing with relics of saints, rosaries, and images, supposed to possess magic power.

### The Charm-House

The charm-house or god-house is supposed to be the habitation of a soul or a spirit, which is persuaded to enter the abode by a native who has made an offering to it. Various ceremonies are performed, and the spirit is asked to enter the offering, which is then kept for three days. If no good fortune results, it is concluded that either the spirit did not enter the offering selected or does not wish to extend its protection. In either case the ceremonies must all be repeated.

### Fetich Beliefs

Before going further, it is necessary to point out that the devotees of Fetichism, whether in Africa or elsewhere among primitive peoples, believe that all things, animate and inanimate, have souls and are identical with man in reason, intelligence, and action. Quite naturally, there is a belief connected with this basic one that dead people have no souls and no shadows. Breath is also considered, often, as being the same as the soul. The Basutos of South Africa believe that if a man walks so close to the river that his shadow falls on the water, a crocodile may seize it and pull him in.

### The Juju Soul

The identification of the breath with the soul is the basis of the widespread practice of kissing a dead relative, which is merely an effort to ensure the soul a living resting place. Hence, also, prayers at burials are a survival of the prayers of the medicine man in his effort to bring the soul back to the dead body.

Primitive people believe that sickness is absence of soul, and from that grows the belief that if one is sick, someone has obtained possession of the ill person's soul. It also follows, according to primitive reasoning, that, if by some magic, one's enemy gets possession of one's soul, death will follow. The driving of nails into the wooden image as described above was an effort to persuade the soul, which the Negro believed had been taken from him in part, to re-enter his body through the image.

### The Juju Trance

In Juju ceremonies, the witch doctor, conjurer, or medicine man often falls into a trance, froths at the mouth, and during this period is supposed to be in contact with distant spirits. This arises from the belief that, when one is dreaming, one's soul travels abroad; and being in a trance is similar to dreaming, in the sense that the person is unconscious.

According to the African natives, souls are supposed to dwell in plants, trees, mountains, lakes, corn, sun, moon and, in fact, practically everything. These spirits are sometimes in animal, sometimes in human, form. The same is true of beasts, who the natives believe are just as smart and cunning as men. They are even supposed to be able to speak and are thought to be not inferior to humans.

With so many spirits about in every hedge and stone, branch and vine, animal and bird, it is necessary that certain of them be propitiated or that the native try to bring to his soul and character some of the qualities of one or more of these spirits. If a native trips and falls on a log, he assumes that he has done something to offend the spirit of that log, and immediately sets out to propitiate that spirit. If he is going on a journey, he first makes offering to the spirit of the river over which he will propel his canoe or the forest through which he will travel.

### Unattached Spirits

There are also innumerable unattached spirits capable of entering the souls of men through fetiches or charms. Some are good and some are bad spirits. If an evil person makes a clay or wooden image of another and causes an evil spirit to enter, then evil will possess the bewitched person. Likewise, if a native well versed in his Juju makes the proper connection with the good spirits inhabiting another, they can be induced to leave the person they occupy, whereupon the dispossessed person grows ill or dies.

If good spirits or souls can be made to enter a small bag of roots, or a stone, or a piece of wood, and this charm is worn on the person, then no evil can befall the wearer, and good luck will be his portion. If someone steals the charm or the owner loses it, then his protection and luck departs, and he is at the mercy of his enemies until he can get another and stronger charm or recovers the old one.

### The Juju Murders

When it is desired to murder another, the medicine man is paid to go into the forest and carve an image of the person whose life is desired. He must remain silent from the time he enters the wood until he leaves it, and must refrain from mentioning the name of any living being unless he wishes that person to die and his soul to enter the fetich.

When the image is all prepared, the name of the marked person is mentioned, and he is believed to die within ten days. The nails are driven into the image in order to procure the vengeance of the indwelling spirit on the enemy.

While charms, lodestones, amulets and other protective and good-luck objects are widely sold among Negroes in the United States, this is the first time that an effort has been made, aside from the aforementioned Voodooism in Louisiana and other Southern states, to introduce in a large way the weird African religious

beliefs and practices. Will this Juju make any headway among American Negroes? It is difficult to foretell. Ancient Romans, Egyptians, Jews, Greeks, Chinese, Indians, Britons, Germans and many other peoples all practiced Juju and there are many survivals of it in present-day religions.

Certainly the coming of this cult to Harlem, the capital of the Negro world, is an ominous sign. With the widespread belief in luck and charms already among Negroes, who can say how many may eventually bow to the mysterious and sometimes bloody Juju cult?

### Gleaned from the Press

News dispatch from Richmond says influenza deaths are below normal. Mersey! Page Mr. Normalcy. Something must be done about this.

The man who wants to sell his restaurant and rooming house because of his poor health must have eaten and slept at his own place.

Eskimos in Alaska make ice cream from fish oil, snow, and sugar. Sounds fishy, doesn't it?

If you want to read a THRILLER, turn to  
**NICE CHILD**  
a Short Story  
on Page 11, in this issue.



## Personality plus HAIR BEAUTY means Popularity

Personality alone cannot bring popularity. At every party, every gathering, everywhere you go, you see the proof of this. To have a pleasing personality is good; but it is not enough. The woman who is really popular, who is the center of attraction, surrounded by admirers, always has something more than just a pleasing personality—she has a pleasing appearance. She has beauty.

And this beauty is first and foremost a matter of hair. For however well you look otherwise, you

cannot hope to be considered beautiful if you have short, coarse, wiry hair.

Don't think you can't have beautiful hair. You can. By the use of the marvelous new Hi-Ja White Hair Fix and Glossine, the most ugly, wiry hair is easily made long, soft and silky.

Get this wonderful product now. It is different from anything else ever made. Pure white in color, it cannot stain linen or clothing. It has the odor of a fine perfume that attracts and charms. And it will quickly give you straight, stylish luxuriant hair that you can arrange any way you wish.

Let Hi-Ja Hair Fix and Glossine and other Hi-Ja Beauty aids help you to obtain Beauty. For Sale at Drug Stores, by Hi-Ja Agents, or sent postpaid upon receipt of price.

**Special FREE Offer**  
With each four packages, we will send FREE a full sized 25c cake of Hi-Ja Skin Cleansing Soap. Free gifts for new agents. For Agency Plan write Dept. NM-22.

### Other HI-JA Beauty Aids

- Hi-Ja Cold Cream ..... 25c
  - Hi-Ja Keep Sweet ..... 25c
  - Hi-Ja Face Powder ..... 25c
  - Hi-Ja Talcum Powder ..... 25c
  - Hi-Ja Vanishing Cream ..... 25c
  - Hi-Ja Perfume ..... 25c
  - Hi-Ja Beauty Soap ..... 25c
  - Hi-Ja Skin Lotion ..... 25c
- Superior Products—for Superior People



**HI-JA** INC  
ATLANTA  
GEORGIA



## Too Much ACID

Many people, two hours after eating, suffer indigestion as they call it. It is usually excess acid. Correct it with an alkali. The best way, the quick, harmless and efficient way, is Phillips' Milk of Magnesia. It has remained for 50 years the standard with physicians. One spoonful in water neutralizes many times its volume in stomach acids, and at once. The symptoms disappear in five minutes.

You will never use crude methods when you know this better method. And you will never suffer from excess acid when you prove out this easy relief. Please do that—for your own sake—now.

Be sure to get the genuine Phillips' Milk of Magnesia prescribed by physicians for 50 years in correcting

excess acids. 25c and 50c a bottle—any drugstore.

"Milk of Magnesia" has been the U. S. Registered Trade Mark of The Charles H. Phillips Chemical Company and its predecessor Charles H. Phillips since 1875.

### GLEAMY WHITE TEETH and a Sweet Breath

Try Phillips' Dental Magnesia Toothpaste just once and see for yourself how white your teeth become. Write for a free ten-day tube. Address The Phillips Co., 117 Hudson St., New York, N. Y.