

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE ECHO
CHELTENHAM, ENGLAND
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AUTHOR AND "BLACK MAGIC"

POETRY QUOTED IN A LIBEL ACTION

The hearing was resumed before Mr. Justice Swift and a special jury in the King's Bench Division to-day of the libel action by Aleister Crowley, the author, against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of a book entitled "Laughing Torso," which, he alleged, imputed that he practised "black magic."

Other defendants were Constable & Co., Ltd., publishers and printers, and Charles Whittingham & Briggs, the defence being a plea of justification.

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

In his cross-examination yesterday, Mr. Crowley said he had the distinguishing marks of a Buddha at birth and still had some of them. He claimed to be a "master magician," saying that he took a degree which conferred that title.

"MAGNIFICENT POETRY"

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., for the printers and publishers, in cross-examination to-day, read a poem from the book "Clouds Without Water," and asked Mr. Crowley, "Is that not filth?"

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

Later, Mr. Crowley remarked, "I should like to be universally hailed as the greatest living poet. The truth will out, you know."

Asked about another poem, Mr. Crowley said that the author of those words had been "dead for years."

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.

"I created this work of an imaginary author," Mr. Crowley added.

Still another poem was mentioned by Mr. Hilbery, who asked, "Is that anything but disgusting and infamous?"

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

AGAINST HIS OWN COUNTRY

Mr. Hilbery read an extract from an article which Mr. Crowley said he contributed to a Chicago magazine before America came into the war and asked, "Did you write that against your own country?"

Mr. Crowley: I did, and I am proud of it.

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

Mr. Crowley explained that what he wanted to do was to over-balance the sanity of German propaganda by turning it into absolute nonsense.

Mr. Hilbery: That is your explanation after the allied cause is safe and no longer in danger?—Lots of people knew it at the time.

Mr. Crowley agreed that he wrote "The Diary of a Drug Fiend," which was assailed in the Press.

He agreed, too, that in a newspaper article he had written, "I have been shot at with broad arrows. They have called me 'the worst man in the world'."

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

There was some laughter at this and Mr. Justice Swift sternly intimated that a repetition of the laughter would cause him to have the court cleared.

"I also had the reputation of being the best man in the world," declared Mr. Crowley a few moments later.

In a London flat—which he once had was "a hall of mirrors," the function of which was to concentrate the invoked forces.

On one occasion he invoked the forces with the result that some people were attacked by unseen assailants.

Mr. Hilbery: Was that your black magic or your white magic?—That is white magic in which you protect yourself from such things.

HUMAN SACRIFICE

Mr. Hilbery: As a part of your magic, you do believe in a practice of bloody sacrifice do you?—I believe in its efficacy, but I do not approve of it at all.

Don't approve it? You say (in his book of magic) "For nearly all purposes human sacrifice is best"—Yes it is.

Mr. Justice Swift: Do you say that you don't approve it?—Yes.

Mr. Crowley said that at the villa at Cefalu there was "a sort of square box" used as an altar. On it were a book purporting to contain the laws and candles for ceremonial purposes.

Incense, a dagger, and a sword were used, and he wore an appropriate robe.

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

Did you keep hasheesh and other drugs at Cefalu?—There was no hasheesh, but there was opium and strychnine.

Are you skilled to administer hasheesh?—I can get the desired results in 10 minutes.