

**THE EVENING DESPATCH
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(pages 11 & 14)**

**INVITED IN COURT TO PERFORM
MAGIC UPON A K.C.**

**MR. CROWLEY REFUSES TO DO SO
USE OF BLOOD IN RITUAL DENIED**



Mr. Aleister Crowley

"We cannot turn this court into a temple, Mr. O'Connor," said Mr. Justice Swift to-day in the "black magic" libel case.

The action is being heard before a special jury in the King's Bench

Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, claimed damages against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," and Constable and Co., Ltd., the publishers, and Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers.

Mr. Crowley complained that the book imputed that he practised "black magic," and he said this was a libel upon him. The defence was a plea of justification.

COUNSEL'S INVITATION.

Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett) resuming his cross-examination to-day, invited Mr. Crowley to try his magic in court.

"You said yesterday," said Mr. O'Connor, "that as the result of early experiments you invoked certain forces with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants. Try your magic now on my learned friend (pointing to Mr. Hilbery). I am sure he will not object."

"I would not attack anyone," replied Mr. Crowley, "I absolutely refuse."

Mr. Justice Swift here made the remark quoted above.

Later (continued Mr. O'Connor to the plaintiff), you said you succeeded in rendering yourself invisible. Would you like to try that on now, for, if you don't I shall pronounce you an impostor?—You can ask me to do anything you like. It won't alter the truth.

RITUAL.

Counsel then dealt with the ritual observed in the ceremonies at the Villa at Cefalu. Mr. Crowley denied that a cat was killed in the ceremony and that part of the cat's blood was drunk by a person taking part.

"There was no cat, no animal, no blood, and no drinking," he declared.

Mr. Eddy (Mr. Crowley's counsel) asked Mr. Crowley about a passage in his "confessions"—concerning which he had been cross-examined—and said the passage referred to a village girl and showed that Mr. Crowley "went roaming with her amid the heather."

He was then a boy of 15 or 16 "roaming the heather with anyone was a terrible offence in itself in the surroundings in which I was brought up," he added. "Merely to look at a girl across the street was considered an offence and dealt with in the most sever way."

Mr. Crowley's family were Plymouth Brethren.

YEARS OF TORTURE.

Mr. Crowley agreed that he had studied black magic though only as a student.

"I was just coming out from years of abominable torture," he explained. "I wanted to find out what a church was like and I sneaked secretly into a church at the danger of incurring the severest penalty, because among the Plymouth Brethren even the idea of entering a church might have incurred damnation.

Mr. Eddy: Have you at any time practiced black magic?—No.

What is the object of the magic you believe in?—My particular branch is the raising of humanity to higher spiritual development.

Asked why he indulged in German propaganda in America during the war, Mr. Crowley said it was in order to destroy it. He reported his activities to the chief of the British organization. Captain—later Commodore—Guy Gaunt, and was in communication with the Hon. Everard Fielding. He came back immediately after the war, and if he had been a traitor he would have been shot “and a good job, too,” he said.

When Mr. Crowley’s evidence was concluded and he was about to leave the witness-box Mr. Justice Swift asked him to tell the court “the shortest and at the same time comprehensive definition of magic which he knew.”

Mr. Crowley: Magic is the science or the art of causing changes to occur in conformity with the will. White is if the will is righteous and black is if the will is perverse. It may involve the invocation of spirits. It did involve the invocation of the holy guardian angel appointed by Almighty God to watch over each of us.

Is it your view the art of controlling spirits so as to affect the course of events?—That is part of magic—one small branch.

“SINISTER”

The next witness, Carl [*sic*] Germer, a German who described himself as a merchant, said he had known Mr. Crowley since 1925 and had had him as a guest at his house in Germany for several months.

Mr. Constantine Gallop (who also appeared for Mr. Crowley): Do you believe there is black magic?—Yes.

“Black magic,” said Mr. Germer, “is sinister and tries to do harm to others. White magic would define people who work for the benefit of others.”

Throughout the time he had known Mr. Crowley he had never practiced or advocated, in his hearing, black magic. Because it was just the opposite that he invited him to his house as a guest.

He had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the spirit of magnanimity.

Mr. Justice Swift: Are you sure it was the spirit of magnanimity and not the spirit of hospitality?—I believe so.

Mr. O’Connor: Where did it come from? How long did it stay? Where did it go to? Tell me. Where did it come from first?—It probably came from heaven. I don’t know.

“ARCHPIECE OF IMPOSTURE.”

How long did it stay?—I didn’t have a stop-watch.

Mr. O'Connor: I look upon this as an archpiece of imposture. Where did it go to after the visit?—I don't know.

"I have seen him invoking the sun," said Mr. Germer later.

"I hope the invocation was on a very foggy day," commented Mr. O'Connor.

Mr. O'Connor: What was the result of the invocation?—Nothing.

He didn't get very far in the invoking business successfully in your presence. Are you acquainted with invisible planes?—Yes.

Where can I find one? The musical plane. Music is invisible.

Where do you find the musical plane? Have you seen persons on invisible planes?—No.

I should like to learn a little black magic. Tell me how I can.—I cannot instruct you on it.

Do you know any black magician who specializes in killing babies?—I do not.

The case for Mr. Crowley was concluded.

DEFENCE OPENED

Counsel Asks "What Right of Complaint"?

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery (for the printers and publishers) said the question for the jury was whether the passages in "Laughing Torso" of which complaint was made would be read by any reasonable person as worsening the character of Mr. Crowley.

What right had a man who had for years been professing contempt for the standards of ordinary decency to complain of injury to a reputation which he had written about himself as being that of the worst man in the world.

The hearing was adjourned.