

DAILY TELEGRAPH
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**ALEISTER CROWLEY DESCRIBES
HIS MAGIC CIRCLE RITUAL**

**SEVEN-SIDED ALTAR, CANDLES,
INCENSE, ROBES & SWORD**

**"PACING ROUND LIKE A TIGER
STALKING A DEER"**

Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, was further cross-examined about his books and "Black Magic" yesterday when the hearing was resumed before Mr. Justice Swift and a special jury of his libel action against Miss Nina Hamnett.

He complains that in her book *Laughing Torso* the defendant suggested that he practiced "Black Magic."

Other defendants were Constable and Company, Limited, publishers, and Charles Whittingham and Brigs, printers. The defence is a plea of justification.

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

In his cross-examination on Tuesday Mr. Crowley admitted that he assumed the names "Beast 666" and "The Master Therium" (the Great Wild Beast), and added: "666 is the number of the sun, and you can call me 'Little Sunshine,' " he added.

He also said he had the distinguishing marks of a Buddha at birth and still had some of them, and claimed to be a "master magician," saying he took a degree which conferred that title. Miss Hamnett was once a student of his.

"GREATEST LIVING POET"

Resuming his cross-examination yesterday, Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C. (for the publishers and printers), referred to a book entitled *Clouds Without Water*, upon which Mr. Crowley said, he built his literary reputation. Having read a poem from it, Mr. Hilbery asked: "Is that not filth?"

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

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.

You have been well known as the author of these things that I have been putting to you, for years?—No.

Do you still swear you were not known as the author of that book?—Not generally known. I regret that my reputation is not much wider than it is.

Do you want your reputation to be wider?—I should like to be universally hailed as the greatest living poet. The truth will out, you know.

Mr. Hilbery next quoted from a volume entitled *The Winged Beetle*, and asked "Are those poems all erotic?" "No," replied Mr. Crowley.

Would it be true to say that that book, like the others, contains disgusting words?—It all depends upon your views. I rely upon the general opinion of instructed critics of literature.

GERMAN PROPAGANDA DURING THE WAR WORK OF WHICH HE WAS PROUD

Before America came into the war, when the affairs of the Allies were in great jeopardy, did you contribute to a Chicago magazine?—Yes.

Counsel read an extract from an article in the magazine and asked: "Did you write that against your own country?"

"I did, and I am proud of it," replied Mr. Crowley.

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. ---- 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? Lots of people knew it at the time.

Mr. Crowley admitted that he was the author of *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, which was assailed in the press. He did not know whether his publishers withdrew it from circulation, but they did not print a second edition.

"WORST MAN IN THE WORLD"

Questioned about a newspaper article, Mr. Crowley admitted that he wrote: "They 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 any distinction has rumours about him.

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

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?—Yes.

In a magical position?—Yes.

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

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.

You said in the article: "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."

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

BECOMING INVISIBLE

Mr. Hilbery quoted the following passage: describing how Mr. Crowley conducted his first experiment in becoming invisible.

By invoking the God of Silence I gradually got to the stage where my reflection began to flicker like the images of one of the old-fashioned cinemas. I never disappeared completely.

"I was able to walk out of the house in a scarlet robe and a crown on my head without attracting any attention. They could not see me."

Was that true?—Yes.

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

If you believe in its efficacy, you would believe in its being practiced?—I do not approve it at all.

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 do not approve it?—Yes,

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

"If you like, yes," replied Mr. Crowley.

Did it have on it a book which purported to contain the laws?—I expect so, yes. I do not remember 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 would have a magical significance?—So would any number.

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 as a ceremony.

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.

With your approval an inmate had a razor or knife with which to cut himself if he stumbled into using a forbidden word, whatever it was?—They were not gashes, but minute cuts. You can see marks of them on my own arm.

"This is a general practice, by which any man may learn to control his actions and thoughts," added Mr. Crowley.

He agreed that there were drawings on the walls of the villa at Cefalù.

Were some of them, at any rate, frescoes which may technically have been obscene?—Not in my opinion.

MAGIC CIRCLE RITUAL

Questioned about the ritual of his magic circle, Mr. Crowley said he spoke words which might have been intoning words.

Did you raise your voice as your ecstasy increased?—I hate raising my voice.

Mr. Justice Swift: So we have Observed. (Laughter)

With reference to the ritual of circumambulation, Mr. Crowley agreed that he walked round the room.

Mr. Hilbery: Did you use a dancing step? No. It was a sort of three-fold step which resembles the waltz. Mr. Crowley added that he went round at the pace of a tiger stalking a deer.

Did you sometimes perform a ceremony naked?—Never in the presence of another person.

Have you been called "the thoroughly exposed and pernicious Aleister Crowley"?—I don't think I know that one. I cannot read everything.

Referring to attacks on him in a Sunday newspaper in 1922 and 1923, Mr. Crowley said to be blackguarded "in such a filthy way" was a great compliment.

JUDGE'S QUESTIONS

'YOU TOOK NO STEPS TO CLEAR YOUR CHARACTER'

Mr. Justice Swift: When you read "It is hard to say with certainty whether Crowley is a man or beast," did you take any action?—It was asked of Shelley whether he was a man or someone sent from Hell.

Mr. Justice Swift: I am not trying Shelley. Did you take any steps to clear your character?—I was 1,500 miles away. I was ill. I was penniless. I wrote to my solicitors and found it was impossible.

Mr. Justice Swift: I didn't ask you about the state of your health. Did you take any steps to clear your character?—I wrote to my solicitors, and then it was impossible.

Mr. Justice Swift: The answer is that you took no steps to clear your character?—Yes.

Mr. Crowley said while in America during the war he was leading a very public life. After America came into the war he

worked for the Department of Justice for the benefit of his country.

Mr. Justice Swift: Were you not in prison in America?—I was not in prison there or at any other place or time in the whole of my life.

Mr. Crowley said he did not take any action with reference to the earlier articles because he was advised that his action would last fourteen days and that he would have to find £10,000 to fight it.

Mr. Justice Swift: Now you see how absurd that advice was, because this case won't take anything like fourteen days. It has now taken two whole days, and it will probably take the whole of to-morrow. It may go into Friday, though I am not sure about that. It won't last more than four days. I imagine you have not found £10,000 have you?—No.

“MAN WHO SEES VISIONS”

Cross-examining on behalf of Miss Hamnett, Mr. Martin O'Connor suggested to Mr. Crowley that he was a “man who sees visions.” Mr. Crowley agreed.

You are a “master magician”?—Yes, go on.

And a person with supernatural powers?—No.

What is the good of being a master magician without having more power than your learned counsel or I have got?—There is no such thing as supernatural power.

How have you been living?—Virtuously.

Mr. Crowley said he did not know of any woman in whose houses he had stayed and to whom he owed money for board-residence. He had stayed at a West-end hotel with a woman who passes as Mrs. Crowley.

The hearing was adjourned until to-day.