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MR. CROWLEY ASKED ABOUT DRUGS

Kept Opium and Strychnine

No Hasheesh for Inmates

Questions about drugs and ceremonies at his villa in Sicily were put to Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, during the resumed hearing in the King's Bench Division today of his action for alleged libel against Miss Nina Hamnett, the authoress.

Miss Hamnett wrote a book called *Laughing Torso*, which, Mr. Crowley alleges, imputed that he practised "black magic."

Other defendants were Constable and Company, Limited, publishers, and Charles Whittingham and Briggs, printers. The defense was a plea of justification.

At the material time Mr. Crowley had a villa on the mountainside at Cefalù, Sicily, which was known as the "Abbey of Thelema." He denied that he practised "black magic" there.

Mr. J.P. Eddy and Mr. C. Gallop appeared for Mr. Crowley, Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., and Mr. Lilley for the publishers and printers, and Mr. Martin O'Connor for Miss Hamnett.

In some of the villa ceremonies, Mr. Crowley said, he was endeavouring to get "concentrated spiritual ecstasy."

"Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalù?" Mr. Hilbery asked.

"There was no hasheesh," said Mr. Crowley. "Opium?" asked Mr. Hilbery. "Yes" was the reply. "Strychnine?" again the answer was "Yes."

"Are you skilled to administer hasheesh," asked counsel.

"Yes. I can get the desired results in ten minutes," said Mr. Crowley. He denied that hasheesh was used for the inmates of the villa.

Human Sacrifice

Other questions were put to Mr. Crowley concerning his views about magic and human sacrifices. He was also asked about "temples" in his London flat.

Resuming cross-examination of Mr. Crowley when today's hearing began, Mr. Hilbery referred to a book on which, suggested counsel, Mr. Crowley had built his reputation.

Mr. Hilbery, having read a poem from the book, asked: "Is it not filth?"

Mr. Crowley: "You read it as if it were magnificent poetry. I congratulate you."

Mr. Hilbery: "Is the meaning of it filth?:—"In my opinion it is of no importance in this matter; you have read a sonnet out of its context as you do everything."

Mr. Hilbery referred to a poem in which was the line: "Still we can laugh at burghesses and churls." "That is, at us ordinary folk?" he asked.

"I consider you far from ordinary," was the reply. "You would not have attained the eminence you have if you were ordinary."

Mr. Hilbery read the poem and asked if Mr. Crowley had written it.

"I should like to point out that the author of those words has been dead for years," said Mr. Crowley.

Mr. Hilbery: "Is the Aleister Crowley who wrote that dead?"

Mr. Crowley: "Do I look like it? It is not Aleister Crowley who wrote that. It is an imaginary figure in a drama. I created the drama."

"And you created the poem?"—"I created the work of an imaginary author."

Mr. Hilbery next quoted from a volume entitled *The Winged Beetle*.

"Are those poems all erotic?" he asked. "No," replied Mr. Crowley.

"Would it be true to say that that book, like these others, contains disgusting words?"—"It all depends upon your views. The ordinary reviewer employed by important newspapers and magazines gave very good reviews of these books."

Mr. Hilbery, after quoting from another poem, asked, "On any basis, literary or otherwise, is that anything but disgusting and infamous?"

Mr. Crowley: "It means that even the vilest of women can, through the influence of love, become a refining and inspiring influence in a man's life."

German Propaganda

Mr. Hilbery: "Before America came into the war, when the

affairs of the Allies were in great jeopardy, did you contribute to a Chicago magazine?"—"I did."

Counsel read an extract from an article in the magazine.

"Did you write that against your own country?" he asked.

"I did, and I am proud of it," replied Mr. Crowley. "I suggest that you should understand a little of the context and why I wrote it."

Mr. Hilbery: "Was it part of the German propaganda in America?"—"Yes."

"And written as such?"—"I endeavoured to have it accepted as such. What I wanted to do was to over-balance the sanity of German propaganda, which was being very well done, by turning it into absolute nonsense. How I got Mr. (Carus) to publish that rubbish, I cannot think. He must have been in his dotage."

"That is your explanation given after the Allied cause is safe and no longer in danger?"—"A lot of people knew it at the time."

Diary of a Drug Fiend

Mr. Crowley said that he was the author of a publication in 1922 entitled *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* which was assailed in the Press.

Mr. Hilbery: "In consequence of the attack in the Press upon it did your publishers withdraw it from circulation?"

Mr. Crowley: "I do not know. They did not print a second edition."

Questioned about a newspaper article, Mr. Crowley admitted that he wrote: "I have been shot at with broad arrows. They have called me the worst man in the world."

Mr. Hilbery (reading from the article): " 'They have accused me of doing everything from murdering women and throwing their bodies in the Seine.' Is that true?"—"I hear a canard about me every week. Any man of distinction has rumours about him."

"Does any man of distinction necessarily have it said about him that he is the worst man in the world?"—"Not necessarily: he has to be very distinguished."

"Did you say 'Horatio Bottomley branded me as a dirty, degenerate cannibal'?"—"Yes."

"You never took any action against the people who wrote and published those things about you?"—"No."

Flat in Chancery Lane

"But because this silly little paragraph in this book appeared, you run to your lawyer to bring an action for the injury to your reputation—that reputation being that you are 'the worst man in the world?'—"I also had the reputation of being the best man in the world."

"Is there a portrait of you with the article in a magical position?"—"Yes."

"With the thumbs in a particular position?"—"Yes, representing the horns of a ram."

"You announced in that article that you were 'The Master Therion.' Did you say, 'Practically my whole life has been spent in the study of magic?'"—"Yes."

"Did you have a flat in your early days in Chancery Lane?"—"Yes."

"Did you have two temples in that flat?"—"Yes, but one was not really a temple. It was just a lobby which was not used."

"You said: 'I constructed a temple in the flat. It was a hall of mirrors, the function of which was to concentrate the invoked forces?'"—"Yes."

Mr. Crowley agreed that in the article he referred to an occasion when he invoked the forces, with the result that some people there were attacked by unseen assailants.

Mr. Hilbery: "Was that the result of the spirits which your magic had brought to the place?"—"That is the theory of certain people."

White Magic

"I had not the experience to control the forces then," added Mr. Crowley. "I was trying to learn how to do something and made a lot of blunders, as beginners always do."

"Was that your black magic or your white magic?"—"It is white magic in which you protect yourself from such things."

Mr. Crowley agreed that, in his *Confessions*, he had said that once in Mexico he walked in the street in a scarlet robe and with a jewelled crown without anyone seeing him.

Mr. Hilbery: "Was that because of your magic?"—"Yes."

Mr. Hilbery: "As a part of your magic do you believe in a practice of bloody sacrifice, do you?"—"I believe in its efficacy."

"You would believe in it being practised?"—"I do not approve it."

"Do not approve it? You say (in his book on magic): 'For

nearly all purposes human sacrifice is best?"—"Yes, it is."

Mr. Justice Swift: "Do you say that you do not approve it?"—"Yes."

Altar in Villa

Referring to the villa at Cefalù, Mr. Hilbery asked whether there was an altar there.

Mr. Crowley: "There was a sort of square box on which were kept things, and there was a cupboard in which were kept things."

"Was it an altar for the purpose of the ceremonies?"—"If you like, yes."

"Did it have on it a book which purported to contain the laws?"—"I expect so. I do not remember these minute details after ten years."

"Were there candles upon it which were used for ceremonial purposes?"—"Yes."

"Was incense used at the ceremonies?"—"Yes."

"Was this altar seven-sided?"—"I believe it was."

"Seven sides have a magical significance?"—"So would any number."

"Seven would have a particular significance?"—"So would any other number. The reason I doubt whether it was seven is that it was a most unlikely number for me to choose."

"For the purpose of ceremony did you require a knife?"—"No; there were no knives, magically speaking, but there was a dagger and a sword."

"Did you wear an appropriate robe at the ceremony?"—"Yes."

"In some of the ceremonies were you endeavouring to get concentrated spiritual ecstasy?"—"Yes."

"Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalù?"—"There was no hasheesh."

"Opium?"—"Yes."

"Strychnine?"—"Yes."

"Did you advise that drugs should be employed for the purpose of increasing or helping the spiritual ecstasy?"—"No, nothing would be more inappropriate at a ceremony."

"When do you advise the use of them?"—"Under skilled supervision, but to a very limited extent."

"Are you skilled to administer hasheesh?"—"Yes. I can get the desired results in ten minutes."

"I suggest that hasheesh was used for the inmates of your

villa?"—"It was not."

"Was their heroin used at the villa?" Mr. Hilbery asked. "It had been prescribed for me by a Harley Street doctor for asthma," said Mr. Crowley.

Questioned about the ritual of his magic circle, Mr. Crowley agreed that he walked around the room.

Mr. Hilbery: "Did you use a dancing step?"—"No. it was a sort of threefold step which resembles the waltz."

Mr. Crowley said he went round the room at a pace resembling the pace of the tiger stalking the deer. He had never performed a ceremony naked—not in the presence of another person.