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(page 7)

"BLACK MAGIC" CASE.

"People Attacked by Unseen Assailants."

From our London Staff.
FLEET STREET, Wednesday.

Further remarkable evidence was given in the King's Bench Division to-day in the libel action brought by Aleister Crowley, author, against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of "Laughing Torso," which, he alleges, imputes to him the practice of "black magic."

Other defendants are Constable and Co., Ltd., publishers, and Charles Whittingham and Griggs, printers. The defence is 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 Thelema." He denied that he practised "black magic" there.

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery, K.C., further cross-examining Mr. Crowley, asked, "Before America came into the War, when the affairs of the Allies were in great jeopardy, did you contribute to a Chicago magazine?"

Mr. Crowley: 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. "What I wanted to do was to overbalance the sanity of German propaganda, which was being very well done, by turning it into absolute nonsense."

"WORST MAN IN THE WORLD."

Mr. Crowley admitted that he was the author of a publication in 1929 entitled "The Diary of a Drug Fiend," which was assailed in the Press.

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

"The first part meant," he said, "that my principal assailant was sent to penal servitude."

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?

Mr. Crowley: 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.

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

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.

"FORCES" INVOKED.

You announced in that article, didn't you that you were "the Master Therium." 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 wasn't really a temple. It was just a lobby which was not used.

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 your magic had brought to the place?—That is the theory of certain people.

"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.

HUMAN SACRIFICE.

Then it is white magic which becomes black, isn't it?—No, it is not. It is white magic making the wound antiseptic.

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

If you believe in its efficacy, you would believe in it being practised and say it could be practised without impropriety?—I do not approve it at all.

Don't 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 you do not approve it?—Yes.

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

Mr. Crowley: There was a sort of square box in 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, yes. I don't remember these minute details after ten years.

CANDLES AND INCENSE.

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

Was incense used at the ceremonies?—Yes.

For the purpose of the 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.

Mr. Crowley denied he kept hasheesh at Cefalu. There was opium and strychnine.

Mr. Hilbery: 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.

FORBIDDEN WORD.

I suggest to you that one of the rules that you enjoined at the Abbey (his place in Sicily) was that nobody should use the word "I" except yourself as master?—It is not true at all.

With your approval an inmate had a razor or knife with which to gash 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.

Mr. Crowley agreed that there were drawings on the walls at the villa at Cefalu.

Mr. Hilbery: Were some of them, at any rate, frescoes which may technically have been obscene?

Mr. Crowley: Not in my opinion.

Was there heroin used at the villa?—It had been prescribed for me by a Harley Street doctor for asthma.

"LIKE TIGER STALKING DEER."

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

With reference to the ritual of circumambulation, Mr. Crowley agreed that he did walk round the room. He went round at a pace resembling the pace of a tiger stalking the deer. He had never performed a ceremony naked—not in the presence of another person.

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

"To be blackguarded in such a filthy way is a great compliment," Mr. Crowley declared, with reference to other Press articles.

"KING OF DEPRAVITY."

Mr. Hilbery referred to articles in which Mr. Crowley was described as "The king of depravity," "The man we would like to hang," "Another traitor trounced," and "The notorious Aleister Crowley."

Mr. Justice Swift: It is said of you, "It is hard to say whether he is man or beast."

Mr. Crowley: It was said of Shelley that he was sent from Hell.

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

Mr. Crowley agreed, but denied that he had supernatural powers.

The hearing was adjourned until to-morrow.