

**THE SUNDERLAND ECHO
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TRY MAGIC NOW!

Counsel's Invitation to Mr. Crowley

COMMENT BY JUDGE

"Cannot Turn Court Into Temple"

An invitation to try his magic in court was extended to Mr. Aleister Crowley, the author, when the hearing was continued in the King's Bench Division, to-day, of the libel action he has brought against Miss Nina Hamnett, authoress of the book "Laughing Torso."

He alleges that in the book Miss Hamnett imputes that he practised black magic. He is also suing Messrs. Constable and Company, Ltd., the publishers, and Messrs. Charles Whittingham and Briggs, the printers.

The defence is a plea of justification.

"You said yesterday," said Mr. Martin O'Connor (for Miss Hamnett) "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: We cannot turn this court into a temple, Mr. O'Connor.

On a later occasion (continued Mr. O'Connor to Mr. Crowley) 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 imposter?

Mr. Crowley: You can ask me to do anything you like. It won't alter the truth.

NO CAT KILLED

Mr. O'Connor 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 next 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."

"How old were you," asked Mr. Eddy.

"I was a boy 15 or 16," replied Mr. Crowley. "Roaming the heather with anyone is 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 severe way."

Mr. Crowley's family were Plymouth Brethren.

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.

SPIRIT OF HOSPITALITY?

Mr. Eddy: Have you at any time practised 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.

Mr. Eddy asked Mr. Crowley why he indulged in German propaganda in America during the war.

Mr. Crowley: In order to destroy it. I reported my activities to the chief of our organization, Captain (later Commodore) Guy Gaunt, and was in communication with the Hon. Everard Fielding. I came back immediately after the war, and if I had been a traitor I should have been shot—and a good job too.

Carl Germer, a German merchant living in England, said that many people in Germany admired Mr. Crowley very highly. He had seen Mr. Crowley invoke the spirit of magnanimity.

Mr. Justice Swift: You are sure it was the spirit of magnanimity which came, and not the spirit of hospitality?—I believe so.

“WHAT RIGHT?”

Mr. Malcolm Hilbery 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?